



WAUSAU WATERWORKS

FOR YOU!

inside this issue

Public Hearing Scheduled March 3 For Water Rate Increase

DNR Holds Enforcement Hearing Regarding Lead Exceedence

Employees obtain DNR Certification

Ask Professor Faucet

Public Notice to all Customers of Wausau Water Utility

Winter Comparison

Businesses Reminded of Cross Connection Inspection Requirements

Sewer Back Up Insurance Is Good Insurance for Homeowners

Public Hearing Scheduled March 3 For Water Rate Increase

An Application has been filed with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin for a water rate increase. The increase is necessary due to increased operating expenses and for the need to replace aging infrastructure, particularly water mains.

For an average family who uses 1400 cubic feet, the increase will be \$6.40 per quarter, or \$0.07 per day. Separate rates are being proposed for Irrigation class customers as well as non-residential class customers along with increases in fees such as for checks returned for non-sufficient funds.

A telephonic public hearing will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3 in the Council Chambers, 1st Floor, City Hall. For more information on how to testify at the public hearing see the Notice of Public Hearing on page 3 of this newsletter.

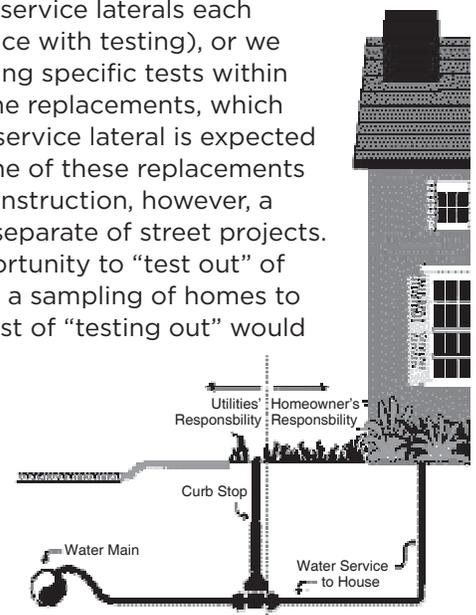
DNR Holds Enforcement Hearing Regarding Lead Exceedence

Department of Natural Resources staff met on December 19 with utility and City staff along with consultants representing the City, regarding the 2014 lead exceedence. In 2014 the utility was required to test 30 homes from a list of pre-approved properties known to either have a lead water service line or lead solder. Out of the 30 homes we were allowed to have up to 3 properties exceed the Action Level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) limit. We had 4 homes exceed. The exceedence which was the second in 22 years, will now require under DNR and EPA rules the additional testing of 60 homes, twice a year, until the utility gets back into compliance. Unfortunately, it does not end there. At the enforcement hearing, the DNR reviewed additional tasks that the utility may be required to accomplish under a Consent Agreement. The utility will be required to replace 7% of the 6056 lead service laterals each year (or until the utility gets back into compliance with testing), or we can try testing out of replacements by performing specific tests within properties with lead service lines. The cost of the replacements, which would only be on the utility's side of the water service lateral is expected to be in the range of \$2,500,000 annually. Some of these replacements will be scheduled along with regular street reconstruction, however, a good share of them will have to be completed separate of street projects. The other option the DNR offered was the opportunity to "test out" of replacements. Water Utility staff will be testing a sampling of homes to see whether this will be a viable option. The cost of "testing out" would be considerably less than replacement, if it proves to be a viable option. *(continue on page 4)*

Configuration of a Service Line with Partial Ownership by the Utility and Homeowner

Utility Service Line - the pipeline between the water main and the curb stop.

Homeowner Service Line - the pipeline between the curb stop and the water meter.



Employees obtain DNR Certification

Three water utility employees recently received DNR Water Operator Certification during the fall testing process. Obtaining their Distribution Certification were Brandon Ball and Rick Dorn. Deb Geier obtained both her Distribution and Groundwater Certifications.

Roy Kressman, a Wastewater Treatment Plant maintenance mechanic, received his DNR Lab Certification which completes all the Wastewater certifications.

