

# 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

**Choose earth friendly landscaping.** When landscaping your yard you can protect your kids, pets, and the environment from harm. By choosing plants that are native to Michigan and by practicing good lawn-care practices, you can help prevent pollution of our lakes and streams.

Here are some simple steps you can take to landscape and maintain a healthy yard and help keep our water clean. Give them a try. A few simple changes can make a big difference!

**Mow high.** Make your lawn more economical and easier to maintain by mowing high (three inches is recommended). Taller grass requires less water, promotes root growth, and shades out weeds.

**Use mulch.** Place a thick layer of mulch (e.g., four inches) around trees and plants. This helps retain water, reduce weeds, and minimize the need for pesticides.

**Go native.** Select plants native to Michigan. Native plants are better equipped to tolerate Michigan's climate, require less fertilizing, and are more disease resistant.

Variety is the spice of life. Using a wide variety of plants helps control pests and mini-

mizes the need for pesticides.

**Water wisely.** Generally, your lawn needs about an inch of water a week. Over-watering lawns results in shallow-rooted plants that are less tolerant of heat and drought, and more prone to disease.

Avoid over-watering by using a rain gauge and watering only when necessary, instead of on a fixed schedule.

**Use less for pests.** Pesticides and herbicides can be harmful to our kids, pets, and the environment. So, use pesticides and herbicides sparingly. Limit applications to problem areas instead of applying to the entire area (e.g., weed and feed).

**Rake it or leave it.** Follow the guidelines in your community for leaf pick-up. Never rake leaves into or near storm drains, ditches, or streams.

Decaying leaves use up the water's oxygen, harming fish and the aquatic insects that fish depend on to survive. Better yet, mow leaves into your lawn. Leaves and grass clippings are good fertilizers for your lawn.

- YCUA Director

## WTUA Lower Rouge Expansion

The Western Townships Utilities Authority (WTUA) is currently undertaking an expansion of its Lower Rouge Pumping Station and Equalization Basin. WTUA is comprised of the Charter Townships of Canton, Northville and Plymouth, and is a significant wastewater customer of the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA). The Lower Rouge Facility directs a significant portion of the wastewater collected in its three member communities to the YCUA Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).

The expansion project entails two major components: adding additional storage volume (doubling the available storage), and increasing the pumping capabilities to that storage. WTUA's storage volume is used for both dry weather equalization and wet weather equalization; that is, when wastewater volumes collected from the member communities are high, they are stored in the equalization basins until the volumes are lower, at which point they are delivered to YCUA.

During dry weather, the higher flow volumes associated with the morning and afternoon periods are stored until the overnight period, when lower flow volumes are typically generated. This dry weather equalization results in a smoother delivery of wastewater to the WWTP (especially since a significant portion of the daily wastewater treated by YCUA comes from WTUA), improving operations and making the plant operate more efficiently (typically resulting in lower rates).

During wet weather (rain events), the storage volume allows for WTUA to control the amount of wastewater delivered to YCUA, reducing the load on the treatment plant, which results in the need for a smaller treatment plant than would be required absent storage. This smaller size treatment plant also has an impact on rates, since treatment plants typically operate more efficiently when running near their capacity.

## Summer Water Main Replacement and Improvement Projects

YCUA will be performing two major water main improvement projects this summer. The Hewitt Road Water Main Replacement project consists of replacing approximately 1,800 feet of existing water mains on Hewitt Road from Packard Road to north of Washtenaw Avenue in the Charter Township of Ypsilanti. The work will be completed in conjunction with road improvements made by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Project cost will be approximately \$650,000 and will be funded with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus dollars.

The Mansfield Street Water Main Replacement project consists of replacing approximately 1,300 feet of aging and undersized water main on Mansfield Street between Washtenaw Avenue and Westmoorland Street in the City of Ypsilanti. The work will be completed in conjunction with road improvements made by the City of Ypsilanti. Project cost will be approximately \$260,000.

Visit our website at [www.ycua.org](http://www.ycua.org)

for more information on  
these and other topics.

## YCUA Recipient of 2009 AWWA Safety Award

On March 4, 2009 YCUA was notified by the American Water Works Association Michigan Section Safety Practices Committee that it had been selected for the 2009 Michigan AWWA Safety Award - Class III. This award is given a Class III facility (101–500 employees) to recognize excellence in water utility safety programs. YCUA will be presented with its award at the AWWA annual convention in Traverse City on September 14–17, 2009.

