Milwaukee Water Flows to New Berlin

New Berlin became Milwaukee’s 14th suburban customer this summer, providing relief for New Berlin’s water supply and contamination worries and for Milwaukee, an additional source of revenue. The Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) began providing its high quality drinking water to a portion of New Berlin in mid-June.

Milwaukee Public Works Commissioner Jeff Mantes and New Berlin Mayor Jack Chiovatero ceremoniously “opened a valve” July 21 to commemorate completion of the connection of the two cities’ water systems. Purchasing water on a wholesale basis from Milwaukee, New Berlin will maintain its own distribution system and bill its customers. The Milwaukee Common Council had approved the water contract in 2003.

Chiovatero said those New Berlin residents receiving Milwaukee water are very pleased to be relieved of the worry of radon in their well water, a water shortage, and maintenance of water softeners that are not necessary with Milwaukee water. He said New Berlin crews had picked up truckloads of discarded water softeners since the switch was made to Milwaukee water.

Mantes said New Berlin customers would continue to

Automated Payment Centers Introduced at Three Police District Stations

First Night Time Parking Permit Dispensing Machines in the Country

Need to buy a third quarter night parking permit? The City of Milwaukee has introduced “Automated Payment Centers” at three Police District Stations to purchase night parking permits and to pay for parking citations. Mayor Tom Barrett, Administrative Services Director Dorinda Floyd, Milwaukee Police Department Deputy Inspector Dale Schunk, and Alderman Joe Dudzik participated in a press conference on June 28th to discuss how the payment centers operate and their success.

Mayor Barrett said, “Not only are the machines more convenient for the public, but they also allow personnel at the police stations to be utilized more efficiently and effectively for police related matters.” Deputy Inspector Schunk and Alderman Dudzik echoed his sentiment in their remarks.

The City Milwaukee sells over 190,000 night parking permits annually. The payment centers will make the purchase of night parking permits more convenient. The payment centers, which are currently located at Police Districts 2, 5, and 6 are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They take cash, check or credit card, and are in both English and Spanish.

If a resident has purchased a permit in the last 12 months, the permit information will appear on the screen and all the resident has to do is update the information, if necessary. If a resident has never purchased a permit, he or she can apply at the payment center as well.
City Arborists Compete in Wisconsin Tree Climbing Championship

The Wisconsin Tree Climbing Championship was held on July 14, 2005 at Pierce Park in Appleton, Wisconsin. The competition is sponsored by the Wisconsin Arborist Association. Arborists from the City of Milwaukee Forestry Section have participated and placed very well at this event for many years. The competition brings together statewide tree climbers to compete in five events — Speed Climbing, Footlocking, Throwline, Aerial Rescue, and the Work Climb.

There is a separate women’s competition and men’s competition. The women’s winner is decided by the best overall score from all five events. The men’s winner is decided by a masters challenge event consisting of the top three scorers from the five preliminary events.

In 2005 six arborists from the City of Milwaukee Forestry Section competed and did very well. Here are the names of the competitors and their placement.

MEN’S DIVISION:
25 Competitors Overall
Najjar Abdullah — 2nd Place
Eric Wolf — 10th Place
Keith Gelhar — 12th Place

WOMEN’S DIVISION:
4 Competitors Overall
Barb McCollum — 2nd Place
Kit Regan — 3rd Place
Kimberly Patterson — 4th Place

Thanks to Randy Krouse, Technical Services Coordinator, Forestry Section for the information on the tree climbing competition.

Automated Payment Centers

The City has tested the payment centers over the last two quarters (since the first of the year until June) and sold over 11,100 permits in the second quarter. Eventually the City intends to sell all night parking permits through the payment centers. The City is ordering five more to be placed in the remaining Police District Stations as well as an additional payment center in Police Districts 5 and 6, where the most sales occur. The Parking Fund is financing the purchase of the automated payment centers.

The cost of a night parking permit will remain at $12 per quarter and $44 per year. There will be no fee to use the payment center to purchase a night parking permit. The payment centers also provide for the payment of parking citations. Cash, check, and credit card can be used. All transactions will be real time with no delay in processing your night parking permit application or your parking citation.