Congratulations to all these employees for obtaining additional training and certifications to allow them to do their jobs better.



Ask Professor Faucet

Lead Concerns in Wausau

There has been a considerable amount of discussion recently about lead in Wausau's drinking water. We'd like to use this opportunity to explain some of these concerns.

How does the lead get in the water? Lead gets into the water anytime it sits for 6 hours or more in plumbing that is either made from lead, such as lead service lines, or has lead solder.

What areas of town have concerns over lead in the drinking water? The issue can be anywhere in the City, but is basically limited to older homes.

How old does the home have to be? Homes built in 1965 or earlier would likely have lead service lines, while homes built between 1965 and September 1984 would likely have lead solder.

How do I know how old my pipes are? The Utility has records on most homes as to when the laterals were installed. Give us a call at 715-261-7262 to find out.

Are there health hazards associated with lead? Yes, lead can cause serious health problems if too much lead enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can also be affected more than healthy adults at lower levels of lead. Lead is stored in the bones, and can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones while in utero, which may affect the child's brain development.

What can be done to minimize lead? Flushing your water at any faucet that you would normally drink from whenever the water has sat unused for 6 or more hours will help minimize your exposure as it brings in fresh water from the mains. You may need to run your water for 30 seconds or more. Also, never use hot water from your tap for drinking or cooking. Use the cold water and heat it.

Will boiling water eliminate lead? No, boiling the water will not eliminate the lead. Some home treatment devices are an option, but may only treat the water at the faucet where they are installed. These items also require periodic maintenance and replacement. It is recommended that you thoroughly research any product that claims to remove lead.

What is the Utility doing? We will be working with a consultant to address our water quality in regard to corrosiveness. We will also be having a consultant prepare a water hydraulic model to aid in performing unidirectional flushing of our distribution system.

How can I get my water tested? There are several private labs that can test your drinking water for lead. Labs in our vicinity include: Northern Lake Service, 715-478-2777; AgSource Laboratories at 715-898-1402 or Badger Labs at 1-800-776-7196. Labs should be contacted prior to taking a sample as there are specific instructions on how to properly take the sample. Costs of samples may vary from lab to lab.

Where can I get more information? Information on lead in your drinking water is available on our website at: <http://ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/WausauWaterWorks/InformationonLead.aspx> or on the EPA's website at <http://epa.gov/lead>.

Public Notice to all Customers of Wausau Water Utility

Wausau Water Utility has filed an application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) to increase water rates. The increase is necessary because of the need to replace aging infrastructure, particularly water mains, and because of increased operating expenses since the last water rate case in 2006.

The total increase in water revenues requested is \$855,958, which will result in an estimated overall rate increase of 20% over the water utility's present revenues. If the request is granted, the water bill for general service and public fire protection service for an average residential customer with a 5/8-inch or 3/4-inch meter who uses 1,400 cubic feet (10,500 gallons) of water per quarter will increase from \$48.07 to \$54.57, or 14%.

The proposed water rates include class rates, with a uniform volume rate of \$2.10 per 100 cubic feet (750 gallons) for residential class customers and a uniform volume rate of \$3.00 per 100 cubic feet (750 gallons) for irrigation class customers. Nonresidential customers would continue to be billed volume rates using a declining-block rate structure.

A telephonic public hearing on the application has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 3, 2015, at 11:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers (first floor) at the Wausau City Hall, 407 Grant Street, Wausau, Wisconsin. Scheduling questions regarding this hearing may be directed to the PSCW at (608) 266-3766.

A person may testify in this proceeding without becoming a party and without attorney representation. A person may submit this testimony in one of the following ways:

Web Comment. Go to the PSCW's web site at <http://psc.wi.gov>, click on the "Public Comments" button on the side menu bar. On the next page select the "File a comment" link that appears for docket number 6300-WR-104. Web comments shall be received no later than the day before the hearing.

Oral Comment. Spoken testimony at the public hearing session.

Written Comment. Instead of speaking at the hearing, write out a comment and submit it at the public hearing session.

