

GM Corner

2017 and beyond may see changes to water industry

By Steve Schneider

Here at SPRWS we are preparing for 2017. We have a long term capital plan and a sound operation and maintenance program that has served us well for many years. That being said, we are always looking toward the future to stay in front of any pending regulatory changes or other legislative items that may impact how we need to operate the utility. This year and beyond may pose some challenges in that regard.

We have a new President and different majority and leadership in both bodies of the legislative branch following the elections last November. What will this mean for the drinking water industry? As in all political areas, there are already several differing opinions on this issue. As always, we will use our resources at the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) and the American Water Works Association (AWWA) to keep on top of issues as they arise. We closely monitor the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine what regulatory modifications may be proposed and the federal budgeting process to ensure that one of our major funding sources (Drinking Water State Revolving Fund) continues to be funded at current levels.

SPRWS has supported AMWA and AWWA and many staff members have been involved at the local, state and federal level of these organizations. They provide us valuable tools to stay informed and to remain ready to meet the challenges and changes that may come up in the

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Pumping out the reservoir



Kevin Romero and Jon Beck, water utility workers, pump water from the north finished water reservoir at McCarrons. The reservoir is being emptied in order for work to be done inside, including cleaning, and moving the chemical feed point and sampling point location. The reservoir was last open about 10 years ago in conjunction with the installation of the granulated activated carbon filters.

Don't lose your FSA money

Make sure you get reimbursed for all of the money you put into your 2016 day care and/or medical flexible spending account(s). You will lose any money remaining in your 2016 FSA account you have not claimed by the end of the day on Feb. 15.

You can find the reimbursement form at www.benefitready.com. Select the knowledge base icon, go to forms, and select the Medical/HRA/Dependent Care Reimbursement Claim Form.

Submit it by fax at 612-335-9217 or email at flex@cielostar.com.

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Three customer service reps retire within a few weeks



Jackie Carey shows off the plaque commemorating her retirement from the utility with her boss Jim Bode at a reception in her honor on Jan. 19.



Kou Vang, right, presents Kathie Ferdig with her retirement plaque at a reception in her honor on Jan. 26.



Kristine Callinan

Three customer service representatives left the water utility last month, taking with them more than a hundred years of experience, as each of them had more than 30 years at the water utility.

Kristine Callinan started work at the water utility as a temporary accounting machine operator I in October of 1979. She began work as a certified employee in August of 1982. In 1986 there was a change in title to water billing operator. She was promoted to an accounting clerk I in 1994 and to a clerk III in 2006. Changes to her title made her an office assistant III in 2007. She earned a promotion to customer service representative in 2008, and it is the posi-

tion from which she retires. Her last day in the office was January 20.

Kathie Ferdig started with the water utility in 1982 as a clerk typist II. She held the provisional title of cashier in 1989. Later that year, she was promoted to a customer service representative. For many years she held two titles: clerk typist II and customer service representative. She retires from the utility as a customer service representative. Her last day in the office was January 31.

Jackie Carey started working for the water utility as a clerk typist I in 1985. She held that title until she was promoted to a customer service representative in 1989. That is title from which she retires after nearly 32 years of service. Her last day in the office was January 19.

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next few years. However, we cannot forget that we exist to serve our customers and to meet our mission. Challenges often bring about higher cost of providing services. Staying ahead of the curve keeps us informed and able to meet new items as effectively as possible, allowing us to provide our water and services at a reasonable cost.

Thank you to all SPRWS employees who are active in AWWA and AMWA!

Don't lose your FSA money

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To determine your balance, go to www.wealthcareadmin.com and select the participant portal to login. Questions? Contact CelioStar at 612-436-2778.

Remember, there will be two balances. The flexible spending money you set aside in 2016 must have been spent in 2016 and claimed by midnight Feb. 15, 2017. The website abbreviates that balance FSA.

The website lists the health account money you accrue from Healthy St. Paul as HRP. This money rolls over each year and does not need to be spent or claimed annually. If you have questions, call CelioStar at 612-436-2778.