The competition involves the review and evaluation of the utility's safety record and safety program. The process was recently modified to include the evaluation of specific sections of a drinking water utility's safety program. This was done to provide a more objective evaluation of a larger utility's program that may typically have access to more extensive safety resources and staff.

Winning the 2009 Award places YCUA into contention for the AWWA national safety award, the Wendell R. LaDue Safety Award. The Michigan Section's Safety Practices Committee previously recognized YCUA in 2007 for participation in the competition and for having a distinguished safety program.

The purpose of the safety practices committee of the AWWA is to promote safety consciousness and encourage safe work practices in the water works industry.

**Notice to Customers:** Residents having problems with their sewer service (odors, backing-up, and / or running slow) should contact YCUA before calling a plumber. Calls can be made to YCUA twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week. YCUA staff will attempt to determine the cause of the problem and resolve the issue if it is in the sewer main. If the problem appears to be within the sanitary sewer service, responsibility for resolving the problem will be with the owner.

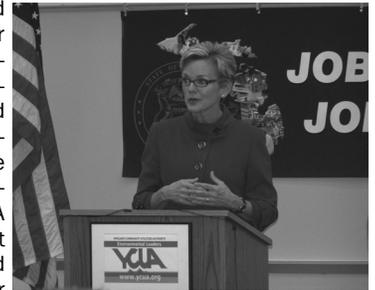
Residents having problems with their water service ( low or no flow, or odors in the water) may also call YCUA at any time. YCUA staff will attempt to determine the cause of the problem and resolve the problem if it is within YCUA's area of responsibility. If not, responsibility for resolving the problem will be with the owner.

A copy of YCUA's *Sanitary and Water Services Policy* can be found at: [www.ycu.org/Policies/SanitaryandWaterServicesPolicy12-19-06.pdf](http://www.ycu.org/Policies/SanitaryandWaterServicesPolicy12-19-06.pdf)

## Governor Granholm Visits YCUA

At a press conference held on February 24th at Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority, Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced that Ypsilanti will be one of 16 communities in the state receiving federal stimulus money under the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) signed by President Barack Obama earlier in the month.

Also addressing the press and local elected officials were Environmental Quality Director Steven Chester, YCUA Board of Commissioners' Chairperson J. Ray Scott, and YCUA Director Larry R. Thomas. Having recently returned from the National Governors' Association conference in Washington and from a meeting the day before with President Obama and his economic advisors, Gov. Granholm briefed YCUA on water infrastructure and other projects that will be funded in Washtenaw County and across the state as well as the process for distributing the federal dollars. She indicated that infrastructure improvements in buildings, roads, bridges, sewers, water systems, and mass transit are crucial in jump-starting the economy due to the new jobs that will be created.



Steven Chester, Director of Environmental Quality, said that the state is expected to receive about \$66 million for drinking water infrastructure improvements, which will be shared among the 16 communities with shovel-ready projects, including New Haven, Ypsilanti, Van Buren Township, Dearborn and River Rouge. For Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township, that could mean \$680,000 for water main replacements on Mansfield Street and Hewitt Road. However, an exact total is pending from the EPA and specifically how the funds will be divided among projects has yet to be determined.

"For roads, bridges, and transit, Michigan will get about \$853 million – almost \$1 billion," Gov. Granholm said. "It's anticipated that Michigan will create 109,000 jobs as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)." She stated that the ARRA is more than just a "stimulus plan" because some of the projects are expected to last for decades and will result in a boost to the economy that will be long-term. Gov. Granholm also estimated that the drinking water projects alone could put almost 800 people to work in Michigan.

Construction jobs will be the first ones created by the ARRA because those are the projects ready to go, but teaching, information technology and medical jobs also will benefit from the plan.



Also as part of the ARRA, unemployment benefits are going up \$25 a week and there will be a large increase in federal help for state Medicaid programs. "For Michigan, that means that we will receive an additional \$450 million for Medicaid," Gov. Granholm said. "This is important because, over the last four months, over 50,000 more citizens have enrolled in the Medicaid system because of the recession."

Gov. Granholm also urged Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township officials to apply for substantial energy-related ARRA funds. This could include money for weatherizing buildings, increasing their energy efficiency and generating "green" energy. "There are going to be huge opportunities for greening," she said.

Federal guidelines require the ARRA funds to be carefully monitored and governments that misuse stimulus money will have to pay it back. "They were very clear in the White House – and we all ought to be very clear – that this money will require significant oversight," she said. "We have to have transparency and accountability and we've got to do it right."