



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District *of* Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Provides Immediate Clean-up and Seeks Long Term Solution at Veterans Park

At approximately 8 p.m. on Sunday, May 11, a junction shaft interceptor for the Deep Tunnel system erupted due to pressure created by stormwater overwhelming the sewer system. An extreme rain event discharging 1.8 inches in an hour timeframe Sunday night inundated the sewer system. This water displaced air quicker than the air could be evacuated causing a pressure build up resulting in an eruption of dirt and rock. This type of event is called a transient event.

This eruption evacuated a 30 foot diameter shaft fifteen feet deep. Debris settled in the surrounding area and parking lots next door. Water spewed from the shaft causing damage to the basement level of the adjacent building. The shaft is in the corner of Veterans Park in Calumet City, IL. Fortunately, nobody was injured and damage was minimal.

The MWRD mobilized a construction crew immediately and secured the perimeter. The MWRD is assessing the situation to determine the cause and identify an action plan. The site is secured, and the clean-up is underway. Site clean-up will be immediate but investigating the cause and implementing a solution to prevent future events will take several months.

The Deep Tunnel system is a complex hydraulic system. The transient events are similar to hydraulic hammering experienced in water delivery systems. The MWRD has had success in the past correcting transient events through operating guidelines and improving shaft ventilation systems. In 2015, the Thornton Reservoir will be placed in service. The reservoir will act as a very large surge suppression tank for the entire system. This should significantly reduce these transient events.

The associated sewer structures are in good shape. The site is expected to carry upcoming rain events without issue. The open shaft will provide needed venting of system air without incident.

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Our Water Environment: **Take it personally**

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.