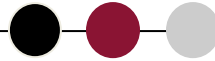




# PSC Water Currents

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



**January-February, 2009**  
Volume 2, Issue 1

## In This Issue

- Madison Water Utility offers rebates on WaterSense toilets
- Water supply plan for southeast Wisconsin nears completion
- WRWA announces water conservation poster contest
- EPA seeks comments on WaterSense urinals
- New rules promote more efficient plumbing in Wisconsin
- Upcoming Events
- Focus on Wisconsin Water: Changes lead to electric savings for Janesville Water Utility

## Water Saving Tip

The average American home can use as much as 400 gallons of water per day. Actual usage varies, depending on the type of plumbing fixtures installed and family size. Kohler Company has developed tools to help estimate residential and commercial water use. The tools include benchmarks that can help to identify water efficiency improvements. To use the calculators, visit: <http://www.us.kohler.com/savewater/>.

Have a good idea to share? Email your tip to [water.currents@psc.state.wi.us](mailto:water.currents@psc.state.wi.us).

## News

### Madison Water Utility offers rebates on WaterSense toilets

The PSC recently approved a request by the City of Madison Water Utility to spend up to \$250,000 per year on toilet rebates. The program is among the first of its kind in Wisconsin and is intended to address declining groundwater levels in Dane County. Beginning in the spring of 2009, the utility will offer \$100 rebates to its residential customers who install high efficiency WaterSense toilets. Toilets that meet the WaterSense specification use 1.28 gallons per flush or less, which is 20 percent lower than existing plumbing code requirements. The utility estimates that the program will save as much as 273 million gallons per year after ten years. Other utilities are encouraged to contact the PSC staff to discuss whether rebates or similar programs could help them in meeting their water conservation goals. For more information about the Madison Water Utility's rebate program, visit: <http://www.cityofmadison.com/water/>.

## **Water supply plan for southeast Wisconsin nears completion**

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has released its preliminary recommended water supply plan for seven southeastern Wisconsin counties. The plan, which was launched in 2006, is intended to identify options for sustainably meeting the region's water needs through 2035. When finalized, the plan will identify water conservation measures and alternative water sources for communities facing critical water shortages or water quality problems. SEWRPC has scheduled a series of briefings in January 2009 and is accepting comments on the plan until February 9, 2009. For more information, visit: <http://www.sewrpc.org/>

## **WRWA announces water conservation poster contest**

The Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) is sponsoring a "Water Conservation and You" poster contest. The contest is open to all Wisconsin 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders, and entries from each participating school will be on display at WRWA's annual technical conference in Green Bay, WI, March 24-27, 2009. As part of the contest, WRWA is encouraging teachers to discuss the importance of water resources with their students. WRWA encourages all Wisconsin utilities to get their local schools involved in this contest. Entries must be received by March 11, 2009. For more information, visit: <http://www.wrwa.org/>.

## **EPA seeks comments on WaterSense urinals**



The United States EPA has released a draft high-efficiency flushing urinal specification as part of its WaterSense program. The specification is designed to ensure efficient water use and a high level of user performance and satisfaction. To meet the draft specification, flushing urinal fixtures and pressurized flushing devices cannot exceed 0.5 gallons per flush. By installing high-efficiency WaterSense urinals, EPA estimates that facilities will be able to save more than 2,300 gallons of water per fixture each year. EPA is accepting public comments until March 9, 2009. For more information, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>.

## **New rules promote more efficient plumbing in Wisconsin**

The Wisconsin Plumbing Code Council approved changes to Wisconsin's plumbing rules on December 17, 2008. These rules include changes that will help to encourage water conservation and efficiency, such as eliminating some restrictions on re-using water from water closets and urinals for non-potable applications and requiring the use of fixtures that are consistent with national water efficiency standards established by the federal Energy Policy Act of 1992 (EPA Act). These standards include 1.6 gallon per flush toilets, 2.5 gallon per minute shower heads, and 2.2 gallon per minute faucets. The Council advises the Department of Commerce on the State's Uniform Plumbing Code, which includes requirements for the design, construction, installation, maintenance, and inspection of plumbing. Wisconsin's new rules are expected to become effective in March, 2009. For more information, visit: <http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/SB/SB-PlumbingProgram.html>.

