



NEWSPLASH

News for Customers of the Erie Water Works

Fourth Quarter 2019

Gearing Up for Phase III Renovations of Historic Water Treatment Plant

In November 2015, the Erie Water Works (EWW) rededicated its Sommerheim Water Treatment Plant to the Richard S. Wasielewski Water Treatment Plant (RSW WTP) in recognition of Mr. Wasielewski's more than 50 years of service to the water system here in Erie. That event marked the successful completion of the first and second phases of a three phase renovation project at the historic facility.

In the first phase, EWW modernized the pumps, motors, internal piping and added a backup power generator to make operations highly efficient and extremely reliable. Phase two improvements included a new state-of-the-art ultrafiltration membrane system that continues to produce some of the highest

quality water available from a public water system.

The third and final phase of the project consists of a major overhaul of the facility itself. Originally constructed in 1932, EWW's primary water treatment plant is nearing 87 years in service. Like any building of this age, the RSW WTP is more than ready for a makeover.

With the final design expected in early 2020, and an 18-24 month construction timeline, the RSW WTP will be completely renovated by mid 2022! The projected improvements include a new highly modernized laboratory, a fully renovated and technologically advanced control room, restoration of the iconic copper dome that sits atop of the plant, and restoration of all concrete

and brickwork that has eroded over the past 87 years. The facility will also be fully compliant with the American Disabilities Act. Upon completion of Phase III, the RSW WTP will be poised to serve the residents and businesses of NWPAA for decades to come.

As always, EWW's goal is to continue to provide "World-Class Water, First-Class Service".



Richard S. Wasielewski Water Treatment Plant located on Sommerheim Drive in Millcreek Township

East Lake Road Water Main Replacement Project Complete

The 4th and final Phase of the East Lake Road Water Main Replacement Project was completed in September 2019. The total project was conceived in 2008 and engineering design began shortly thereafter. The goal of the capital investment was to replace and improve aging and maintenance-intensive infrastructure in Lawrence Park and Harborcreek Township. In total, EWW abandoned and replaced 27,500 feet (5.2 miles) of 12-inch diameter cast iron water main with new 20-inch and 16-inch ductile iron pipe. In addition, 156 valves and 35 fire hydrants were installed as part of the construction.

The 1st Phase of the project was completed in 2010 and extended from EWW's East Lake

Road Pump Station (across from Wabtec) to Smithson Avenue along East Lake Road and Iroquois Avenue. The 2nd Phase installed new line from Smithson Avenue to Walbridge Road in 2015. Phase 3 construction was finished in 2017 and stretched from Walbridge Road to Irvine Drive. The 4th and final phase replaced the main from Irvine Drive to Bartlett Road.

In all project phases the new lines were 'upsized' from 12-inch diameter to 20 or 16-inch, allowing EWW to improve the water flow characteristics of the distribution system. This resulted in improved water pressure and volume available to fight fires when fire hydrants are needed in an

emergency. Replacing lines with frequent failures (also known as 'water main breaks') helps EWW to control repair costs and increase customer satisfaction by improving our continuity of service which is at the heart of our mission. With 774 miles of pipe in the water system, it is our goal to strategically renew infrastructure when and where it is needed for the benefit of our customers.



It's Time to Prepare Your Home for Winter

When temperatures are consistently at or below 32°F pipes in your home may be vulnerable to freezing. Here are some tips to help you deal with Erie's frigid weather.

- Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines by repairing windows, insulating walls, closing off crawl spaces and eliminating drafts near doors.
- Allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is minimal compared to the cost to repair a broken pipe.
- Open cabinet doors to expose pipes to warmer room temperatures to help keep them from freezing.
- If your pipes freeze apply heat to the frozen pipe by warming the air around it. You can use a hair dryer, space heater or hot water.

If water is not restored and neighbors are experiencing the same problem it could be a water main break and customers should call the Erie Water Works 24-hour emergency number 814-870-8087.

A Day in the Life of a Meter Department Employee

EWW employs nine people in its Meter Department. Some of those employees are Meter Readers that read routes on a daily basis. The rest are Meter Technicians that handle meter repairs, new meter installations, and meter change outs.

EWW provides water service to more than 220,000 people in Northwest Pennsylvania. That equals 63,000 metered accounts. 41,000 of those accounts are equipped with Neptune Radio Read meters. These meters allow Meter Readers to drive or walk by the home or business to capture a reading via radio frequency. 22,000 meters, mostly in the City of Erie, require the Meter Reader to step on to the property to capture the reading from the touch pad located on the outside of your house. These meters will eventually be converted to the radio equipped meters.

In 2018, Meter Readers captured 260,000 readings. On an average day a Meter Reader that walks most of their route will take approximately 24,000 steps. That can be either a blessing or a curse depending on the weather conditions here in Erie. While the weather can't be controlled there are a few things customers with touch pads can

do to make it a more pleasant, less hazardous experience for the Meter Reader. Clearing the area around the touch pad to make it easily accessible is most appreciated! During the summer months overgrown vegetation not only makes it difficult to access the touch pad but also may attract unwanted insects. Ground bee's nests, ticks and other surprises can be dangerous. Winter brings new challenges if the Meter Reader has to trudge through mounds of snow to get to the touch pad. A shoveled path to the touch pad would make their day! But the single most important item a customer can do to help EWW's Meter Readers would be to clearly post a sign warning of any danger, especially a warning if there is a dog on the property. Properties with an invisible fence and a dog present is particularly dangerous for our Meter Readers. While your dog may be the sweetest animal in the world, it may feel the need to be aggressive if a stranger enters its space. Out of an abundance of caution for our employees personal safety, EWW Meter Readers have been trained to approach every property as if there is an aggressive dog present but it is always more helpful to know ahead of time if dan-

ger is imminent.

A huge thank you to the many EWW customers that are thoughtful enough to take into consideration the challenges the Meter Readers and other utility workers are faced with each and every day!

Also, please keep in mind that if an EWW employee needs to visit your home or business for a service related issue or meter reading, our employee will wear an Erie Water Works uniform and have I.D. available upon request with their name, photo, and Erie Water Works logo. NEVER allow anyone claiming to work for the "water company" into your home unless you are confident of their Erie Water Works affiliation. If you have reason for concern, please call the Erie Water Works, at 814-870-8000 before letting anyone enter your home.



A Meter Reader is shown capturing a reading from a touch pad.