

Maine Water News

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

January 2011, Number 155

Closing out the Year

Kathy Moriarty, President

I can hardly believe that this is my last column as association president. In a few short weeks, I'll be passing the gavel to the incoming president. Another year seems to have flown by.

I must start by thanking those who have made this year so interesting (sometimes challenging) but certainly a learning experience. This must include my fellow Board members, committee members, association members who have offered input and advice, and Jeff and his staff.

The last 12 months have convinced me even more firmly about the varied value of association membership – a topic on which I've written and on which I've spoken individually with anyone who wandered into range. A primary example of "value" is our upcoming annual conference in February.

The conference provides training seminars, an opportunity to network with others in the industry (where most interesting ideas come from), and a chance to visit with vendors. The conference also provides a great example of how our association is responding to member input to secure its future. The event schedule and location have been modified – sometimes more than once – to better meet needs and provide a more meaningful experience. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity, and convince a non-member to come as well.

Another highlight of the last 12 months was the relocation of our association office to a permanent home in Augusta. This move – long in the discussion and planning stages – is another block in the foundation of MWUA's future.

Responsiveness, cooperation, member involvement, public outreach, planning – these and more taken together begin to define what our association is (or could be). John Storer ended his newsletter tenure last year with a quote. Let me offer one as well. "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." (Van Gogh).

Online Directory of Products and Services

Now Available

The MWUA website has another new addition to announce: an online directory of products and services! This directory gives you the option of viewing our members to see what products/services they offer, and you can also see their contact information and access their website as well. If you are looking for providers of a specific service, you can click on that product/service, and then see which of our members supply that product/service. The link to this directory is found on the home page of our website: www.mwua.org.

We hope that you take advantage of this new tool. If you are an Associate Member but your organization is not included in this directory, please contact the MWUA office so that we can incorporate you into this directory as soon as possible.

Searsport Water District Completes Water Main Replacement Project

In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the Searsport Water District replaced approximately 1 mile of water main in various locations throughout its water distribution system. Most of the mains that were replaced were in more than 100 years old and were failing on an annual basis. Larger mains were installed to meet existing and future fire protection needs. Funds for these projects were made available through the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program (USDA-RD). The District applied for \$850,000 and received \$622,000 in Grant and \$228,000 in Loan for these projects.

In 1988, the District began making major upgrades and repairs to the system in order to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Over the years the District has spent over \$6,786,064 in order to make necessary upgrades and repairs. The total grant money that has been received to date for these projects was \$2,857,527, and the total amount of the loans to date was \$3,928,537.

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Material of interest to the water supply profession
will be considered for publication. Copy deadline is
the 15th day of month preceding publication.

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Portland Water District



“Since completion of the 2009/2010 water main replacement projects, the District has experienced no major water main breaks. Previously the District was spending nearly \$12,000 annually to make water main repairs within these areas.”

The December Meeting

The December Meeting was hosted by Belfast Water District and held at the U-Maine Hutchinson Center. A thorough and interesting overview of the Belfast water system was given, and each MWUA committee also gave an annual report. The Nominating Committee announced that Steve Cox, Alan Hitchcock, and Kathy Moriarty were elected to the Board of Directors for 2011.

For the technical program, the attendees were treated to a game of “Who Wants to be a Millionaire”, which educated everyone about financial contingency planning. Lucretia Smith of the Maine PUC discussed how to determine when a rate change is needed, and Stephani Morancie reviewed the rate case process. Over 40 people attended this meeting, and in turn, many utility’s rate case questions were answered.

Lunch was excellent, and included some tasty corn chowder which was perfect for the chilly December day.

2011 Bi-Monthly Meeting Locations

The bi-monthly meeting locations have been established for 2011.

February will be in Portland and all under one roof at the Holiday Inn By the Bay. The registration form is included in this newsletter, so don’t forget to sign up!

April will find us in Sanford, and June will be held in Eastport. The August Golf Tournament will once again be held at Val Halla Golf Course in Cumberland, and the Annual Clambake is scheduled to be at Thomas Point Beach in Brunswick. Rumford will welcome us in October, and December will be in Damariscotta.

The 2010 Journal will be arriving at your office soon, and included will be a 2011 calendar that includes the bi-monthly meeting dates. Make note of these dates, so you can attend meetings close to your location, and more if possible! We look forward to seeing you there.