The payment centers will be able to process other types of payments, such as utility bills. The City is currently negotiating with WE Energies to process gas and electric bills through the payment center.
The City of Milwaukee’s Water Works has teamed up with the Milwaukee Fire Department and the Milwaukee Police Department to create a public awareness campaign to deter the illegal opening of fire hydrants. On Monday, July 25th Milwaukee Water Works Superintendent Carrie Lewis and Assistant Fire Chief Mark Sain unveiled campaign materials to assist with those efforts at one of the eight Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division’s Cool Spots, Clarke Street, 2816 West Clarke. The campaign materials include posters and flash cards that warn “Play with water and you could get burned.” At the time of the press conference 328 fire hydrants had been illegally opened, 34 of them occurring on Sunday, July 24th. Carrie Lewis started by asking citizens firstly, to leave hydrants for the Water Works and Fire Department and secondly, to “step up and report tampering with hydrants.” She said that so far the campaign has resulted in one arrest — a teenager who was arrested on July 16th for trying to break open a fire hydrant.

Assistant Fire Chief Mark Sain spoke of the danger caused by damaged hydrants once they have been tampered with. He stated, “we (the Milwaukee Fire Department) might arrive at the scene of a fire where there’s a broken hydrant, and we don’t have time to spare to search down the street for a hydrant that is in service.” He also mentioned that hundreds of thousands of gallons of water flood out of the water system creating a danger for children playing in the street and wasting a precious commodity, treated drinking water.

Captain Harpole of the 3rd District was also on hand to lend support to the campaign stating that Milwaukee Police will respond to calls made regarding the illegal openings, in order of priority. Cedric Banks, Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division encouraged children in Milwaukee to go to the Cool Spots where they can play safely. The Cool Spots, which are listed on the cards, are:

- Auer Avenue, 2221 West Auer Avenue;
- Columbia, 1354 West Columbia Street;
- Hopkins Street, 1503 West Hopkins Street;
- Starms Discovery, 2035 North 25th Street;
- Ben Franklin, 2308 West Nash Street;
- Clarke, 2816 West Clarke;
- Granville, 9520 West Allyn Street;
- and Wheatley, 2242 North 20th Street.

The posters and flash cards are being distributed to all Milwaukee Public Libraries, and to community groups, churches, Boys and Girls clubs, gas stations and other locations in the areas where most of the illegal fire hydrant openings are occurring. Milwaukee Police Department Community Liaison officers will distribute the cards and so will Milwaukee Fire Fighters who are involved in community events.

Aldermen have also been asked for their input to make sure the community is well informed. Residents who see anyone tampering with a fire hydrant are encouraged to call 286-3710.
Robert Skiera, Former City Forester Extraordinaire (1922-2005)

Bob Skiera, former City of Milwaukee Forester, died peacefully in his sleep at his central Wisconsin family farm Friday, July 29, 2005. Though retired since 1990, his name is still associated with the nationally acclaimed Milwaukee Bureau of Forestry, thanks to a high profile during his career.

After returning from military service in Korea, Bob started working as an arborist trainee in 1955. Over the next 19 years, he worked his way up the ranks, until appointed as city forester for Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1973. His 17 years in that position included a period of tremendous growth and devastation. At the same time Milwaukee’s urban forest was experiencing tremendous growth; it also was ravaged by Dutch Elm Disease (DED).

Bob was faced with removing diseased trees and replacing thousands of elms in a timely period. But the country was in the depth of a recession. One of his greatest challenges and contributions to the profession that gave Bob the most satisfaction was being able to convince city policy makers to budget replacement trees, as well as removal funds. On the day prior to his passing the headlines on the front page of USA Today read, “City Leaders Finding Money Does Grow on Trees”. The article explains the many previously unknown benefits tree cover provides to better communities.

The DED experience led Milwaukee to acquire one of the first computerized tree inventory programs and one of the first planting management programs. The latter was necessary to ensure sufficient diversity to avert future disasters like DED. Bob also worked closely with the Mayor’s Beautification Committee for citizen input on replacement trees. This program led to Milwaukee being awarded one of the first Tree City USA designations.

Another major contribution to the Milwaukee area was Bob’s role in the development of the Milwaukee Summerfest grounds from an empty urban industrial area to a well-landscaped festival site. He was instrumental in planting of demonstration gardens through the cooperative effort of the Mayor’s Beautification Committee in supervising 1,200 volunteer gardeners who were responsible for Summerfest plantings.