Mail Comment. All comments submitted by U.S. mail shall be received no later than the day before the hearing and shall be addressed to:
Docket 6300-WR-104 Comments, Public Service Commission,
P.O. Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854.

The PSCW intends to webcast this hearing live on the PSCW's web site at <http://psc.wi.gov> under the "PSC Live Broadcast" button.

All documents in this docket are filed on the Commission's Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) system. To view these documents: (1) go to the Commission's web site at <http://psc.wi.gov>, (2) enter "6300-WR-104" in the box labeled "Link Directly to a Case," and (3) select "GO."

If you have any questions, please contact Wausau Water Utility at (715) 261-7262.

Winter Comparison

How is the winter of 2015 comparing to that of 2014? In 2014 we thawed over 425 service laterals and had water running at an additional 400 homes to keep service lines and water and sewer mains from freezing. So far we only have a hand full of properties running water. The utility continually monitors water temperatures throughout the City and will advise property owners IF the need to start running their water should occur. In 2014, frost depths dropped to 8+ feet in many areas throughout the City. So far this year, frost depths are at around 5 feet. Unfortunately, we have had more than our share of water main and lateral breaks in 2015 having made 16 repairs in January alone. For the safety of our employees, cooperation of the public to detour around areas where breaks are occurring is greatly appreciated.

Businesses Reminded of Cross Connection Inspection Requirements

Businesses that completed Cross Connection Inspections in 2013 are reminded that they will need to have an inspection of their internal water system completed in 2015, and forward a copy of the inspection to Wausau Water Works. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources mandates that owners of commercial, industrial and publicly owned properties conduct a Cross Connection Survey every two years.

A cross connection can occur when a drop in pressure in the water system causes a back siphoning into the water system (such as when a hydrant is opened, or a water main breaks). Making sure that no cross connection exists ensures a safe drinking water supply for our customers.

Residential customers can do their part to make sure the water supply stays safe by installing hose bib vacuum breakers on outside faucets and removing any hoses that may be connected to laundry tubs or other sinks or tubs. Additional information is provided to residential property owners during routine meter upgrades.

For more information on cross connections, contact Wausau Water Works at 715-261-7265.

Sewer Back Up Insurance Is Good Insurance for Homeowners

This year make Sewer Back Up Insurance a priority. With the start of a new year, we all like to visit ideas to make our lives better. One that should be considered is to purchase sewer backup insurance.

Sewer backup insurance can be added to most homeowner's policies, and typically at a minimal expense, especially when you consider what it costs to replace goods and clean up the mess. This is especially important for homeowners who have improved basements.

Backups are typically the result of a blockage in either the homeowner's sewer lateral or the City's sewer main in the street. It should be noted that damages from blockages in the City's mains are not automatically reimbursed by the utility. We follow the Wisconsin State Statutes as it pertains to negligence, and as long as we have maintained the main within the last 3-5 years, there may not be coverage. That is why it is important to carry sewer backup insurance. Another thing to consider is the amount of coverage to carry, especially if you have an improved basement.

Having your sewer lateral cleaned on a regular basis is another good thing to do to help with backup concerns, and never ever use your toilet as a replacement for a garbage can.

DNR Holds Enforcement Hearing

(continued from page 1)

A water service lateral has two portions, the portion that the City owns which goes from the water main in the street to the round shut-off valve which is typically located in the boulevard area of the property. The other portion is the private side which is the homeowner's responsibility. The Utility would only be responsible for replacing the portion that the City owns; the private side would need to be replaced at the homeowner's expense. While homeowners are strongly encouraged to replace their portion at the same time. If property owner opts out of replacing their portion, they should expect to see elevated lead levels for an unknown period of time due to the disturbance of the lines.

Wausau Water Works will also be working with a consultant on performing a Water Quality Investigation and to develop a water hydraulic model to aid in unidirectional flushing of hydrants.

More information of lead is available on our website at: <http://ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/WausauWaterWorks/InformationonLead.aspx> or by calling 715-261-7262.