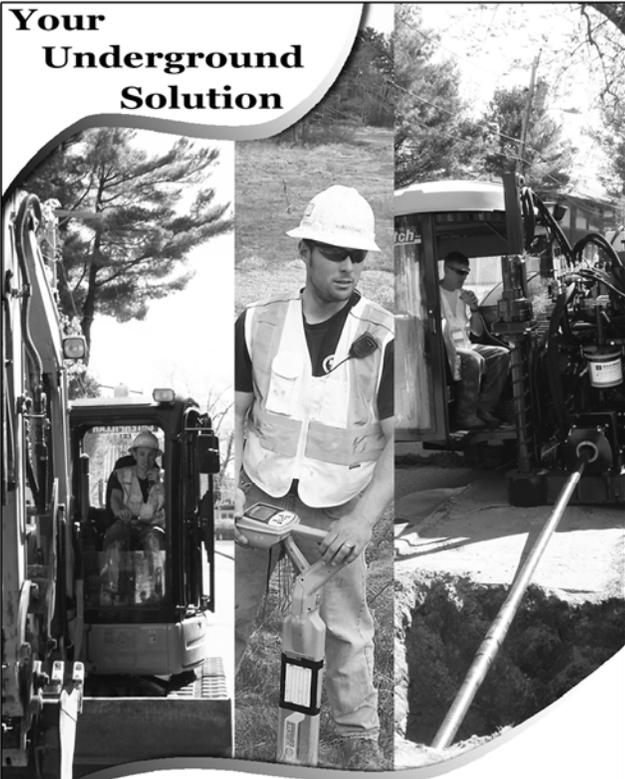
125th Maine Legislature Likely to Redirect Focus of State

As was reported in the November issue of Maine Water News, the 2010 mid-term election will be a political game changer for Maine. At the time it was thought that there was not much hope for a bond referendum for the SRF match. Due to the fact that most of the money approved in the June 2010 referendum was used to secure the 2010 capitalization grants, an additional \$3.7 Million is needed for the Drinking Water and Clean Water match for the 2011 construction season. For 2012 and 2013 the total match requirement is \$11.8 Million.

Discussions with legislative leaders lead us to believe that there may be a bond package, and if there is, water and wastewater projects would stand as good a chance of inclusion as any other projects. Hence, a general obligation bond referendum bill has been submitted in collaboration with the Maine WasteWater Control Association.

Additionally, a major effort will be undertaken to incorporate the match needs into the DHHS and DEP budgets. The thrust of that effort will be to calculate and communicate the cost of borrowing the match versus

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paying for it as part of the budgets.

Also on the docket is a bill proposing to amend the Board of Licensure of Water System Operators statute. As proposed, the amendment would allow the Board to accept the results of approved examinations proctored by approved third parties. This would allow for on line testing; the fees for said testing would not be subject to the fee requirements in the law. The amendments would also allow for the adjustment of examination, licensure, biennial renewal or reinstatement

fees, as reasonable and necessary, to accommodate increased costs. The fees were last adjusted 8 years ago.

There will likely be a number of other legislative issues to deal with this session. With a new Governor and the Republicans in power it will be an interesting time. Hopefully the atmosphere will be conducive to finding a better solution to the annual SRF funding requirement.

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Lobbying Cost Calculation Available

Water utilities are aware of the fact that they must include, in the annual PUC report, all monies spent on lobbying activities. The association conducts lobbying on behalf of its members. The portion of a member's 2010 dues spent on lobbying costs can be determined by multiplying the dues by 0.008.

If there are any questions concerning this, please contact the office.

PUC Chapter 660 & Dig Safe Decisions Warrant an Additional Look

Recent actions on rules from the Maine PUC have left many with questions as to how the agency's decision will impact water utility operations.

The final rule Chapter 660 Consumer Protection Standards for Water Utilities which was recently adopted and which is effective January 1, 2012 leaves many questions unanswered. According to many customer service staff, from water utilities around the state, there is much uncertainty relative to certain requirements of the rule.

It is felt that there are discrepancies between what the adoption order indicates would happen and the actual requirements of the final rule. There are questions on a number of fronts – one of the most obvious being whether water utilities, under the Customer Privacy provisions, are allowed to provide usage information to sewer districts so that they can bill their customers.

In addition, there are sections in the new rule where greater clarity would obviate the need for interpretation, either by PUC staff or utility personnel.

There are at least two avenues to resolve these issues. One approach would be for the PUC's Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) to rectify the discrepancies and issue a bulletin clarifying questions. The Commission could also reopen the rulemaking, address

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those apparent discrepancies between the adoption order and the rule, and perhaps accept additional input.

There have been a number of discussions with staff; the most recent one seems to indicate that CAD will at least clear up the obvious discrepancies between the order and the rule.

The recent Dig Safe rulemaking was a substantive rulemaking process, which means that final adoption will be subject to approval by the Legislature. The provisionally adopted rule includes a requirement concerning emergency excavation which may be problematic for water utilities.

The Notice of Rulemaking, issued back in September, proposed that an emergency excavation occurs within four hours, not 12, as under the current rule. The PUC stated that: "We do so because it is our observation that waiting 12 hours, in an emergency situation can threaten public safety and that the notifications can be done in four hours".

Many commented on this proposed change. Those representing water utilities all expressed concerns about being required to begin emergency excavations within four hours.

The adoption order states that the Commission provisionally adopted the four hour language as proposed. What was proposed was that the definition of



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"emergency excavation" means an excavation that is necessary to commence within four (4) hours of an emergency to prevent injury, death or loss of an existing vital service.

