

New rail car purchased



The utility purchased a new Trackmaster for moving rail road cars into the chemical building from the rail road tracks. Heavy equipment operators spent the day on Nov. 7 training on driving the new vehicle and practicing hooking up to and moving an empty chlorine rail car, as seen in the image above.

Use vacation hours over 120 or risk losing them

If you have quite a few vacation hours still on the books, you might want to start planning when you are going to use those hours before it gets too late in the year. Don't wait until the last minute to try to use your vacation hours.

You can carry over 120 hours of vacation into the next year, but anything over that amount will go back to the city. You will effectively lose that time off.

Take a look at your remaining vacation days in TASS to see if you will have more than 120 hours left to use at the end of this year.

Contact Sandy or Becky for your most up-to-date vacation hours or with questions. Any hours above 120 will be lost on Jan. 1, 2025, if they aren't used by Dec. 31, 2024.

Lead service line inventory and notifications are out

The Minnesota Department of Health recently mandated that all water utilities in the state provide an inventory of all lead, unknown, and galvanized pipe within in their water systems to meet new EPA requirements under the updated Lead and Copper Rule. This will be an annual effort moving forward.

Each year, we will update and share our inventory with the MDH. They'll make this information available on a state-wide website, and we're proud to note that our up-to-date inventory is already accessible on our website and has been for several years.

As part of this annual effort, customers with lead or unknown materials in their service lines will be notified by mail to ensure they're informed and empowered to take any necessary steps.

This year those letters went out at the end of October. These efforts have led to an increase in requests for lead testing, as well as more inquiries from customers looking to learn more about water quality.

We've been actively working to reduce lead service lines in the right of way since the 1980s, and with new grant funding available since 2022, we've expanded our program to replace

lead service lines in private property as well.

Our team is committed to continuing this important work to improve water and service quality for our community!

Special thanks to Brent Marsolek and the lead team, Matt Dalrymple and the lead notification team, Renee Huset in maps and records, Elena Iliarski for her help with CIS, and Derek Olson in customer service for their work in getting the inventory completed and the letters out to our customers. And of course, everyone who answered calls once the letters were delivered.

AMI underway in conjunction with meter register replacement

For the past few years, the utility has been working to implement Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), a cutting-edge technology that allows us to collect accurate, near real-time data on water usage. This system not only improves billing accuracy but also enhances our ability to detect leaks, monitor water resource management, and identify irregular usage patterns. With AMI, we can assist customers more effectively by pinpointing high water usage and potential leaks, as well as supporting more frequent and accurate billing cycles.

AMI technology collects data from the customer's water meter, encrypts it, and transmits it via a signal to a collector device. The utility receives this data at regular intervals, enabling us to track usage in near real-time.

To date, SPRWS has installed 22 collector devices in various locations, including water towers, high-rise buildings, and emergency siren poles. As a result, we are now receiving consistent meter reads from 22,000 accounts.

This AMI deployment is being carried out in conjunction with our water meter register replacement project. As part of this initiative, we are replacing aging water meter registers that are approaching the end of their lifecycle. However, instead of simply replacing them with similar models, we are relocating the remote (or "box") to the exterior of the structure. This change will enhance the signal range from the water meter, enabling us to expand the number of accounts that can be read by the AMI system.

We expect to have AMI fully implemented by 2030, with 99% of our accounts being monitored through this advanced system.

The combined budget for the AMI Project and the Register Replacement Project is \$21 million, which will be financed through revenue as outlined in our 10-year capital improvement plan.

Chaple and pipebursting crews featured in magazine



Graeme Chaple and the pipebursting crews were featured in the November issue of Municipal Sewer and Water discussing using in-house staff to replace water main by the pipebusting method. SPRWS used an outside contractor for about 9 years before moving the process in house. Read the whole article for more information www.mswwmag.com/ezine/2024/11.

Utility trainees join meter operations office staff

Water utility trainees Sabirah Aleem and Maddy Tusler are working in the meter operations office as of November 2.



Sabirah Aleem



Maddy Tusler

The two are reporting to Gayle Moser.