



Pipeline Express

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June 12, 2026

SPRWS Showcases National Leadership During U.S. Water Alliance Visit



Members of the US Water Alliance and staff from SPRWS, CDM Smith, and Zan Associates at a lead replacement location as part of the tour of SPRWS work held on June 2. The group also toured the plant on June 3.

More than 50 water professionals from across the country visited Saint Paul on June 2-3 as part of a national meeting of the U.S. Water Alliance. Participants from cities including Seattle, Baltimore, San Antonio, Chicago, and Milwaukee have been collaborating for two years on Alliance taskforce pillars: water affordability, workforce development, and community engagement. Saint Paul was selected as the host city because of the significant progress being made in all three of these pillars over the last few years at SPRWS.

On June 2, visitors toured an active Lead Free SPRWS lead service line replacement project and learned about the various components of the project including community outreach efforts, GIS mapping systems, program funding, and the Utility Trainee Program.

The event gave attendees a firsthand look at how SPRWS is thoughtfully approaching projects and addressing challenges facing water utilities across the nation.

"The Alliance members were very impressed with the site visit and the work SPRWS has accomplished over the past several years around lead," said General Manager Racquel Vaske. "It was wonderful to highlight the top-notch construction work our teams conduct as well as the support teams that help bring it all together." Vaske also praised the staff who helped organize the event.

"The team did a wonderful job coordinating the site and the speakers," she said. "The site, was thoughtfully designed to offer a full picture of what it takes to bring projects like this to life. The passion for this work was evident with each speaker!"

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The following day, participants had the opportunity to tour the water treatment plant. The US Water Alliance also coordinated a team of videographers to capture stories about the Utility Trainee Program. More than 10 employees participated, including current trainees Saivon Parker, Randy Schotz, and Gustavo Luis Luis, and program leaders Mike Knutson, Sandy Kimbrough, and Josh Jonas. Interviewees discussed how the program operates, the support provided to trainees, and the factors that have contributed to its success.

The Alliance plans to use the video to highlight the Utility Trainee Program nationally. The program has already served as a model for similar workforce initiatives in many utilities. A special thank you goes to the many employees who helped prepare sites, coordinate logistics, host tours, answer questions, share their expertise, and represent SPRWS throughout the visit. The professionalism, knowledge, and enthusiasm displayed by staff helped make the event a success and left a lasting impression on visitors from across the country.



Saivon Parker, water utility trainee, is interviewed about the trainee program as part of a professional video being made about the program to highlight SPRWS and be used to promote the development of similar programs through the members of the US Water Alliance, where Seattle and Coumbus, Ohio, have already initiated programs in their communities. The video featured several SPRWS staff and was filmed on site on June 3.



Rachel McCarty and Jacob Pauna answer questions from the US Water Alliance about the GIS mapping application that shows all of the lead service line sites and houses all of the information about each site within the app on June 2.



Mike Knutson and Kevin Romero answer questions about the water utility trainee program for members of the US swater Alliance on June 2.



Members of the US Water Alliance view the lead replacement site on June 2.



Brent Marsolek explains the funding process for the Lead Free SPRWS program for members of the US Water Alliance on June 2 on Ivy Street in Saint Paul.

Interns Share Skills with Water Utility



Ellie Boyer



Xee Lee



Khalid Saleh



Keng Pheng Vang

Saint Paul Regional Water Services is pleased to welcome several new interns who are sharing their skills across the organization this summer.

Ellie Boyer is serving as a Safety and Security Intern, supporting training initiatives, evaluating the use and effectiveness of personal protective equipment (PPE), and assisting with onsite evaluations. A Minnesota outdoor enthusiast, Ellie enjoys spending time in nature and relaxing with crochet projects.

Xee Lee has joined SPRWS as a Capital City Intern with the Marketing and PR team. In this role, Xee will help create social media content, develop public information materials, and represent SPRWS at community events. Outside of work, Xee enjoys baking and playing a variety of musical instruments.

Khalid Saleh is an Engineering Service Desk Intern who assists the Engineering team with project work and reducing backlogs. Outside the office, Khalid enjoys traveling and staying active through sports.

Keng Pheng Vang has joined the IS Department as an IS Intern. Keng supports information services operations by assisting with device support, workstation services, user support, and help desk activities. When not working, he enjoys making music and playing volleyball.

Civil Engineer III Sought

The City of Saint Paul Regional Water Services is hiring a Civil Engineer III to join our Project Engineering team. Candidates hired into this role will be involved in a wide range of projects that support the supply, treatment, storage, and distribution of drinking water throughout the utility system. The position closes at midnight on June 17 and must be applied for online at stpaul.gov/jobs.

New Staff and Interns Tour Plant



Eric Noe, civil engineer, and project manager of the plant project, gives a tour to new staff and interns on June 2. The group started the tour in the new lime building, shown here.

Afeez Ibrahim Starts as New Public Service Manager



Afeez Ibrahim

SPRWS welcomes Afeez Ibrahim as the Public Service Manager. In this role, Afeez oversees safety and security, facilities maintenance, and facilities operations, helping ensure that SPRWS facilities remain safe, secure, and operating efficiently for employees and customers alike.

As Public Service Manager, Afeez will work closely with teams across the utility to support day-to-day operations, coordinate facility needs, and strengthen safety and security practices throughout the organization.

Outside of work, Afeez is a passionate soccer fan and proudly supports Arsenal Football Club. He is already celebrating the team's 2026 Premier League championship and enjoys following the club's success throughout the season.