



PSC Water Currents

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



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Water Saving Tip

EPA's WaterSense web site now includes a fun, interactive resource for kids. The "WaterSense for Kids" section includes a quiz, information on why saving water is important, things kids can do to use less water, and a link for parents on where to find WaterSense products. The site is intended to complement existing educational programs. For more information, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/kids/index.htm>.

Have a good idea to share? Email your tip to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us.

News

Janesville utility adopts water conservation rates

The Janesville Water Utility is the latest Wisconsin water provider to adopt rates designed to encourage water conservation and efficiency. In October 2009, the PSC approved an overall 15.0 percent increase in revenue, including an inclining block rate structure for residential customers. Under the approved rates, residential customers will be charged \$0.95 per 100 cubic feet for the first 1,500 cubic feet (approximately 11,000 gallons) used in a quarter and up to \$1.65 per 100 cubic feet for higher usage. The utility implemented this rate structure to encourage conservation and to allow customers to save money on their water bills by reducing their usage. The utility is also developing a comprehensive water conservation program that may include outreach and education, rebates for high efficiency toilets, and water audits. For more information about the Janesville Water Utility, visit: <http://www.ci.janesville.wi.us/citysite/DeptHome.aspx?Dept=water>.

WRWA water conservation poster contest

The Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) is accepting entries for its second annual Water Conservation Poster Contest. The posters are intended to promote the awareness of water as a vital

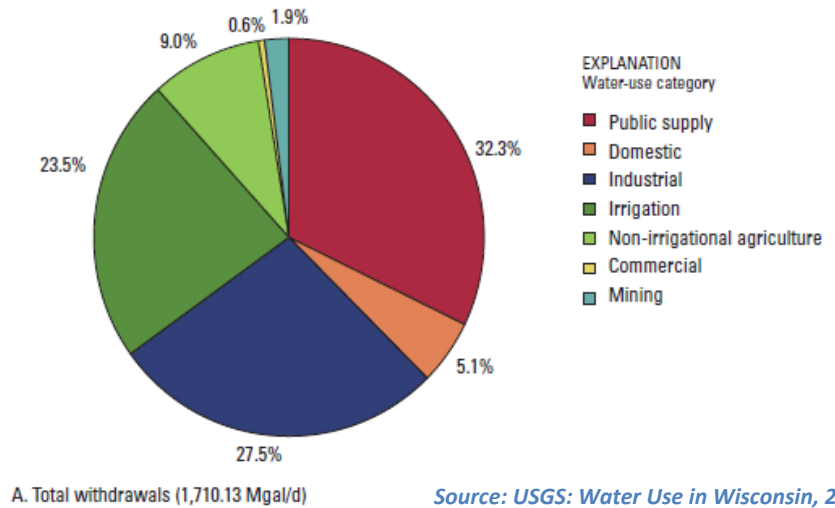


resource and the need for its conservation. The contest is open to all Wisconsin kids in first through sixth grades. The deadline for entries is March 5, 2010. Winners will receive a savings bond and school supplies for their school. The winners will be announced at the WRWA annual conference in March 2010. WRWA is asking utilities and water professionals for their assistance in getting the word out to schools and teachers across the state. For more information, visit: <http://www.wrwa.org/postercontest.html>.

USGS releases Wisconsin water use report

Every five years, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimates the amount of water used in the United States. In its recently released "Water Use in Wisconsin, 2005" report, the USGS

estimated that in 2005, water withdrawals in Wisconsin totaled 8.6 billion gallons per day, including 7.6 billion gallons from surface waters and 1.0 billion gallons from groundwater. The single largest water use was cooling water for thermoelectric power plants. After power plants, public water utilities were the second largest user, accounting for 552 million gallons per day. The USGS estimated that 71 percent of



Source: USGS: Water Use in Wisconsin, 2005

the state's population relied on public utilities for their water in 2005. The USGS has tracked water use since 1950 and its reports provide useful information about water use trends. The report is available at: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2009/1076/>.

