



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Value of water infrastructure on display during open houses



Senior Civil Engineer Brian Levy and his family joined MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore in welcoming visitors to the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant at the annual MWRD open houses. The event was a popular opportunity for MWRD staff to show their friends and families their workplace and invite them to learn about the water treatment process.

More than 250 curious and civic-minded water enthusiasts braved the blustery elements to tour the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) water reclamation plants (WRPs) to see how these critical facilities are really tested during an onslaught of rain.

MWRD staff engineers, scientists and treatment plant operators were on hand at the WRPs to answer questions from the public and promote the value of infrastructure in keeping with the Value of Water Campaign's national Infrastructure Week. Free buckets of MWRD compost were distributed to guests, as were oak tree saplings to help the MWRD in its efforts to restore the canopy and equip Cook County residents



(From L to R): M&O Deputy Director Brett Garelli, Commissioner Kari K. Steele, Administrative Specialist Nina Joiner and Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations Stephen Carmody welcomed visitors to the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant.

with a green infrastructure tool to manage stormwater and mitigate flooding.

"The MWRD gladly provides wastewater treatment services to residents and visitors alike throughout Cook County," said MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore. "The annual open houses at the treatment plants give District employees an opportunity to highlight the vital work they perform and showcase the infrastructure that protects our water environment."

Designed to promote the importance of maintaining and modernizing the nation's infrastructure, Infrastructure Week 2017 challenges policymakers and the public to address the challenges facing U.S. infrastructure, to move beyond short-term fixes and deferred maintenance, and to envision the innovative solutions, technologies, policies and investments that will improve America's infrastructure today and for the future. The MWRD is advancing those concepts (*continued*)

Value of water infrastructure on display during open houses *(continued)*



Visitors at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant learn how the MWRD is recovering resources and transforming water.

in long-term savings by working to become energy neutral by 2023 through its resource recovery program and various energy savings and reduction projects.

“The resource recovery and water transformation projects taking place at our plants each day are ensuring that our infrastructure is prepared for the future,” said MWRD Commissioner Kari K. Steele.

“We appreciate everyone’s participation at our annual open houses,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “It’s important for us to open our doors to the public so we keep them informed on how we protect the water environment that residents and visitors to Cook County count on each day.”

The tours highlight the needs for these intrinsic services that the MWRD provides and the public relies on. The MWRD has the capacity to treat more than three billion gallons of water each day, and the Stick-



Visitors at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant show off their saplings and compost.

ney WRP, at 1.44 billion gallons, is considered one of the world’s largest treatment plants of its kind. The MWRD’s seven plants provide excellent treatment for residential and industrial wastewater, serving 10.35 million people across 883 square miles in Cook County, covering Chicago and 128 communities.

Year round, private facility tours are offered for groups of up to 25 at the MWRD’s treatment plants and the Mainstream Pumping Station in Hodgkins, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All tours must be scheduled at least one month in advance to accommodate background checks and are open to adults and students in seventh grade or higher. Please contact the MWRD Office of Public Affairs for more information at (312) 751-6633 or email public.affairs@mwrld.org.

To learn more about the MWRD’s free oak tree sapling program, visit www.mwrld.org.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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