

Maine Water News

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

November 2011, Number 160

Staying on Top of Things

Steve Cox, President

Politics is dominating the national news with a heated race for a republican challenger and a current president finding it very difficult to fulfill the promises he made three years ago. Fortunately for MWUA, there is no race for the next presidency...you simply wait your turn. Fortunately for me, I don't recall making any unreasonable promises that will leave my term as president one of infamy.

Even though perception is that leadership positions nowadays are very political, few would consider water utility leaders in Maine to be politically motivated. Most of the time water utilities are happy to be considered silent servants; however, we do occasionally get drawn into sticky political battles from time to time. Whether it is a local official with a personal agenda or a group with motives far exceeding issues in our community or State, we need to ensure our operations are based on good sound science and solid business practices.

It is getting more difficult to simply agree to disagree with someone and then walk away. Gone are the days when the superintendent ended the debate by saying "*if you don't like our water, drill your own damn well!*"

I think we all recognize the greater need to educate customers and the public on important water related issues so that political ignorance doesn't influence the effective management of our public water systems.... source to tap.

My thoughts on a few current MWUA issues:

- Observing Lewiston and Auburn battling watershed protection issues, I hope common sense and sound science will prevail.
- Being part of the Dig Safe rulemaking process, I hope we will end up with *fair, achievable* standards that provide protection to infrastructure, excavators and the general public.
- Listening to discussions relative to LD 909 - I vision a mechanism and culture promoting infrastructure

"savings" instead of a worry about it later "credit card" mentality.

These issues, and more to come, will shape how water utilities do business. So get involved, voice your opinions, and help influence resolutions that make sense.

This December's bimonthly meeting in Damariscotta is a great opportunity to brush up on the science and economics of the public drinking water fluoridation debate. Even though specific communities, NOT water utilities, dictate system fluoridation, we are often viewed by the public as the controlling authority. We should all be prepared for the emotion surrounding this one.

2012 will be a short legislative session, so consider getting your feet wet by becoming involved in the legislative committee... the next issue may affect you!

The October Meeting

It was a rainy morning as we arrived in town for the October bimonthly meeting, hosted by the Rumford Water District. The venue, 49 Franklin, was an old church that had been very nicely restored. We were greeted by a very nice continental breakfast, set out by a cheery catering staff.

Carlo Puiia, Rumford Town Manager, welcomed us and then stayed for the meeting. This was unusual in that town managers usually exit after the welcome. However, it was refreshing to see the level of interest and what is obviously a good working relationship between the town and the district.

The stories of how some of our water systems came to be are often interesting, and this one was no different. Superintendent Brian Gagnon provided a very interesting overview of the system genesis and how it evolved over time.

The Regulatory Update and the Legislative Update brought members up to speed on current happenings. The 2012 budget, approved by the Directors at the September Board meeting, was presented, and the membership was made aware of a 10% dues increase.

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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

Nominating Committee Chair John Storer then presented the committee's nominations for Directors for 2012, namely Gordon Johnson of Portland Water District, Don Gobeil of Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District and Jon Ziegler of Boothbay Region Water District. There were no nominations from the floor. It was not possible to hold the election for Directors at the meeting, as the requisite number of individual members was not present.

The technical session had something for office personnel as well as the operationally inclined.

Sam Evrard, of Invoice Cloud, reviewed an electronic billing process that is catching on in the profession.

Jerry Lowry, of Lowry Engineering, then walked the attendees through a description of an innovative air stripping process being utilized for corrosion control, not just in Rumford but in many locations throughout the country.

He was followed by George Seel, of Maine DEP and Al Hodsdon, who presented a case history of Rumford's experience with leaking home heating oil tanks that contaminated the aquifer in which the district has a well. Fortunately the groundwater flow was such that the district's well was not adversely impacted. The situation did drive home the importance of managing the impact of potential contaminant sources in a wellhead protection zone.

The Rumford Water District is celebrating its 100th anniversary and, following a scrumptious lunch, we made our way to an open house at the pump station. It was an opportunity to view the treatment setup, which includes the air strippers and other equipment.

All in all it was a day well spent – an opportunity to obtain some very useful information and also appreciate what it takes to confront and manage operational challenges.