Skiera’s successes in Milwaukee made him a sought-after consultant and lecturer. He consulted with municipalities across the country and with the military on vegetation management at military installations. He worked with American Forests on their Cool Communities program and was an urban forestry adviser to the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point and to the Milwaukee Area Technical College. Following retirement, although he curtailed his lecture and consulting schedule, Bob still found time to serve on the Governor’s Forestry Advisory Committee. He also became an expert on propagating and growing hostas. Known as “Hosta Bob” by members of the Southeast Wisconsin Hosta Society, he donated countless hours as a volunteer and lecturer at the Boerner Botanical Gardens.

During his professional career, he served as President of the International Society of Arboriculture, Municipal Arborists, and Urban Foresters Society, Wisconsin Arborist Association, and as Vice-President of American Forests, the nation’s oldest conservation organization. For his untiring efforts, Bob has been honored with awards from many green industry organizations. The latest was the Student Society of Arboriculture “Roots of Our Being” award in 1998.

Bob was also a dedicated family man to his four children and wife of 50 years, Patricia. He was an avid gardener, archer, bow hunter and expert marksman. He was a talented coach and instructor, always willing to help others develop advanced skills. He was a certified Professional Archery Association instructor and trained multiple state and national junior Olympic champions, including his wife, son, and daughters who won multi state titles. Bob held the state record in archery posting the first perfect score of 300 during a state championship competition. His most recent accomplishments include achieving the title of Senior State Champion in 2002, 2003, and 2004 in Small Bore Silhouette Hunter Rifle.

Information provided by James Skiera, Bob’s son. James Skiera is currently the Executive Director of the International Society of Arboriculture.
The City of Milwaukee, in partnership with a turnkey developer, is building a new centralized facility for Department of Public Works and Milwaukee Water Works personnel. The facility is located at the former A.O. Smith/Tower Automotive Manufacturing Plant. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 17th with several local politicians, city officials, and contractors in attendance.

The new 230,000 square foot facility is being built on a 24-acre site, located at 35th and West Capitol Drive. This facility, when completed, will include operations of Street & Bridge Maintenance, Sewer Maintenance, Facilities Maintenance, and Milwaukee Water Works’ Lincoln Avenue and Cameron Avenue distribution facilities. Currently, these groups are located at seven different locations. By combining these facilities, the City will create efficiencies by eliminating duplication of services in several different locations. The new facility will also avoid future capital and operating expenses. The staff at this site will number 480.

Mayor Barrett announced at the groundbreaking that the City was on track to meet or exceed the Emerging Business Enterprise (EBE) and Residential Preference Program goals. During the development of the site, the EBE goal is 18% of the contract dollars and the Residential Preference Program goal is 25% of the hours worked. The total value of the project is slightly over $23 million and when completed will have employed 65,000 worker hours.

Environmental issues played a huge part in the development of the site and in the building design. The new building will incorporate sustainable design principles to help retain stormwater and prevent additional runoff from entering the sewer system. Energy Star standards will be met or exceeded for the lighting, HVAC, and roof elements of the project. In developing the site, 14 acres of buildings were demolished, resulting in 8,000 tons of salvageable metal and 100,000 tons of recycled granular fill that was created using on-site crushing equipment.

Completion of this facility will occur early in 2006, and the Department of Public Works will relocate its staff from the Traser Street facility at 6th and Canal Street, with that site being redeveloped into the Harley-Davidson Motor Company museum.
Everyone in City Government knows there is a new phone system. The City’s telephone system includes approximately 5,700 telephones for nearly 8,200 employees at over 150 locations. The new phone system project included training on the use of the Avaya telephones for several thousand municipal employees. Employees have enthusiastically embraced the new phones and find it has been very helpful in their communication with each other and with the general public. Some of the most popular features include: caller ID, call logging, speed dialing and the digital screens on the more advanced phones. There are several stories that can be told about the City telephone replacement.

