



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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For immediate release

May 4, 2017

## IWEA recognizes MWRD for protecting the public's water quality

The Illinois Water Environment Association (IWEA) and Water Environment Federation (WEF) presented two top honors to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) as water industry leaders from across the state gathered for annual meetings in Springfield.

MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos was presented the Public Official Award, while the Laboratory Analyst Award was given to MWRD Assistant Director of Monitoring and Research Donna Coolidge from WEF.

The Public Official Award is given annually to a public official who has made a documented significant contribution in the areas of clean water legislation, public policy, government service or another area of public prominence that resulted in improvements to the water environment.

Under her leadership, since being elected president in 2015 and joining the Board of Commissioners in 2009, President Spyropoulos has:

- sought to protect the region's natural resources and clean water supply;
- partnered with 129 communities, including Chicago to promote a more resilient region;
- commanded fiscal responsibility from the MWRD, bringing pension reform in line;
- promoted sustainability by driving the MWRD's ambitious plan for energy neutrality and championing green infrastructure projects and the distribution of more than 120,000 free rain barrels;
- advanced the MWRD's resource recovery model to provide a return for the environment and taxpayers, including the launch of the world's largest nutrient recovery facility;
- and supported the MWRD's world renowned Tunnel and Reservoir Plan to mitigate flooding and water pollution in area waterways.



Officials with the MWRD's Monitoring and Research Department and MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos (second from right) participated in the Illinois Wastewater Professionals Conference in Springfield, where the president was bestowed the Public Official Award from the Illinois Water Environment Association.

"Thank you to the Illinois Water Environment Association for the honor of the Public Official Award," said President Spyropoulos. "I am humbled by the recognition. The 128 year history, the nearly 2000 employees and nine elected board of commissioners are what make the agency work, and I am proud to be part of the MWRD."

President Spyropoulos serves as chairman of the MWRD committees on Judiciary, Labor and Industrial Relations, and Pension, Human Resources and Civil Service. She also is vice chairman of the Ethics Committee and serves as a Trustee on the Pension Board.

The WEF Laboratory Analyst Excellence Award recognizes an individual for outstanding performance, professionalism and contributions to the water quality analyst profession. Donna Coolidge earned a BS degree in chemistry from Illinois State University and a master's degree in education from St. Xavier University. She started with the MWRD as a laboratory technician in 1984, working her way up through the chemist series to her (*continued*)

## IWEA recognizes MWRD for protecting the public's water quality *(continued)*



*Water Environment Federation Trustee Peter Vanrolleghem presents Donna Coolidge, MWRD assistant director of Monitoring and Research, with the Water Environment Federation's Illinois Water Environment Association's the Laboratory Analyst Award. Photo by Ted Denning-MWRD retiree.*



*Illinois Water Environment Association (IWEA) President Mark Termini passes the gavel to MWRD Managing Civil Engineer Dan Collins as president of the IWEA. Collins, retired from the MWRD in 2017. Photo by Ted Denning-MWRD retiree.*

current position of assistant director of the Monitoring and Research Department for the Analytical Laboratories Division. She has volunteered as a judge for the laboratory events for the WEF Operators Challenge and also assisted the lab committee with their workshop at WEFTEC 2015. Coolidge recently volunteered with the IWEA Lab Committee to present the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) workshop and Operators Lab Challenge at the IWEA conference this year. She is also a member of the Midwest Water Analysts Association and is on the Steering Committee.

The Illinois Wastewater Professionals Conference was held April 24-25 in Springfield. Operators, engineers, managers and scientists attended the joint annual conference of the Illinois Water Environment Association and the Illinois Association of Water Pollution Control Operators. Attendees could attend technical presentations, participate in hands-on workshops, visit 85 vendors, test their skills at the Operators Challenge, and network with friends and colleagues.

The MWRD will be well represented going forward as it was announced that former MWRD Managing Civil Engineer Dan Collins will be the incoming IWEA president. Despite his recent retirement from the MWRD, Collins will continue his dedication to protecting the state's water environment.

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In addition, several MWRD representatives provided presentations at the conference. These included:

- "Carbon and Phosphorus Mass Fluxes at the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant," Paramasivam Srinivasan, senior environmental research scientist.
- "Developing Bio-Waste Based Circular Economy in Illinois," Kuldeep Kumar, senior environmental soil scientist
- "Start Up and Optimization of the Anita Mox Side Stream Deammonification Process at the Egan WRP in Schaumburg, IL," Katarzyna (Kathy) Lai, principal engineer, Dongqi (Cindy) Qin, environmental research scientist, and Lou Storino, principal civil engineer
- "The Assessment and Regulatory-Compliant Management of Testing Waste," Cam Walker, site remediation specialist

"Congratulations to our award winners, President Spyropoulos, Donna Coolidge, Dan Collins and our many talented staff members who are introducing groundbreaking technology to improve our treatment process and make us a leader in the industry," said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita.

### **Recovering Resources, Transforming Water**

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