What actually happened in the provisionally adopted rule is that the definition of emergency excavation was deleted. In Section 4, Responsibilities of the Excavator, a new section was added which states:

Emergency Notice Process. In the event of an emergency, an excavator shall notify the Dig Safe System of the location of the intended excavation at least 4 hours prior to the commencement of excavation.

In the association's comments on the proposed rule, it was stated that there is sometimes a pressing and critical need to repair facilities and restore service as soon as possible. It appears that this new provision would require water utilities to wait at least four hours before commencing excavation. Obviously, this is not always possible and is counter to the Commission's acknowledgement that sometimes, immediate action is

required to prevent injury, death or loss of an existing vital service.

In any event, there will be ample opportunity to attempt to rectify this problematic requirement as the provisionally adopted rule is deliberated before the Maine Legislature.

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Legislative Breakfast Scheduled for February 17th

Once again, MWUA will partner with Maine WasteWater Control Association and New England Water Environment Association in sponsoring a breakfast for legislators. It will be held on February 17th at the Senator in Augusta. As has been the case for the past few years, the theme will be caring for and replacing aging infrastructure.

Specifically, the need to come up with the 20 % match we need each and every year to secure the SRF capitalization grants will be front and center.

The call is out for photos of construction projects to be used in a Power Point presentation. SRF & ARRA related pictures are preferred as are photos of old structures that have been replaced and shots with construction workers and equipment. If anyone has

photos they would like to contribute, please contact the office.

This event is an excellent opportunity to treat your representative to breakfast, while exposing them to the needs of the water/wastewater profession. Mark your calendars and be watching for the notice.

Wilton Loses Good Man

Russell Mathers II, 58, died January 7, 2011 in Auburn. He was the Town of Wilton's Wastewater Treatment and Water superintendent. He was born in Butler, PA, was educated in the schools of Hopewell Junction, New York and served in the US Army.

Russ was hired in 1987 as a plant operator and advanced to the position of superintendent. He and his staff were known for their innovative approach to operations, often doing their own repairs and even creating their own parts. He was known for his musical and artistic abilities

He is survived by his wife, Jody, a son and stepson and a daughter.

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**Maine Water Utilities Association
85th Annual February Meeting & Trade Show
February 8 - 9, 2011
REGISTRATION FORM**

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

Name: _____ Title: _____
 Company: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

Option 1: Mail completed registration form with payment to: Maine Water Utilities Association
 Option 2: Fax registration to: (207) 623-9522 150 Capitol Street, Suite 5
 Option 3: Register online at: www.mwua.org Augusta, ME 04330

EVENT REGISTRATION – Please check all that apply

Registration & Name Badges are required for attendance at all sessions and events.

Pre-Registration closes January 31, 2011

	Register by 01/21/11	Registrations Received 01/22/11 - 01/31/11
<input type="checkbox"/> TWO DAY FULL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION	\$150/Person	\$175/Person
Two Day Full Conference Registration Includes:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tuesday & Wednesday Training Session (including material handouts & certificates) ▪ Tuesday's Business Luncheon & Trade Show Preview ▪ Wednesday's Training Sessions, Lunch, & Trade Show Attendance (as well as coffee & pastries) 		
<input type="checkbox"/> ONE DAY TUESDAY ONLY CONFERENCE REGISTRATION	\$100/Person	\$125/Person
*Sessions 1 - 14 Include the Luncheon		
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 1: Water Words that Work: Communicating Effectively with the Public	8:00 AM – 11:15 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 2: A Day in the Life of an Operator	8:00 AM – 11:15 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 3: Understanding the Importance of Contact Time (CT) in Disinfection	8:00 AM – 11:15 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 4: Energy Management for Water and Waste Water Utilities: The Triple Bottom Line	8:00 AM – 11:15 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 5: Instrumentation and Controls	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 6: Biosolids Management	9:15 AM – 10:15 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 7: Technical Writing for Water/Wastewater Professionals	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 8: Laboratory Limits & QC and How to Report Them	2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 9: Nitrogen Limits for Casco Bay... When and What to do	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 10: Panning for Gold: Identifying Potential Program Funding Opportunities for Utilities	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 11: The Incomplete Coliform Rule (The TCR Now and Proposed Revisions)	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 12: Trustee Session	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 13: Water Words that Work: Website Development	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 14: Communication: The Skill We All Could Improve	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> ONE DAY WEDNESDAY ONLY CONFERENCE REGISTRATION	\$65/Person	\$80/Person
*Sessions 15 - 18 Include the Lunch		
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 15: Ensuring Public Safety During Distribution System High Demand	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 16: How to Hire a Professional Service Provider	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 17: Communication and Social Networking: The Electronic World	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> Session 18: Product Demonstrations	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> TUESDAY BUFFET LUNCHEON ONLY	\$35/Person	\$45/Person
<input type="checkbox"/> WEDNESDAY TRADE SHOW ONLY	N/C	N/C

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Maine Water Utilities Association is a non-profit membership organization which was organized in 1925. The mission of the Maine Water Utilities Association is to represent the water works professional membership in advocating safe drinking water through education, legislation, policy and networking.

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