

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

YCUA prides itself on providing our customers a product and service at a reasonable cost. YCUA continues to strive for savings for our customers through the reduction of energy costs. YCUA has recently completed the Martz Road and Willow Run pump stations renovation projects. The projects included new pump installations, electrical services and new emergency electrical generators. The projects were funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with a 40% principal forgiveness. As a result, we have witnessed a large reduction in the electrical consumption at these locations, with an estimated annual savings of \$24,000.

Energy Reduction and Process Control project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project was also funded through the ARRA at a cost of \$1,113,750 with a 40% principal forgiveness. We anticipate \$500,000 in annual energy savings for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Projects like these allow us to continue delivering clean water to your home or business for your use and collecting and treating wastewater at a reasonable cost.

-Larry R. Thomas, Director

In addition to these projects, we have also completed the

April is Safe Digging Month

April is Safe Digging Month in Michigan. Each year, Michigan's underground utility infrastructure is jeopardized by unintentional damage caused by those who fail to call before they dig. But safe digging is no accident!

Excavators and homeowners can save time and money by calling 811, the national Call Before You Dig toll-free number, or MISS DIG System, Inc., Michigan's one-call excavation safety and utility damage prevention company, at 800-482-7171 at least three business days in advance of any digging project. By making this call, residents can have underground lines located to avoid the potential for undesired consequences such as service interruption, damage to the environment, personal injury and even death. It is also important to practice safe digging by respecting the lines marked by the MISS DIG crews and maintaining visual definition of the line through the course of the excavation.

MISS DIG System Inc. offers free assistance with its more than 900 participating members who will stake underground utility lines and provide overhead electric line assistance prior to digging.

YCUA Nearing End of City Meter Upgrade

The Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority is in the final phase of upgrading water meters for its customers in the City of Ypsilanti. This phase of the project involves replacing outdated visual readers with radio-read devices. The new system requires a new meter to be installed that is compatible with a Meter Transceiver Unit or MXU. The MXU operates on a radio frequency, which can be read and registered by a passing meter truck. This offers many advantages over the older manual read system. With the radio read system, YCUA personnel will no longer need to enter customers' yards and will be able to get more meter readings with greater accuracy and speed, thus eliminating the need for estimated bills and resulting in more accurate billing for our customers.



Close up view of one of YCUA's new Meter Transceiver Units (MXUs).



A YCUA Meter Service Technician installing an MXU.

Remaining in the system are 688 of the old visual readers that are in need of replacement. YCUA meter service technicians will be visiting the affected properties and, if no one is home at the time, letters will be left requesting customers to call to schedule an appointment. Installation of this equipment entails replacement of the meter, wire, and any current outside device. The new equipment will provide YCUA with accurate meter reads and more timely alerts of problems with the meter or electronic reader.

The MXU may be mounted either inside by the meter or outside. Because the MXU has a battery inside of the unit that will in the future need replacement, it is best that the MXU be installed outside when possible.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling YCUA customer service at 484-4600 ext. 705. Completion of this project will assist the Authority in its goal to provide quality service to all customers.

For further information, please contact us at 734-484-4600 or visit our website at www.ycua.org.

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

How Much Water a Leaking Faucet or Toilet Can Waste

Check your faucets at home – do any of them drip? Well, maybe it's just a small drip – how much water can a little drip waste? True, a single drip won't waste much water. But think about each faucet in your home dripping a little bit all day long. A faucet leak of just one drop per second wastes 2,400 gallons per year. Worse yet is a running toilet, which may burn through 25,000 gallons a month or more!

Here are three major ways to reduce expenses and conserve water:

- ◆ Fix leaks. Add vegetable dye to the toilet tank reservoir and check back in 15 minutes. If the color has migrated into the bowl, you have a leak, even if you can't hear it. Also periodically check for leaks from humidifiers, hot water heaters, refrigerators, and outside faucets or sprinklers.
- ◆ Make water conservation a habit. Don't leave the tap running while brushing teeth or shaving. Be aware of shower time durations. Purchase low-flow toilets (1.6 gallon per flush vs. 8 gallons per flush). Install aerators on faucets and showers to provide the 'feel' of a full blast of water at a fraction of the flow per minute.
- ◆ Be aware of seasonal water use. Compare your water bills through the seasons to discover ways to conserve water. Filling pools, watering landscapes, washing cars, and operating water-cooled air conditioners or humidifiers are activities that potentially consume large amounts of water. Outdoors, you may choose to reduce lawn areas, plant native species, apply mulch around plantings, and water only as needed (1 inch of rain or sprinkler water every 10 days).

For more information on water usage and conservation actions, consult the Huron River Watershed Council, www.hrwc.org, 734.769.5123 and the California Urban Water Conservation Council www.H2Ouse.org.

Sources: abtwater.com and www.a2gov.org

2011 Water Supply System Improvements

Holmes Road Phase 3 Water Main Replacement. This project consists of replacing approximately 5,000' of existing water mains on Holmes Road between Spencer Lane and Michigan Avenue in the Charter Township of Ypsilanti. The work will be completed in conjunction with road improvements made by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Total project costs are estimated at \$1,080,000.

Ford Boulevard Water Main Replacement. This project consists of replacing approximately 1,500' of aging and undersized water main on Ford Boulevard between Parkwood Avenue and Russell Street in the Charter Township of Ypsilanti. The work will be completed in advance of road improvements to be made by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Total project costs are estimated at \$406,000.

East Cross Water Supply System Improvements. This project consists of replacement of water services, hydrants, and valves on the existing water main in East Cross Street between River Street and Prospect Street in the City of Ypsilanti. The work will be completed in conjunction with road improvements made by the City of Ypsilanti. Total project costs are estimated at \$180,000.

Water-Wise Tips For Your Spring Cleanup

Storm drains in our streets and yards empty directly into our lakes and streams. Fertilizer on our driveways and sidewalks washes directly to our lakes and streams polluting the water. Here are some simple lawn care tips for a great looking lawn that will also help protect our environment:

- ◆ Don't pour your unwanted chemicals on the ground or down sinks. Instead, take them to a hazardous waste collection center.
- ◆ It's important to use chemical fertilizers, weed killers, and fungicides only as directed. Do not apply these products if rain is expected or near surface waters.
- ◆ Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways easily washes into storm drains. Sweep it back onto the lawn.
- ◆ Don't hose your lawn clippings away – sweep them up instead.
- ◆ Don't fertilize until three weeks after green up in the spring.
- ◆ Consider a fertilizer spreader with a directional control that avoids non-lawn areas.
- ◆ Instead of spreading weed killer over your entire lawn, use a pre-mixed spot treatment, directed at the root of the problem.

Did You Know?

... For fascinating information about your water, check out YCUA's upcoming report on water quality that will be mailed to you this summer. That report will also be viewable on our website at www.ycua.org.