



# Press Release

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## Rotary Club of Naperville praises MWRD officials for broadening water treatment education to India



*(From L to R): MWRD employees Syama Pappu and Hitesh Shah, International Service Director of the Rotary Club of Naperville Rachel Ossyra, MWRD retiree Dr. Prakash Tata, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, and MWRD retiree Mohamedusman Baki were presented with the Paul Harris Award for their wastewater education in India.*

The Rotary Club of Naperville honored Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Great Chicago (MWRD) Commissioner Frank Avila along with a team of current and retired MWRD engineers and plant managers with the Paul Harris Award.

The Paul Harris Award is given to citizens who make a positive impact on others' lives, while representing the club's motto of "service before self." It is considered the Rotary Club's highest honor bestowed to citizens. The MWRD team was presented with Paul Harris awards for their outreach in educating communities in India on wastewater treatment. The team embarked on a trip sponsored and coordinated by the Rotary Club of Naperville in partnership with Bharathi Theertha, a non-profit organization that pursues to improve the quality of life in impoverished areas of India and the United States. The group held workshops that

educated citizens on the proper procedures when handling sewage and water treatment.

"We were happy to receive this honor and thank the Rotary Club of Naperville for the recognition," said MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila. "The Great Lakes is home to about 20 percent of the planet's freshwater, and serving as a steward of that valuable resource make us a leading and recognized agency across the globe, but part of that commitment also comes with a responsibility to educate others on improving the conditions of our water environment. We are glad to share our knowledge and learn how India adopts many best management practices in water treatment with a growing population."

Commissioner Avila, who also serves as MWRD chairman of Finance, was joined by retired assistant director of MWRD's Monitoring and Research Department Dr. Prakasam Tata. Dr. Tata recruited Hitesh Shah, managing engineer for the John E. Egan Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) in Schaumburg; Syama Pappu, MWRD electrical engineer and Mohamedusman Baki, retired plant manager of the Kirie WRP in Des Plaines.

Officials from MWRD worked with officials at local water treatments plants in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to educate them on correct procedures when handling wastewater. The MWRD's visit occurred at a time when India is experiencing a rise in new water treatment plants. Both the MWRD and the trip's organizers hope the training and workshops held in India will lead to positive results with the area's water.

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**Recovering Resources, Transforming Water**

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*