

The Mainstream

A semiannual newsletter dedicated to enhancing water and wastewater services brought to you by
The Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority



Your water and wastewater service providers

From The Director

The City of Ypsilanti water main replacement project is nearing its end. In the last four years over 33 miles of water main in the city have been replaced. Some of the mains replaced were installed in the 1930s and, perhaps, even earlier. The new mains are much less prone to breakage than those that were replaced and provide better distribution and fire protection. The process has caused inconvenience for city residents as all the local streets have been impassable for periods of time over the course of the program. I would like to thank all those who were inconvenienced for your patience and understanding.

The expansion and improve-

ments project at the wastewater treatment plant continues and we are looking forward to its completion next year. YCUA's largest wastewater customer, the Western Townships Utilities Authority (comprised of Plymouth, Canton and Northville Townships) has partnered with us to expand the treatment capacity from 28.9 million to 45.9 million gallons per day as well as to make some very significant improvements to the existing wastewater plant. The project is proceeding well and is on schedule and within budget.

- YCUA Director

Credit Card and Online Bill Payments Now Accepted

This fall, YCUA began accepting credit cards for water bill payments. You can now also pay your bill online through a link on the YCUA website at www.ycua.org. In addition to these new options, you may still pay your bills in person, by mail, or by automatic withdrawal from your bank account. If paying in person, please bring your bill with you. For questions about your bill, please call us Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:25 p.m., at 734.484.4600.

YCUA Receives National Safety Award

YCUA is very proud to be the recipient of the 2004 George W. Burke Jr. Award. This award, given in recognition for a facility having an outstanding safety program and record, is awarded annually by the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and its member associations. YCUA received the award at the 2004 annual conference of the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA) in August.

This award was established in 1982 to honor George W. Burke Jr. for his years of service to the water environment field. He was instrumental in developing the WEF's annual safety survey and assisting in the production of several safety training aids and promotional packets.

The award is given in recognition of a facility's commitment to health and safety in the workplace as evidenced by a documented safety program and the incident record of the preceding year. One year ago, the YCUA Health and Safety Supervisor submitted a detailed application outlining the established safety programs and procedures followed by Authority employees.

YCUA has always exceeded

standards relating to the safety of its employees. It is a great honor to have this commitment recognized across the state.

Special recognition goes to Scott Robinson, YCUA Health and Safety Supervisor, and Mike Warren, YCUA AFSCME Safety Coordinator, who provide leadership in the development of the safety program. Additionally, recognition goes to all YCUA employees, both management and staff, who show great commitment and dedication to YCUA as they support, promote and cooperate in achieving the goal of providing a safe working environment.

The Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA), established in 1925, represents more than 1,700 water quality professionals statewide who are dedicated to preserving, restoring and enhancing Michigan's water resources. MWEA is a member association of the Water Environment Federation (WEF) an international organization with more than 100,000 members worldwide. MWEA's mission is to be the recognized authority on and advocate for preserving, restoring and enhancing Michigan's water resources.

Your New and Improved Billing Statement

As we strive to expand our services to you, we have made several improvements within our Customer Service Department. We recently installed new billing software that will increase processing efficiencies as well as provide our staff with more up-to-the-minute information about your account. **Your billing date and due date will change. We will still bill you bi-monthly, but we will mail your bill within one week of obtaining the meter reading.** While this feature is being phased in, your first bill on the new system may be for a shorter time period than the usual two months. This change in billing dates will alert you to leaks in your plumbing system on a more timely basis. The new bill also reduces postage costs, which result in direct savings to you.

Other highlights of the new statement include more detailed account information such as: previous balance, payments made during the billing period, current charges, and ending balance. A comparison of the last 12 months (six bills) is shown in a bar graph format to illustrate consumption trends. Sprinkling meter data is now combined with the main house meter and prints on one bill statement, under one account number. Detailed Benefit Charges, if applicable, are provided including the balance left to pay. Payment arrangements, if previously made through our Collection Department, are also shown, including the balance left to pay off.

Sewer Backup? Slow Flowing Sewers?

If you are experiencing sewer backups or slow flowing sewers, please notify YCUA. If the problem is in the sewer main, YCUA will be responsible for repairing it. Reimbursement will only be possible if YCUA was notified and has evaluated the problem prior to securing plumbing services.

YCUA Employees Join in United Way Day of Caring

September 14, 2004 marked the Washtenaw United Way's 2004 Day of Caring. Each year, the Washtenaw United Way kicks off its fund drive period with this event, which calls for groups of individuals to volunteer for one day to benefit their communities. YCUA employees eagerly join in the Day of Caring activities each year and our hats are off to those employees whose efforts that day made a difference.

A team of nine YCUA employees participated in this year's Washtenaw County United Way Day of Caring and worked at The Hope Clinic in the City of Ypsilanti. They worked hard painting the exterior of the building as well constructing a new outdoor storage shed.

In addition to YCUA staff's participation in the Day of Caring, employees donate funds annually to the United Way Campaign Fund Drive. YCUA wishes to remind all local residents that they may donate or volunteer their time to the Washtenaw United Way at any time by calling (734) 971-8200 or by visiting their website at www.wuway.org.

**Visit our website at www.ycua.org
for more information on these and
other topics.**

YCUA Addresses West Willow Area Sewer Maintenance

At the YCUA Board of Commissioners meeting on August 24, 2004, the Authority's preventative maintenance program for the cleaning and televising of the sanitary sewer mains was approved. YCUA will be entering into a contract with Inland Waters to clean and televise various sewers in the West Willow area beginning October 1, 2004.

While most sanitary sewer manholes are accessible from the roadways, there are some sanitary mains with access manholes located in backyards of our customers. Since we do not have the proper equipment to address the cleaning of these mains in all situations, the cleaning and televising of these particular mains must be done by outside sources.

Proposals were requested for cleaning and televising the West Willow area in Ypsilanti Township and three proposals were received with Inland Water submitting the low bid. The cleaning and televising of sanitary sewer mains is required by YCUA's Administrative Consent Order with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and is a prudent practice.

We thank the residents of the affected area for their patience and cooperation while this work is being completed.

It's Time To Winterize!

The time to prepare your home for winter is before the freezing temperatures and snow arrive. Follow these tips to help prevent frozen pipes in your home:

1. Disconnect outdoor hoses and make sure hose bibs are not dripping.
2. Insulate pipes in unheated areas or seal off unheated areas.
3. Find your water meter shutoff so if a break does occur, you can turn off your water service quickly.
4. If you have an in-ground sprinkler system, contact your dealer about scheduling an appointment to have your system thoroughly winterized.

Did You Know ...

... that you can refill an eight ounce glass with YCUA water more than 5,000 times for the same cost as one container of bottled water? In addition, the quality of YCUA's water is wonderful! Check out YCUA's recent report on water quality that was mailed to you this summer. That report can also be viewed in the Customer Information area of our website at www.ycua.org.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

For the past eight months, we have asked for your opinion about our Customer Service Department on a survey printed on the back of our bill statement. We appreciate your comments! Many of the features being implemented with our new billing software are a direct result of your responses and comments, such as showing last payment made, acceptance of credit cards and online payments, earlier detection of plumbing problems, comparison of prior billings/consumption, and consolidating house and sprinkler accounts. We hope that these new billing features are helpful to you! Please continue to provide your feedback!