



PSC Water Currents

The water conservation and efficiency newsletter of the
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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In This Issue

[PSC Begins Quadrennial Planning Process for Focus on Energy](#)

[Black and Veatch Releases Report on Strategic Directions in the U.S. Water Industry](#)

[News on Smart Irrigation Initiatives](#)

[EPA Releases Guide on Energy Efficiency at Water and Wastewater Facilities](#)

[App Helps Homeowners Calculate Water Use](#)

PSC Begins Quadrennial Planning Process for Focus on Energy

According to state law, the Public Service Commission must review the goals, priorities and measurable targets for the statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource, or Focus on Energy programs at least once every four years. On July 3, 2013, the Commission opened the quadrennial planning process for program years 2015-2018 with a Notice of Investigation (NOI) and Request for Comments on the appropriate scope of the planning process. The Commission is currently seeking comments specific to Commission decisions made during the first quadrennial planning process that should be revisited as well as any new issues that should be addressed. Given the increasing awareness of issues surrounding the energy-water nexus, one issue of particular interest to water utilities relates to whether water efficiency measures and their associated energy savings should be incorporated into the Focus on Energy program, and if yes, which issues should be addressed. Utilities, organizations, interest groups or individuals may file one scope comment using the Commission's Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) system. Comments are due no later than August 2, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. To view documents related to this process or to file a comment, go to the home page on the [Commission's web site](#). In the box labeled "Link Directly to a Case," enter 5-FE-100, and select "GO." Contact Denise Schmidt at Denise.Schmidt@wisconsin.gov or 608-266-1282 if you have any questions.

Black and Veatch Releases Report on Strategic Directions in the U.S. Water Industry

Black and Veatch recently compiled data and analysis from its second annual survey of water industry representatives in a report that identifies challenges and opportunities facing the water and wastewater industry. This year, a total of 397 water industry representatives provided responses to the survey. According to this year's report, the top three issues are aging infrastructure, managing capital costs, and managing operational costs. Other significant findings include:

1. **Aging Infrastructure.** It is estimated that approximately 240,000 water main breaks occur nationwide each year due to aging infrastructure. ([ASCE 2013 Infrastructure Report Card](#)). Breaks and leaks contribute to an average non-revenue water figure of 20 percent nationwide. (Wisconsin's average is 14.6 percent). At the same time, replacement or renewal of buried infrastructure is occurring at a rate of less than 1 percent annually.
2. **Drought.** Nearly 70 percent of survey respondents are implementing drought contingency plans that include water conservation, community outreach and use of alternative supplies.
3. **Customer Education.** Nearly 60 percent of respondents believe their customers have little to no understanding of the gap between rates and the cost of providing safe and reliable water or wastewater services on a long-term basis.
4. **Alternative Financing Mechanisms.** Fewer than 20 percent of respondents plan to utilize public-private partnerships and other alternative means to meet critical infrastructure needs.

Black and Veatch conducted a similar survey of energy industry representatives. Interestingly, in this year's surveys, energy industry respondents listed water as the number two challenge, and respondents to the water survey identified energy as the second most important sustainability challenge. For copies of the full reports, visit the [Black and Veatch website](#).

News on Smart Irrigation Initiatives

Did you know that residential outdoor water use across the United States accounts for nearly 9 billion gallons of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation, and that the average U.S. household uses more water outdoors than most American homes use for showering and washing clothes combined? The Irrigation Association hopes to educate homeowners, businesses, and other water users about efficient water use and encourage promotion of smart irrigation practices and technologies during July's [Smart Irrigation Month](#). In contrast to standard, manually controlled, clock timer irrigation controllers, "smart" irrigation controllers use local weather and landscape conditions to tailor watering schedules to actual conditions on the site. In Highland Park, Illinois, the City Council recently approved a new [Water Conservation and Efficiency Initiative](#) that includes a requirement that all newly installed irrigation systems must be equipped with sensors that meet WaterSense standards for weather-based irrigation controllers.

To complement its existing specifications for weather-based controllers such as those required in Highland Park, and to further increase water efficiency outdoors, EPA is announcing its intent to develop a specification to label soil moisture-based irrigation control technologies. With its announcement, EPA is releasing a Notice of Intent (NOI) that describes performance measures WaterSense intends to include as well as the technical issues that still need to be more fully defined and resolved. For more information on the NOI, see the WaterSense [Soil Moisture Based](#)

[Technologies](#) webpage. To provide input on the NOI, submit comments to watersense-products@erg.com. In addition, for those seeking a WaterSense New Home certification, the [Version 1.1 WaterSense New Homes Specification](#) includes irrigation controller criteria. The document states that, as of June 1, 2013, any WaterSense New Home with a weather-based irrigation controller must use a WaterSense labeled model. However, builders may continue using soil moisture sensor-based irrigation controllers to meet the specification, provided that the controller contains all of the features listed in section 4.2.7 of the document.

EPA Releases Guide on Energy Efficiency at Water and Wastewater Facilities

EPA recently released a guide that describes how water and wastewater facilities can lead by example and achieve multiple benefits by improving the energy efficiency of their new, existing, and renovated buildings and their day-to-day operations. A product of the EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Program, this guide is designed to help utility managers and operators, energy and environment staff, local government officials, and mayors and city councils understand and evaluate options for improving the energy efficiency of water and wastewater facilities. For a copy of the complete guide, go to <http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/documents/pdf/wastewater-guide.pdf>

App Helps Homeowners Calculate Water Use

Earlier this year, the National Ground Water Association (NGWA) released a free iPhone and iPad app that allows users to calculate their household water consumption. The app requires users to answer simple questions. It also features easy-to-enter categories, automatic responses to data entered, and the ability to calculate total use based on standard versus water efficient appliances. According to NGWA Public Awareness Director Cliff Tryens, "It's never been easier to estimate water use in terms of simplicity and convenience." To obtain the Water Use Calculator app, click on <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/water-use-calculator/id553141703?mt=8>.

About this newsletter

Water Currents is published by the PSC of Wisconsin to provide information about water conservation-related news and events in Wisconsin. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Denise Schmidt, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 266-1282.



To submit information for consideration in future newsletters, send an email to [Denise Schmidt](mailto:Denise.Schmidt). Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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