



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

June 4, 2021

## MWRD earns decades of platinum honors for its dedicated service in answering the call to protect water environment

A testament to its steady, reliable and essential services, the hard-working staff at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) has again earned national recognition for their work meeting all obstacles to treat the region's wastewater.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) saluted the MWRD with six Platinum Peak Performance Awards for at least five consecutive years of meeting stringent permit guidelines at six MWRD water reclamation plants (WRPs), including the Calumet WRP, which earned platinum honors for meeting full compliance for 29 consecutive years.

"Despite a global pandemic, our team is up to the challenge of protecting the water environment," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "Thank you to NACWA for this outstanding recognition and the taxpayers of Cook County for placing their trust in our essential services."

The annual awards honor treatment plants for meeting 100 percent compliance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The MWRD was praised for topping the charts with a Platinum Peak Performance Award at six WRPs that achieved 100 percent compliance for at least five consecutive years. The following facilities have earned platinum status:

- Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, Chicago, 29 years
- Lemont Water Reclamation Plant, Lemont, 24 years
- James C. Kirie Water Reclamation Plant, Des Plaines, 16 years



*MWRD pipefitters like Vernon Hart maintain and enter pipes to ensure water is flowing properly and there are no service disruptions.*

- O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant, Skokie, 15 years
- Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant, Hanover Park, 13 years
- John E. Egan Water Reclamation Plant, Schaumburg, 7 years

The Calumet WRP, which treated more than 260 million gallons per day in 2020, was placed into service in 1922, followed by the O'Brien WRP in 1928. The MWRD treated approximately 453 billion gallons of water in 2020, or about 1.24 billion gallons of water per day. More intense rain events increase the MWRD's goal to shield the region from pollution and make the MWRD's around-the-clock service essential to protecting the public health and the local water environment.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the MWRD has continued to provide critically important water reclamation operations and stormwater *(continued)*

## MWRD earns decades of platinum honors, *cont.*

management services to ensure the region's wastewater is cleaned and that public health and the environment are protected. The MWRD has maintained our flow of water for Chicago and 128 surrounding municipalities, as well as its roles managing stormwater for Cook County, protecting area waterways and the region's drinking water supply in Lake Michigan. Every day throughout the pandemic, MWRD's employees report to work to provide a reliable and innovative service to protect the water environment for 5.25 million residents living in a service area of 882 square miles across Cook County.

"It gives us tremendous pride to receive these Platinum Peak Performance awards from NACWA each year because it shines a light on the important work required from our Maintenance and Operations staff, pollution control teams and the Industrial Waste Division who are tasked with protecting our water environment every hour of the day," said MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan. "These awards signal to us that our staff and facilities have not let down their guard throughout the pandemic."



*The Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, 400 E. 130th St., in Chicago, has continued its sterling reputation for transforming wastewater into clean water from its service area that covers 300 square miles to serve Chicago and 48 south suburbs.*

NACWA plans to celebrate the Platinum Peak Performance Award achievements during the 2021 Utility Leadership Virtual Event scheduled for July 20.

###

---

### ***Recovering Resources, Transforming Water***

*Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).*