

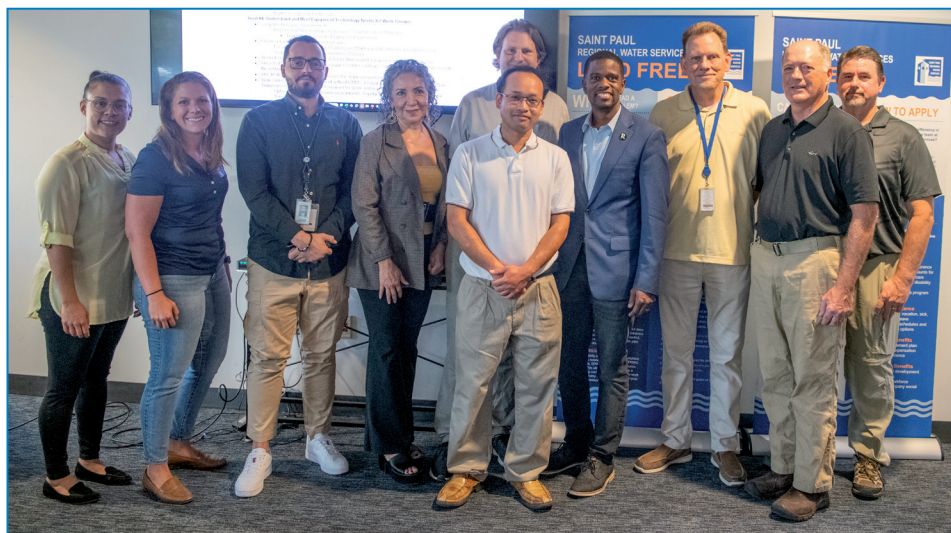
Pipeline Express

Provide high-quality water and exceptional services to the people and communities we support.

SPRWS Responds to Cyber Attack Staff Step Up to Navigate Crisis

By Jodi Wallin

On July 25, 2025, Saint Paul Regional Water Services detected a cyber breach on its business network. The attack, which originated within the City of Saint Paul's network, impacted multiple city systems. SPRWS immediately partnered with the City, the Minnesota National Guard, FBI, and MOXFIVE to contain the breach, restore systems, and strengthen protections. Importantly, there was no intrusion into SPRWS's SCADA network, which controls the safe production of water.



Responding to the Incident

SPRWS activated its Incident Command structure to coordinate response, make timely decisions, communicate clearly, and preserve forensic evidence. By mid-August, nearly all staff had completed secure password resets, and essential systems were being restored. Paymentus was back

online by August 20, allowing customers to again make payments. Some systems remain offline but are in progress.

Mayor Melvin Carter came to the utility on August 14 to thank SPRWS staff who played a part in the cyber attack response, and especially the IS staff who discovered the attack. Pictured from left are: Justina Ross, Racquel Vaske, Liridon Prestreshi, Martha Burkhardt, Chantha Siv, Nick Sprenke, Mayor Melvin Carter, Todd Freking, Tom Miller, and Gary Slowiak.

online by August 20, allowing customers to again make payments. Some systems remain offline but are in progress.

Staff Stepped Up

Every employee played a role in keep-

ing SPRWS running during this crisis, and many stepped into leadership and response roles:

Incident Command: Racquel Vaske and Richard Rowland coordinated utility-wide response.

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Staff Step Up During Cyber Attack

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Information Services: Led by Martha Burckhardt, with Nick Sprenke, Chantha Siv, Liridon Prestreshi, Allan Fung, Gary Slowiak, Elena Iliarski, Joao Xavier Coelho, Andy Knuth, and Natilee Squires, this team worked tirelessly to monitor systems, restore functionality, and keep staff connected.

SCADA & Water Safety: Todd Freking led manual monitoring around the clock with support from Alec McCuskey, Travis Tveit, Paul Rice, and Tristian Magdziarz. SCADA was never compromised.

Payroll, Finance & HR: Grainne Medearis, Heidi Freking, and Becky Carlson created manual processes to ensure employees were paid.

Customer Service: Led by Derek Olson, with Jen Guertin, Holly Overton, Lori Petricka, True Johnson, Jordyn Amund-

son, Deana Masiello, David Denton, Laura Ahman, and Paco Fernandez-Chavarin, the team answered phones as soon as they were restored and cleared more than 1,000 messages.

Dispatch: Don Graf, Gao Moua, Tom Courteau, Rusty Vang, Herman Audett, Ken Reeves, and Nate Kahler provided customer support day and night. Dennis Rosemark kept the engineering service desk responsive.