Legislature assessing Wisconsin groundwater laws

A Legislative Work Group, co-chaired by Senator Mark Miller and Representative Spencer Black, is assessing the State's groundwater laws. The Work Group met at the State Capitol on October 21, 2009, and heard testimony related to energy and water conservation from representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Public Service Commission, the Department of Commerce, the UW Extension and the Alliance for Water Efficiency. The Work Group's goals are to establish policies that protect Wisconsin's groundwater quantity and quality on a sustainable basis for the benefit of Wisconsin's residents and economy. More information about the Work Group is available at: <http://www.legis.wi.gov/senate/sen16/news/Issues/GroundwaterWorkgroup.asp>.

WaterSense standards for commercial toilets, showerheads

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released its first WaterSense specification for a commercial building product. WaterSense labeled flushing urinals will use 50 percent less water than standard urinals, saving businesses 4,000 gallons of water per year for every unit installed.

Current federal standards set the maximum allowable flush volume at one gallon per flush, and EPA estimates that 7.8 million urinals in use today are older inefficient models.



The EPA also released its WaterSense draft specification for showerheads. Showers are one of the leading water uses in the home, accounting for nearly 17 percent of residential indoor water consumption. The average household could save more than 2,300 gallons per year by installing high-efficiency showerheads. Since these water savings will also reduce demands on water heaters, households could also save enough electricity to power their television use for about a year. These reductions could add up to as much as \$50 per year in water and energy bill savings. The WaterSense draft specification for showerheads sets the maximum flow rate at 2.0 gallons per minute at a flowing pressure of 80 pounds per square inch. EPA is accepting comments on its draft showerhead specification until November 9, 2009.

WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by EPA to protect the future of the nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the market for water-efficient products and services. All WaterSense labeled products are independently tested and certified to meet rigorous criteria for both efficiency and performance. For more information, visit: <http://epa.gov/watersense>.

Upcoming Events

- NOV** AWRA Annual Water Resources Conference. November 9-12, 2009. Seattle, WA.
<http://www.awra.org/meetings/Seattle2009/index.html>
- Energy Center of Wisconsin: Renewable Energy Options. November 10, 2009. Eau Claire, WI. <http://www.ecw.org/university/ecuevent.php?ecuid=252>
- WRWA Training: Water Conservation/Accountability. November 12, 2009. Saukville WI.
<http://www.wrwa.org/>
- DEC** WRWA Training: Water Conservation/Accountability. December 8 – Clintonville, December 10 – Pewaukee; December 16 – Eau Claire, December 17 – Dodgeville.
<http://www.wrwa.org/>
- FEB** 5th Annual Midwest Water Industry Expo. February 9-10, 2010. Wisconsin Dells, WI.
<http://www.cswea.org/events/2010%20Expo%20Brochure10.26.09%20draft.pdf>

Focus on Wisconsin Water

Kohler named 2009 WaterSense partner of the year

Wisconsin-based Kohler Company continued to demonstrate its commitment to water efficiency by winning its second consecutive WaterSense Partner of the Year award as a manufacturer. EPA presented the award in October 2009 at the WaterSmart Innovations Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. EPA cited Kohler Company's support for regional incentives and initiatives for water efficiency from Atlanta to Denver with its "mobile restrooms," which are trailers fully equipped with Kohler toilets and faucets that have earned the WaterSense label. In addition to publicizing WaterSense on the road, in the tradeshow circuit, on reality television, and in the restrooms of New York City's Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame Annex, Kohler gave WaterSense a national spotlight through its [Save Water America](#) Web site, which is dedicated to educating homeowners about water efficiency and supports Habitat for Humanity with a \$1 million product donation.



Other WaterSense partners of the year include Lowes Companies, Inc. (retailer), Cobb County, Georgia, Water System (large utility), James City, Virginia, Service Authority (small utility), and Brian Vinchesi of Irrigation Consulting, Inc. (irrigation). To learn more about these WaterSense partners and the awards program visit: <http://epa.gov/watersense/awards.htm>.

Highlight your community's water conservation and efficiency efforts in a future issue of Water Currents. Send a summary of your program or water-saving idea to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us. Include your contact information, a link for more information, and an estimate of the amount of water saved or expected to be saved. Please limit your submittal to 250 words.

About this newsletter

Water Currents is published by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to provide information about water conservation-related news and events in Wisconsin. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Jeff Ripp, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 267-9813.



To submit information for consideration in future newsletters, send an email to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us. Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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