

GM Corner

Keeping the public trust in our water supply

By Steve Schneider

There has not been a time in my career here at SPRWS that I have been more pleased with how we operate our utility with professionalism, competence and an overall sense of public service than the past few weeks. The situation in Flint, Michigan, has resulted in the near total destruction of the public trust of the drinking water in that community. This has caused us to look inward and review our programs with regards to the EPA Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). I am pleased to see how our regulatory compliance, corrosion control strategy, along with our educational and notification protocols provides our customers with reliable, quality drinking water. I want to thank each of you for doing your part in that success.

SPRWS is in full compliance with the LCR and all applicable water quality regulations. We have water plant operators monitoring our water treatment 24/7 to ensure that we provide drinking water that is not corrosive. Our water quality group is constantly performing tests to ensure our award winning plant produces water that continues to be in regulatory compliance. We also provide many resources, including complimentary water tests, for those customers that still have lead water services and offer recommendations they can use to minimize their exposure.

As you have undoubtedly heard me say in the past, public trust is paramount to our success here at SPRWS. This is true of their trust in the water quality, the efficiency with which we perform our jobs and the trust that we are able to invest wisely to ensure a successful future of our system. As we watch the situation unfold in Flint, we can see what can happen if the public trust in drinking water is lost.

SPRWS in the news



Jim Bode, water production manager, interviews for Heather Brown's "Good Question" segment from WCCO TV on January 20. Bode has interviewed with WCCO, FOX 9 TV, Minnesota Public Radio, and the Pioneer Press. Steve Schneider appeared in the Star Tribune. Bode and Schneider have been discussing the water quality issues around lead in drinking water in light of the problems in Flint, Michigan. Employees have been sent information on lead in drinking water by Schneider via email so that they can be more aware of what SPRWS does to prevent lead from leaching into SPRWS' drinking water.

Emerging leaders sought

Do you have what it takes to be an emerging leader? Are you interested in taking a role in influencing organizational culture and effectiveness across city departments?

The Emerging Leaders Academy challenges participants to build upon their strengths and to develop knowledge and skills to improve efficiency and quality of services provided by the city of Saint Paul. The program will focus on areas such as: communication, collaboration and cross-departmental teamwork, project management, innovation tools and techniques, leadership, change, diversity, and inclusion.

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Emerging leaders sought

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If this sounds like you, get more information or an application form from Lisa McKeown, in human resources at Lisa.McKeown@ci.stpaul.mn.us or from Matt Larson, innovation office at Matt.Larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Applications are due by 4:30 p.m. on February 11 and require supervisor approval. You must commit to 1 ½ days per month, plus about 15 percent of your work week for activities related to the program.

Water meter technician internal job posted

Deadline for application is Feb. 15;
Three-hour exam set for Feb. 17

The utility has an internal job posting for the position of water meter technician.

Successful candidates must have graduated from high school or have a GED and one year of basic mechanical and/or plumbing experience. A valid Minnesota Class D driver's license is also required.

A water meter technician is responsible for advanced level bench and field work installing, repairing, testing, and replacing water meters in residential and commercial properties in our service area.

To qualify, candidates must submit their job application online at www.stpaul.gov/jobs, including answers to the supplemental questions.

There will also be a three-hour examination on Wednesday, February 17 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. in rooms 40 A & B in the city hall basement.

This exam consists of questions designed to assess training and experience, mechanical aptitude, problem solving ability, customer service ability, and other areas related to the duties performed by a water meter technician.

The city of Saint Paul is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Women, persons of color, members of the LGBT community, and individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Sandy Kimbrough at 651-266-6510 or email her at jobs@stpaul.gov.

The job posting closes at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 15.

Employees promoted

Joe Tronson and Steve Nystrom were recently promoted.

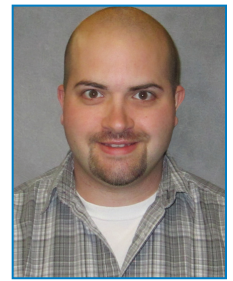
Joe was a water meter technician and is now a meter tech. lead worker. His first day as a lead worker was December 26, 2015.

Steve was a water utility tech I and is now a water utility tech II. His first day as a water utility tech II was January 5, 2016.

Congratulations to both Joe and Steve!



Joe Tronson



Steve Nystrom

Water main break on campus



Pete Hollis, water system worker, cuts through the asphalt to open up the hole where a 42-inch pipe lies.

The pipe sprung a leak, seen at left. The pipe is located on Water Works Road, along Rice Street, right in front of the water utility. Water was shut off to the water utility for several hours on January 19 to repair the leak.