The best story is about the people — the teamwork between DPW telephone, electrical, cabling, networking men and women in different sections and across the Administration and Operations Division. The replacement was a complicated undertaking that required an enormous effort by many dedicated DPW employees. The installation team from DPW included, Clyde Battle, Terrence A. Brehmer, Angel Fontanez, Jr., MICHAEL J. GERARD, Mark J. Ingles, Lance Liska, Kevin Michaels, Robert Morales, Michael D. Panlener, Bryan Pawlak, Walter Polk, David Pritchett, KENNETH R. WALKER, DEBORAH K. WILICHOWSKI, April D. Wilks, and Gerard Froh. A few of these PEOPLE worked 16 hour days and 60 plus hour weeks for months on end to get their part of the job done on time to minimize the impact on the telephone users. The training and installation assistance provided by Avaya and the invaluable contributions of “Telephone Coordinators” as well as the patience of City employees led to the most successful technology project in City government in recent memory. Phone service was virtually uninterrupted in spite of the fact that DPW supported the old and the new phone systems and two voice mail systems simultaneously.

Under budget is another good story. Initially budgeted in 2002 at $5,000,000, the project has been completed under budget by $1,000,000. This was achieved even after the project was expanded to include 500 new Avaya telephones for the 5 remote Health Department sites. The Common Council recently authorized us to spend $400,000 to upgrade the Police Department phone system to the current Avaya technology and to spend $100,000 to upgrade the phone systems in Fire Stations. How did we save so much money? Part of it is luck and timing in the global “market” for telephone systems. The rest of the savings are because dedicated DPW staff did much of the work instead of consultants and contractors. Instead of buying software and hardware for our new voice mail, conference bridge and interactive voice response (IVR) systems, DPW built them from Open Source (free) software. That effort alone saved $250,000 and will have ongoing savings by avoiding annual proprietary licensing fees.

Good for the future is another story. When we turned off the old ROLM telephone system in the City Hall complex the power consumption dropped from 400 to 70 amps. An 82 percent reduction in electrical consumption for the telephone system. There will also be a corresponding savings in air-conditioning required for the “telephone room”. Actually it is more like a telephone corner not a telephone room. The ROLM cabinets were 48 inches wide and 30 inches deep, there were 3 cabinets bolted together in a row and there were 5 rows of these cabinets for a total of 15 cabinets. The new equipment only takes up only 4 19 inch wide racks less than 1/10th the space of the ROLM equipment. The new telephone system and open source software enable the computer telephony integration needed to build the Mayor’s “One Number to Call” initiative 286-CITY and integration with the DPW Call Center application.

Thanks to Gerry Froh, Network Planning Manager, Bryan Pawlak, Electrical Services Supervisor II, and Kenneth R. Walker, Telecommunications Analyst-Project Leader, for contributing and writing the article on the new telephone system.
Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Scott Walker encourage citizens to travel “Milwaukee by Bike”

Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Scott Walker encouraged citizens in Milwaukee County to travel by bicycle to experience Milwaukee in a healthy, safe and fun way at a press event in July. “Milwaukee by Bike” is the title of the new bicycle route map that was recently published with 80 percent funding from the federal government, 10 percent from the City and 10 percent from the County. The City of Milwaukee obtained the grant and hired the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin to design and produce the 102,000 maps.

The map features the City’s bicycle route network, which consists of approximately 150 miles of signed bicycle routes and City streets and approximately 13 miles of streets with designated bicycle lanes. The map also shows City streets where designated bicycle lanes will be installed this year or next, adding approximately 25 additional miles throughout the City of Milwaukee. Milwaukee County’s 100 mile Oak Leaf Trail is also featured on the new bike map. The Milwaukee County Parks and Recreation Department has recently repaved many existing segments and added new sections to the Oak Leaf Trail.

The “Milwaukee by Bike” maps have been delivered to City and County offices for distribution and can be found at all local bike shops, Milwaukee Public Libraries, Milwaukee County Parks and Recreation offices and parks. Plans are being made to deliver maps to major employees in downtown. In addition, the map can be seen on-line at www.milwaukeebybike.org.

Mayor Barrett spoke of the future development of additional bicycle lanes and the City’s commitment to make the City bicycle friendly. County Executive Scott Walker addressed the County’s commitment to providing more bicycle enhancements, including the new bridge, complete with bicycle path, over Lincoln Memorial Drive.

