

Cleaning out the zebra mussels



Tom Longendyke, Kevin Romero, and Mike Sherman, all water utility workers, remove zebra mussels from the canal between Pleasant Lake and Sucker Lake in Sucker Park on Oct. 17.

What do you know about the utility? SPRWS by the numbers

What do you know about the water utility and its employees?

If you look at the numbers, there is a lot to know. Racquel Vaske, human resources, presented an overview of the utility at the October 10 Board of Water Commissioners meeting.

- 252 current employees
- 19 of which are seasonal temporary
- 16 active unions
- 35% of employees are in Tri-Council
- 64% of employees are white males
- 21% are females
- 20% are minorities
- Gender wage gap: 0.026%
- Race wage gap: 4.83%

Numbers continued on page 2

Managers' Corner Distribution reorganizes for the winter

By Brad Eilts

The distribution division manager and assistant distribution division manager have historically shared management responsibilities. These responsibilities will be more defined when distribution switches to the winter lineup on November 27.

Brad Eilts will manage the distribution capital program, preventative maintenance program, yard, warehouse, and garage. There will be a change in how capital work will be assigned this winter. One crew will be responsible for the installation of all hydrants, valves, and all other work required to be completed before the 2018 paving projects start next spring.

Additional resources will be dedicated to the preventative maintenance program next summer. The preventative maintenance program will be separated from other construction staff in 2018. This will provide consistent staffing that will allow SPRWS to meet the goals of the preventative maintenance program. Goals include inspecting all hydrants, completing 45 uni-directional flushing routes, and exercising 20 percent of large valves in the distribution system every year.

Ben Feldman will manage operations and maintenance of the distribution division. This will include dispatch, restoration, and reactive maintenance. Five crews will be assigned this winter to reactive maintenance that will include main breaks, hydrant replacement, hydrant repairs, service leaks, copper service broken tees, and stop box repairs, along with any other issues that need to be addressed.

Manager's Corner continued on page 2

SPRWS by the numbers

Numbers continued from page 1

- 38% of employees live in our service area
- 26% of employees live in Saint Paul
- Average employee age: 45 years old
- 69 employees are 55+
- 48 employees fall under the Rule of 90, of which 17 are currently able to retire at any point
- 5.3% voluntary turnover over the last 3 years
- 28 employees retired in the last 3 years at an average age of 60.
- Bill Tschida- 46 years of service- has been working longer than 121 of our employees have even been alive.
- 63 current employees were hired in the last 3 years
- Average years of service: 13 years

Distribution division reorganizes for winter

Manager's Corner continued from page 1

Planning for staffing of winter crews has begun. Distribution employees will be met with individually by title seniority to explain work to be completed by each crew and which crews have openings. The distribution staff budget for 2018 is the same as 2017 and will require some winter layoffs. Requests for voluntary layoff for the winter season can be made during these meetings.

A moment of levity



Nathan Pearl, water utility worker, makes Carl Sandwick, heavy equipment operator, laugh during a moment of levity in the work day on Oct. 19. Photo by Brandon D'Agostino, water utility worker.

Counting our inventory



Lori Lee and Solomon Alemu, accountants, take a tally of the number of copper coils in the warehouse during inventory on Oct. 20.

Utility seeks transfer/reduction to water utility technician I spot

The utility is seeking city employees who are interested in a transfer or reduction to a water utility technician I to work in the agreements unit.

To be qualified for a transfer or reduction to this position, applicants must currently hold a title that has a maximum rate of pay that is higher than the maximum rate of pay for a water utility technician I (\$28.51).

Requirements:

Ten college semester credits, including at least six semester credits of technical classes. Technical classes include: math, engineering, GIS, CAD, public works administration, and technical/business writing. Technical/business writing is limited to four semester credits. No substitution of experience for credits.

Successful applicants must possess and maintain a valid class D driver's license, or equivalent out-of-state driver's license. The driver's license must have no suspensions or revocations for driving-related offenses within the two-year period prior to the date of appointment. Suspensions for parking-related offenses are excluded.

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Racquel Vaske by the end of day, Monday, October 30, so that staff can determine if you are qualified for a transfer/reduction.