



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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UV disinfection facility at MWRD's O'Brien plant earns praise

Three awards were presented to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) for its role in implementing UV technology to improve water quality at its O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) in Skokie.

Engineering consultant Greeley and Hansen, which designed the O'Brien WRP UV disinfection project completed in 2016, presented the project excellent awards to the MWRD Board of Commissioners at a recent board meeting. The awards include: the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists 2017 Honor Award for Design; the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) National Recognition Award at the 50th Anniversary Celebration for Engineering Excellence Awards in Washington, D.C.; and the ACEC of Illinois Honor Award for projects which are recognized for exceptional engineering that meet the needs of the client and benefit the public welfare, the highest category of award in Illinois.

"We thank our design partners at Greeley and Hansen for their ingenuity on this monumental project and our contractor Walsh for helping us deliver the project," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "These awards represent our commitment to improving the quality of our local waterways and these latest innovations will move us closer to achieving direct contact through cleaner water that supports recreation and a thriving river economy."

The MWRD's O'Brien WRP introduced UV technology in 2016 to disinfect water as a final layer to its treatment process to reduce pathogenic bacteria in the water being released from the plant into the North Shore Channel. After going through primary treatment and secondary treatment, water then flows through the disinfection facility via seven channels. Each channel has the capacity to disinfect 75 million gallons per day using the UV light. With two banks of lights per channel and 64 bulbs per bank, there are a total of 896 bulbs installed in the facility, although the bulbs will not all be in use at all times. It is considered the largest wastewater treatment UV installation in the world.

In presenting the awards to commissioners, Greeley and Hansen Principal Andrew Martin credited the long-time public-private partnership between the MWRD and Greeley and Hansen with improving the quality of life issues for Cook County residents through critical engineering and infrastructure projects.

"The District continues to redefine what it means to be a Utility of the Future with the strategic vision of recovering resources and



Engineers with Greeley and Hansen celebrated recent accolades with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners for the installation of a UV facility that adds disinfection to the water treatment process at the MWRD's O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant.

transforming water," Martin said. "Greeley and Hansen is extremely proud to have had the opportunity to partner with the District on progressive initiatives for over a century. Most recently, we were truly honored to collaborate with the District at the O'Brien WRP to bring the largest UV disinfection system by flow in the world to a water reclamation plant, which will further improve the quality of the Chicago Area Waterways that are the backbone of a vibrant Cook County and once again demonstrates the District to be a civic, environmental and industry leader."

The O'Brien WRP serves more than 1.3 million people within 143 square miles. The \$61.7 million UV disinfection system has the potential to treat 450 million gallons of water per day.

Commissioner Josina Morita has taken an active role in highlighting use of the waterways. She organized a jump into the south branch of the Chicago River and fished along the main branch this fall.

"The improvement in aquatic life and activity on our waterways this summer and along our new Riverwalk downtown epitomize the newfound interest in making the river a central hub of progress for our region," said MWRD Commissioner Morita. "This technology at O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant will protect the North Shore Channel and our various waterways for generations to come."

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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