***Rumford Water District Staff & Friends
at their pump station.***

Training on the Horizon

A number of upcoming training seminars are scheduled for the months of November and December. The Education & Operations Committee has organized a Work Zone Safety Seminar to be held on November 2, 7, 22, 29, and December 13 in Caribou, Calais, Brewer, Augusta and Portland, respectively. This is an all day seminar, and it has been approved for 6.0 TCH/DEP credit hours.

Maine's Utility Financial Officers are offering their 3rd annual symposium, "Current Business Issues" which will be held at Portland Water District's Nixon Training Center on November 17th. This seminar has been approved for 4.5 TCH/DEP credit hours.

NEWWA will be presenting "Where It All Begins: Knowing & Protecting Your Source Water" on November 29th at Jeff's Catering & Event Center in Brewer, and on November 30th at Portland Water District's Nixon Training Center. This session is designed to assist operators, superintendents and related water treatment plant personnel in recognizing and understanding the importance of source water protection in a drinking water system.



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MWUA is also partnering with JETCC to bring back a popular program from 2006 titled "Impacts of Water Treatment Practices on Wastewater Plant Operations". This training will be held at Jeff's Catering & Event Center on December 15th. It is likely that a similar session will be held in the spring if all goes well.

You can find more information about all these upcoming training seminars by clicking the "events" link on our website: www.mwua.org, or call the office at 623-9511.

The December Meeting

Fluoridation has always had the potential to be controversial in communities. Some communities have opted to reverse previous actions to fluoridate while, at the same time, others have voted to implement fluoridation of their water supply.

This issue in the Damariscotta/Newcastle area has generated a referendum on the Nov. 8th ballot. Citizens will have the opportunity to decide if they want the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District to continue fluoridation of the public water supply.

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The December bi-monthly meeting, scheduled for December 1st, is hosted by GSBSD and will focus on the fluoridation issue.

Jennifer Donnell, Security and Fluoridation Specialist with the Maine Drinking Water Program, and Judy Feinstein, Program Manager of the Maine CDC Oral Health Program will discuss the technical aspects of fluoridation, the mission of the Oral Health Program, the advantages and benefits of fluoridation and related topics.

GSBSD Water System Manager Scott Abbotoni, who has attended numerous public meetings leading up to this referendum, will recap the discussions over the last several months, and facilitate a forum of the role and responsibilities of the local water suppliers when issues such as this come to town. It will be a great opportunity to consider what can happen and what did happen – as the results of the referendum will be known by then.

PUC Proposes Revisions to Dig Safe Rules

The Maine Public Utilities Commission has issued a Notice of Rulemaking relative to the Underground Facility Damage Prevention Requirements (Chapter 895 i.e. the Dig Safe Rules). The most

problematic of the proposed revisions would result in a change to the current 18 inch tolerance zone for members and the 36 inch tolerance zone for non-members. The proposed amendment changes the tolerance zone for non-member operators to 18 inches, thus making the requirement consistent for all facility operators.

MWUA's position has been, and continues to be, that tolerance zones should not be a function of membership or non-membership; rather it should be a function of risk. Furthermore, it is often simply not possible to precisely locate non traceable vintage water and sewer facilities which are buried at depths 2 x 3 times that of conductive facilities.

The proposed revisions also include an amendment that requires excavators to provide notice to private landowners of intended excavation but allows the excavator to commence excavation without waiting for 72 hours to allow the private landowner to mark out facilities. This proposal, which came from Central Maine Power during the Dig Safe workgroup meetings, seeks to address the perception that notice to private landowners (i.e. homeowners) is often ineffective and of little value. Additionally, the proposed amendment would require the excavator to be responsible for all



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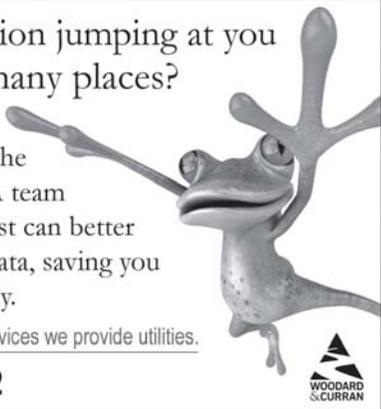
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damages to underground facilities that occur as a result of the excavation. However, the proposal does not seem to distinguish between non-member operators and private landowners (i.e. homeowners).

The proposed rule would also make significant changes relative to enforcement action procedures.