## Upcoming Events

- JAN.** AWWA Water Conservation Workshop. Sponsored by the American Water Works Association. Jan. 25-27, 2009, Portland, OR. <http://www.awwa.org/conferences/>.  
Deadline for submitting abstracts for the 2009 WaterSmart Innovations Conference and Exposition in Las Vegas, NV, is Jan. 30, 2009. <http://www.watersmartinnovations.com/>.
- FEB.** Fourth Annual Midwest Water Industry Expo. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Water Association and Central States Water Environment Association. Feb. 10-11, 2009. Wisconsin Dells, WI. [http://www.wiawwa.org/joint\\_expo.htm](http://www.wiawwa.org/joint_expo.htm).
- MAR.** Customer Service and Information Management & Technology Joint Conferences. Sponsored by the American Water Works Association and the Water Environment Federation. Mar. 1-4, 2009, Charlotte, NC. <http://www.awwa.org/Conferences/>.  
Wisconsin Rural Water Association Annual Technical Conference. Mar. 24-27, 2009. Green Bay, WI. <http://www.wrwa.org/>.  
Better Buildings:Better Business Conference 2009. Sponsored by the Energy Center of Wisconsin. Mar. 5-6, 2009. Wisconsin Dells, WI. <http://www.ecw.org/>.  
EPA National "Fix a Leak Week." Mar. 16 – 20, 2009. <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>.  
WaterEC – The International Water Efficiency Conference. Sponsored by Forester Media and Water Efficiency magazine. Mar. 30-Apr. 2, 2009, Newport Beach, CA. <http://www.WaterEC.net/>.
- APR.** Wisconsin Water Efficiency Seminar. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Water Association. Apr. 21, 2009. Location TBD. <http://www.wiawwa.org/>.

## Focus on Wisconsin Water

### Changes lead to electric savings for Janesville Water Utility

To address rising electricity costs, many utilities are encouraging water conservation to reduce the volume pumped, replacing inefficient pumps and motors, and finding innovative ways to operate their system. The Janesville Water Utility recognized major electricity savings by modifying its operations and installing equipment that allows its to take advantage of lower off-peak electric rates.

The Janesville Water Utility serves more than 60,000 people from eight wells with a total pumping capacity of 32 million gallons per day. Average water production is 11 million gallons per day

(MGD), with a peak that exceeds 20 MGD during the dry, summer season. Janesville's three pressure zones are supported by two earth-covered concrete reservoirs and a water tower, with a total storage capacity of 14.5 million gallons.

Electricity charges to operate Janesville's water pumping equipment exceed \$500,000 per year. Of all the components of its electricity bill, the most significant charges are accrued from energy charges and demand charges. The energy charge is based on the total amount of electricity used during the billing cycle, which is measured in kilowatt-hour (kWh). The demand charge is based on the highest electricity draw for the billing cycle, which is measured in kilowatts (kW) and metered in 15 minute intervals.

To reduce its electricity costs, the utility pumps excess water to fill its reservoirs during off-peak times when the energy and demand charges are lowest. In 2006, the utility also equipped its newest pumping facilities with back-up power generators, allowing it to take advantage of interruptible power rates. The difference in charges between the "firm" demand rate and "interruptible" demand rate has resulted in a savings of \$40,000 per year.

According to Janesville Water Superintendent Katie Edington, other water utilities can save on electricity charges by staying informed of their electricity rates and managing the time of day when their electrical usage occurs. Wisconsin's Focus on Energy program can also help to reduce electricity use at water and wastewater utilities. For more information, visit: <http://www.focusonenergy.com/Business/Industrial-Business/Wastewater.aspx>.

*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](mailto:water.currents@psc.state.wi.us). Include your contact information, a link for more information, and an estimate of the amount of water or energy 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 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](mailto:water.currents@psc.state.wi.us). Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

To subscribe, visit: <http://psc.wi.gov/utilityinfo/water/current/subscriptionPage.htm>.