Operations: Che Fei Chen (production), Graeme Chapple (distribution), and Rich Hibbard (engineering) ensured core services continued without interruption.

Logistics & Communications: Tom Miller and Justina Ross managed logistics, while Josh Cobb coordinated critical communications.

Staying Flexible

Staff adapted quickly, using Office 365 for communication beginning July 28 and adjusting as more systems came online. Despite limited tools, employees kept services moving, stayed positive, and supported one another.

Looking Ahead

Recovery work continues under the Tactical Response Team, and progress has been significant. The dedication, flexibility, and teamwork shown during this unprecedented challenge ensured that SPRWS continued serving customers and protecting the community's water supply.

To every staff member: thank you for your extraordinary efforts. Your commitment, patience, and collaboration carried SPRWS through this crisis.

Vacation Donation Approved for Hugo Lopez

We are asking for vacation donations for Hugo Lopez, who has exhausted all sick and vacation time.

If you are interested in donating please email our payroll specialist directly at pakou.c.moua@ci.stpaul.mn.us and

also carbon copy Becky Carlson in HR at Becky.Carlson@ci.stpaul.mn.us with the amount of vacation donation you would like to contribute.

Thank you for the thoughtful consideration of this request.



Hugo Lopez



Highland Towers: Preserving with Paint and Repairs

By Tim Bagstad

As part of the Saint Paul Regional Water Services' ongoing commitment to infrastructure maintenance and water quality improvement, the second phase of our Highland Park water tower rehabilitation effort is now underway. This year, the Highland #3 water tower, located on Snelling Avenue, received much-needed repairs and a full repaint.

The project began in April and was completed by July. Like the first tower, Highland #2, which was painted last year, this work is being performed by TanksCo Inc., with design and inspection oversight provided by SEH. The total project cost is estimated at \$1.5 million.

The Highland #3 tank, a 1.5-million-gallon toro-legged style structure, underwent extensive work. This includes interior reconditioning, the replacement of safety and access equipment, complete sandblasting, and repainting. A key improvement this year is the use of an upgraded coating system designed to last over 30 years—an improvement over the 20-year lifespan offered by the standard system we've used in the past.

Another visible change will be the addition of the City of Saint Paul logo, which will be painted on the exterior for the first time. Internally, a Gridbee mixer will be installed to enhance water quality and help maintain uniform water temperature and disinfectant levels throughout the tank.

This work isn't just cosmetic. Regular



The blue Highland water towers #2 and #3 now sport fresh paint and SPRWS and City of Saint Paul logos.

maintenance like this extends the life of critical infrastructure and helps ensure continued delivery of safe, high-quality water. The upgraded coating system protects the steel surfaces from corrosion, while the safety improvements bring the tower up to current standards.

This project follows the successful rehabilitation of the Highland #2 water tower, which was completed last year. That tank, also located on Snelling Avenue, holds 1 million gallons and shares the same toro-legged design. The scope of work in 2024 closely mirrors what was done for Highland #2: surface preparation, full coating of interior wet surfaces, spot repair on interior

dry areas, and a full exterior repaint.

An unexpected challenge during the Highland #2 work was the discovery of severely deteriorated roof rafters, which were fully replaced. Like Highland #3, it also received a Gridbee mixer to help maintain water quality and saw the addition of the SPRWS logo for the first time.

With the completion of Highland #3, both of these key structures will be fully refreshed and better equipped to serve the Saint Paul community for decades to come. These projects reflect SPRWS's ongoing dedication to smart infrastructure investment and long-term planning to ensure reliable service and quality water for our customers.

KOU VANG RETIRES AFTER 39 YEARS OF SERVICE

Kou Vang has retired from the water utility after 39 years of service as of June 30.

Kou started his career with the utility in 1986 as a clerk typist, which he worked at until he earned a promotion to water utility tech I in 1993. That same year, he was promoted to a civil engineer I. In 1995, he was promoted to a civil engineer II and two years later became a civil engineer III.

In 2004, he was promoted to a civil engineer IV, the title from he which he retired this year.

Congratulations to Kou on his many years of service and his retirement!



Kou Vang



Kou Vang, right, inspects work on the McKnight standpipe in 2009 with Bill Tschida, left.

Staff Take on New Roles in Distribution



Jacob Masiello



Ty Vidal



Joe Garcia



Biz McAllister

Staff are taking on new roles at the water utility.

In distribution the following promotions have taken place:

Jacob Masiello and Ty Vidal now hold the title water distribution supervisor II.

Joe Garcia and Biz McAllister now hold the title water distribution supervisor III.

Congratulations to everyone on the recognition of their hard work.