

**New staffers
hired**

**Employees earn
promotions**

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*Our mission is to provide reliable,
quality water and services
at a reasonable cost.*

The Pipeline Express

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GM Corner

By Steve Schneider

Construction season winds down; racial equity efforts appreciated

We are winding down another construction season here at SPRWS and we have, once again, completed an appreciable amount of infrastructure replacement and routine system maintenance. I want to express my appreciation to our construction and engineering staff for ensuring all of this work was accomplished during the all too short Minnesota summer.

Another initiative that is also being addressed in collaboration with the Mayor's office that you are aware of is the Racial Equity Initiative. This effort began late in 2014 and is a city-wide effort whose goal is to ensure that race does not predetermine opportunities in education, employment, housing, health and safety. The mayor set a goal of training all supervisors and managers by the end of 2015 and all employees by the end of 2017. We are also looking at our work practices to ensure that we are looking at everything we do through this lens and make sure we don't treat our customers differently based on race or any other reason.

We have met with a group of employees that deal with our external customers on a regular basis during their work day and have identified a few areas we need to look at further. I want to thank that group for agreeing to meet and have the open dialogue so that we can enact changes where they are necessary. We are also going to work with HR to explore how we can more effectively get the word out on employment opportunities to schools and other community groups so that our eligible lists are more reflective of the communities that we serve. If you are interested in assisting in this effort, feel free to contact Racquel Smrz for more information.

Thanks again for the great work this summer and I look forward to planning for a great 2016!

Getting ESS training



Ron Reeves, supply system supervisor, and Dennis Rosemark, management assistant, access the online training for Employee Self Service. Several employees who work in the field and do not have regular access to a PC came in for training on ESS on Monday and Tuesday, August 21 - 22. Due to technical issues with the ESS program, if you have not yet taken the online training, human resources is asking staff to postpone the training until those issues have been resolved. Right now, staff can log on to all aspects of ESS except the My Documents section, which houses the employee's pay stub information.

Three staffers to present at MN AWWA conference in Duluth

Renee Huset and Rich Rowland, water utility techs, and Rich Hibbard, civil engineer, will be presenting at the Minnesota Section of the American Water Works Association (MN AWWA) conference.

Huset and Rowland will be presenting a talk on the evolution of data as it pertains to our mapping systems. The presentation will cover our move from hand-drawn maps to CAD drawings and GIS maps. It will also touch on how we now have online maps for our contractors and Gopher State One Call locators

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Three employees to present at MN AWWA conference

Topics include data evolution on our maps plus a plan to meet water main replacement needs

[MN AWWA continued from page 1](#)

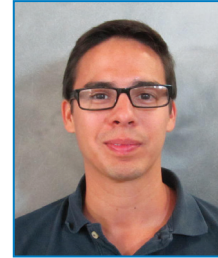
and how the crews have GIS maps on their laptops in their trucks instead of plat maps. The overview will provide a glimpse into how the data from the maps are integrated into our other programs such as CMMS, CIS, and Documentum. And reflect on how we are using GPS to better improve the accuracy of our maps.

Hibbard will be presenting along with Kristofer Knutson of Moorhead Public Services. The two have looked at data regarding the aging infrastructure and the increasing maintenance costs at the two utilities. The two of them will present practical lessons learned and detail the process of developing a plan to meet specific water main replacement needs. This includes analyzing the age of distribution system assets and recommending a sustainable level of replacement over the next 30 years. The plan serves as invaluable tool for identifying and budgeting specific capital improvement projects from year to year and is expected to reduce failures in the system over the next decade.

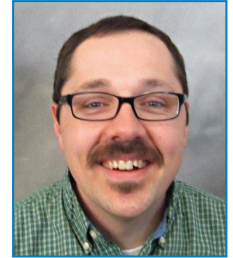
These are but two sets of speakers for the conference, which is held Sept. 15 – 18 in Duluth. The MN AWWA conference offers an opportunity for water utility employees to share ideas and knowledge with other water professionals throughout the state.



Renee Huset



Rich Rowland



Rich Hibbard

“At these conferences, our employees are looked to as leaders and experts,” said Dave Wagner, engineering division manager. “When our employees are presenters, it reflects positively on the water utility as whole.”

As one of the largest water utilities in the state, SPRWS has a history of being leaders at the MN AWWA conference over the years. Steve Schneider, general manager, is the past chair of the MN AWWA. Ben Feldman, civil engineer, is the assistant secretary-treasurer.

If you are going to the conference, the Hibbard presentation takes place at 1 p.m. and the Huset/Rowland presentation takes place at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 17.

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, you can watch Pete Davis, Brian Finnegan, Pete Hollis, and Mike Bailey compete in pipe tapping. And watch Bob Meyer, Jim Duffy, and Jeremy Wry compete in hydrant hysteria.

SPRWS hires four new employees



Jeremy Erickson



Jessica Bales



Chad Larsen



Holly Overton

The water utility hired four new employees in August.

On Monday, August 17, Jeremy Erickson started as a water quality specialist I, working in the water treatment plant.

On Monday, August 24, Jessica Bales began as an office assistant II, working in meter operations.

Chad Larsen began as a water utility tech I in the damage prevention unit.

Holly Overton began work as a customer service representative in the call center.

Please welcome all of our new employees to the water utility!

Employees earn promotions



Justine Roe



Sandy Hernandez

Justine Roe and Sandy Hernandez earned promotions as of Monday, August 24. Roe is now a water quality specialist III.

Hernandez is now the storeroom supervisor.

Congratulations to them both!