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Pipeline Express

To provide high-quality water and exceptional services to the people and communities we support

July 10, 2026

Continuing to Work Toward Drinking Water Excellence Through the Partnership for Safe Water

by Jeremy Erickson and Steve Nystrom

SPRWS has long been committed to producing high-quality drinking water that goes above and beyond regulatory requirements. One benchmark used to measure and improve our performance is the American Water Works Association's Partnership for Safe Water. This voluntary program assists drinking water utilities with self-assessments and optimization efforts aimed at continually improving performance.

The Partnership includes the Treatment Plant Optimization Program (Production Partnership) and the Distribution System Optimization Program (Distribution Partnership) and is broken into four phases: Commitment (Phase I), Baseline Data Collection (Phase II), Self-Assessment (Phase III), and Optimized System (Phase IV). SPRWS is a proud participant in both programs and continues to pursue opportunities for improvement.

Production Division Continues to Maintain Phase IV Excellence While Navigating New Treatment Processes

Last year, SPRWS celebrated significant Partnership milestones, including 25 years of maintaining Phase III status (Director's Award) and 10 years of maintaining Phase IV status (President's Award).
To achieve and maintain Phase IV status, SPRWS has:

- Proactively monitored source water quality;
- Optimized clarification through effective coagulation, flocculation, and solids management;
- Optimized filter performance through continuous monitoring and maintaining low filter turbidity; and
- Pursued continuous treatment improvement through data-driven decision making, preventative maintenance, and a culture of operational excellence.

As SPRWS celebrated its 26th and 11th respective anniversaries in the Partnership, the utility also marked another milestone: the first year of drinking water production from the upgraded treatment plant.

The plant modernization included significant process changes, including a new lime slaking system, replacement of individual coagulation, flocculation, and settling units with solids contact clarifiers, and the addition of recarbonation and ozonation basins. While these improvements enhance treatment capabilities, they also require operators to learn and optimize new processes and technologies.

To support that effort, operations staff have been working closely with laboratory staff to perform many of the same chemistry studies that helped SPRWS first achieve Phase IV status 11 years ago. The extensive datasets developed through previous Partnership self-assessments continue to provide valuable guidance as staff optimize operations at the upgraded facility.

Distribution Division Continues Progress Toward Phase IV Compliance

On the distribution side, SPRWS has achieved Phase III status in the Partnership for Safe Water's Distribution System Optimization Program. This achievement reflects the completion of a comprehensive system self-assessment and implementation of measures designed to enhance water quality and system performance.

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Partnership for Safe Water

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Examples of improvements resulting from the Partnership process include the installation of smart hydrants that monitor system pressure and a chlorine residual analysis that led to revised flushing practices, improving water quality throughout the distribution system.

SPRWS is currently working toward Phase IV status in the Distribution Partnership, with a goal of achieving that milestone by 2032. Approximately 30 optimization items remain to be completed.

Several ongoing initiatives will help advance SPRWS toward Phase IV compliance, including backup generators at pump stations, a system-wide pressure monitoring program, and utility benchmarking efforts. These projects are being carried out by engineering, administration, and other teams throughout the utility, demonstrating that success in the Partnership requires organization-wide collaboration.

While the Partnership for Safe Water focuses on treatment and distribution performance, achieving these milestones takes the work of employees across SPRWS. Whether operating the treatment plant, collecting and analyzing water quality data, maintaining infrastructure, managing projects, or supporting daily operations, employees throughout the utility contribute to our commitment to excellence.

As SPRWS continues optimizing the new treatment plant and progressing toward Phase IV status in the Distribution Partnership, that shared commitment will help ensure we continue providing high-quality drinking water to the communities we serve.

Suzanna Neri Joins Water Quality Lab

Suzanna Neri

As a Water Laboratory Technician I, **Suzanna Neri's** primary responsibility is collecting water samples from locations throughout the distribution system, including pump stations, grocery stores, and gas stations. She brings the samples back to the laboratory to test for bacteria as part of the Minnesota Department of Health's Total Coliform Rule. She also performs bacteria testing on temporary water mains at construction sites to help ensure water quality before they are placed into service.
Suzanna graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth two months ago with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and minors in Environmental Engineering and Mathematics. Outside of work, she enjoys crafting and sewing quilts. She also spends time with her two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Maggie and Tucker.

Staff Earn Promotions

Mike Hiveley

Allison Bruhn

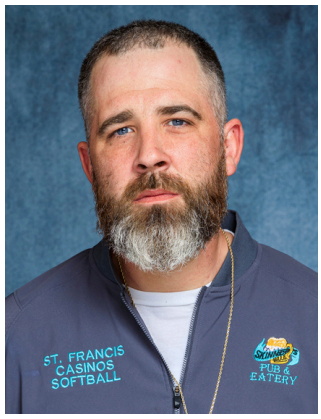
Emma Durian

Miguel Gruen

Ko Sia Vang

Cole Finnegan

Sam Bartz



Colin Novak

Staff recently earned promotions within the water utility.

Mike Hiveley and Allison Bruhn are now water utility technician III.

Emma Durian and Miguel Gruen are now GIS Specialist II.

Ko Sia Vang is now an office assistant III.

Cole Finnegan, Sam Bartz, and Colin Novak are now water system worker II.

SPRWS FAMILIES

Grab your blankets, bring your family, and join SPRWS for a fun day at Carver Lake Park and Beach! NOTE: This is a change from Harriet Island, which is not available.
You'll enjoy great company and you can come and go as time allows. Please RSVP with Will Menkhaus if you plan to attend.

July 15

4:30 p.m - 7:30 p.m

Carver Lake Park and Beach
3175 Century Ave S, Woodbury, MN 55125

SPRWS

Communications Team Learns About Meters

The communications team took a few hours with Joe Tronson to learn more about water meters, registers, and water shut off/on points to better familiarize themselves with how they work

Above, Xee Lee takes direction from Joe Tronson while working on a meter register.

Internal Promotional Posting Closes July 13

The utility has an internal job posting for a customer service rep in the call center

The job is posted on stpaul.gov/jobs and needs to be applied for online by the midnight on July 13.