Kudos to…

Tim Thur, Chief Sewer Engineer, Infrastructure Environmental Section, for using his vacation time to serve as a volunteer leader at Boy Scout Camp. Because of his efforts it allowed more Scouts to have a positive summer camping experience.

Michael Schaefer, Security Manager, who completed his Master of Arts degree in Business and Organizational Security Management. Schaefer completed the degree for personal satisfaction, growth and possible employment opportunities.

Kavodas McRath, Drafting Technician, on completing his degree in Civil Engineering from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee in May, 2005. McRath wanted to be in a position for future promotional opportunities and to set an example for his daughter, currently in middle school. He said he also wanted to “simply finish something that he had started”. He first enrolled in college at the age of 24 and completed at the age of 47.

If you or someone in your area has made a major accomplishment, did a good deed or volunteers for a special project that you think is worthy of being recognized for, please send me an email or fax. Share the good news!

KUDOS: A word meaning glory, praise or credit.
Administration Division

New Hires
Paul J. Klaibor, Graduate Intern

Promotions
Theresa M. Allen, Accountant Assistant II, Parking
Jeffrey J. Darling, Parking Meter Technician, Parking
Gina A. Santiago, Personnel Payroll Assistant II

Infrastructure Services Division

New Hires
Timothy B. Edwards, City Laborer Seasonal, Electrical
Dessalegn Bekele, Engineering Drafting Technician I, Transportation
Demetru D. Leflore, Engineering Technician I, Underground

Promotions
Dennis J Miller, Electrical Services Manager –Sr., Electrical
David J. Mohrbacker, Engineering Drafting Technician II, Transportation
Albert G. Phillips II, Sewer Field Investigator II, Underground
Jaime Rivera, Electrical Mechanic, Electrical
Daniel Rojas, Electrical Mechanic Apprentice, Electrical
Terrence J. Slama, Engineering Drafting Technician II, Transportation
Joseph L. Stephenson, Electrical Mechanic Apprentice, Electrical
Steven J. Viscuso, Sewer Examiner II, Underground
Catherine A. Watson, Painter, Support
Steven R. Walczak, Engineering Technician V, Construction
Scott E. Wilson, Electrical Mechanic Apprentice, Electrical

Retirements
Wayne J. Blaszczyzk, Cement Finisher, Streets & Bridges
Robert Gallob, Bridge Laborer Crew Leader, Streets & Bridges
Otto G. Tesch, Public Works Inspector II, Construction

Operations Division

New Hires
Vincent Ashford, City Laborer Seasonal, Forestry
Keira M. Miller, Urban Forestry Intern, Forestry
Kelly R. Mumm, Urban Forestry Intern, Forestry
Laddie M. Richardson, City Laborer, Forestry
Nathaniel J. Runke, Urban Forestry Intern, Forestry
Eugenia L. Veal, City Laborer Seasonal, Forestry

Promotions
Danie H. Allen, Urban Forestry Specialist
James F. Brady, Tractor Operator, Fleet Operations
Michael Cyrulik, Sanitation Supervisor
James H. Kyles, Sanitation District Manager, Sanitation
Michael T. Lasecki, Water Meter Specialist
Leonard E. Streich, Field Headquarters Coordinator, Sanitation

Milwaukee Water Works

New Hires
Ricardo R. Delgado, Water Treatment Plant Operator
Eric J. Kierzek, Water Meter Specialist
David D. Polk, Water Meter Specialist

Promotions
Gary K. Gibson, Water Distribution Manager
Ben Glatzel, Water Distribution District Supervisor
Thomas R. Heiden, Senior Water Treatment Plant Operator
Jesse Hernandez, Water Distribution Supervisor I
Jay L. Lloyd, Water Distribution Supervisor II
Michael J. Nelson, Water Meter Specialist
Thomas P. Runnells, Meter Reader Supervisor
Mark A. Szalewski, Field Investigator
Gil E. Taylor, Water Distribution Supervisor II

Retirements
Lee G. Walcheske, Water Distribution Supervisor II
John F. Wensierski, Water Distribution Laborer

Belated Congratulations on Your Promotions!
Michael Strehlow, Field Services Manager and
Tom Pechacek, Electrical Services Operations Manager