The public hearing on the proposed amendments is scheduled for November 10th. The changes, whatever they end up being, will be provisional rules subject to final approval by the Maine Legislature.

Scholarship Applications Wanted

Are you a college student that is interning in the water or wastewater profession? Do you know of, or work with a college student intern? Please encourage them to apply for our scholarship. MWUA offers \$1,000 scholarship(s) each year, the number to be determined as funding allows. The recipient(s) will be selected by a three member sub-committee of the MWUA Public Awareness Committee. For information and to apply, please go to our website: www.mwua.org. The deadline is November 30th, so apply today!

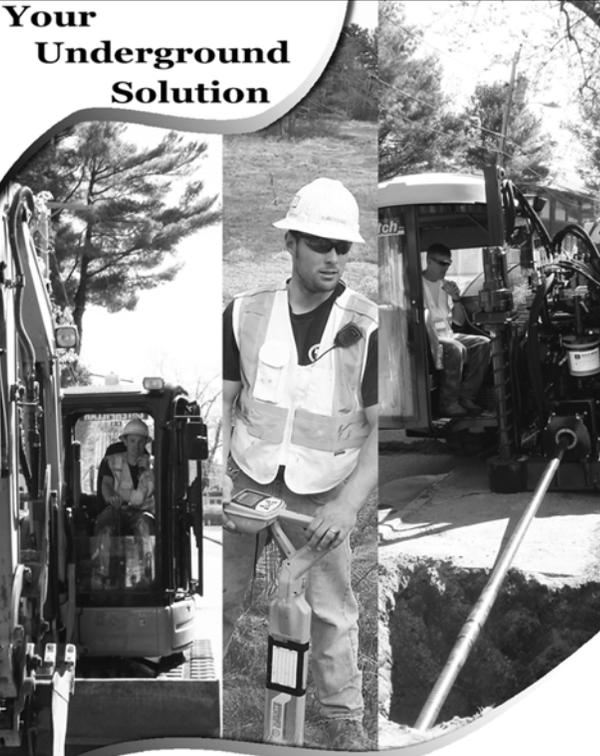


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Public Hearing Held on LD 359

LD 359: An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Wastewater and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Funds is legislation that was carried over from the First Session of the Maine Legislature. A hearing on the bill was held before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee on October 24th. In addition to MWUA, a number of people testified in support of the bill.

This bill could serve as a vehicle to provide the state matches for both the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds for 2012 and 2013.

The committee indicated that the work session will be held when the full Legislature returns in January. If there is a bond package from the Governor's Office, it is possible that this bill and others would be rolled into that.



HOST: Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, Scott Abbotoni, Water Division Manager

LOCATION: Damariscotta Fire House, Biscay Road, Damariscotta, ME

DIRECTIONS: Turn off Rte 1 at the light (McDonalds will be right on this corner) onto Biscay Road and drive until you see Don Foshay's Discount Tire on the left. The Fire House will be right after that on the right.

PROGRAM

- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM **Registration, Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 AM – 8:45 AM **Introduction/Welcome to Damariscotta**
- 8:45 AM – 9:00 AM **Overview of Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, Water Division**
Scott Abbotoni, Great Salt Bay Water Division Manager
- 9:00 AM – 9:15 AM **Regulatory Update**
Roger Crouse, Maine Drinking Water Program
- 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM **Business Meeting**
Annual Committee Reports
- 10:00 AM – 10:15 AM **Election of Directors**
John Storer, MWUA Nominating Committee Chair

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM **Break**

TECHNICAL PROGRAM

- 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM **The Technical Aspects of Fluoridation**
Jennifer Donnell, Security and Fluoridation Specialist, Maine Drinking Water Program
- 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM **The Maine CDC Oral Health Program: The Advantages and Benefits of Fluoridation**
Judy Feinstein, Ms., PH, Maine CDC, Oral Health Program
- 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM **Facilitated Discussion - the Role and Responsibilities of Water Utilities Concerning Fluoridation and Other Debated Issues - Scott Abbotoni, Moderator**
- 12:00 PM **Lunch**

Steve Cox
President

Mike Broadbent, Jefferson Longfellow
Program Coordinators

2.0 Training Contact Training Hours will be granted for this session

REGISTRATION FOR MWUA DECEMBER 1, 2011 MEMBERSHIP MEETING
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