



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD releases pre-recorded virtual tour

Before the pandemic struck, hundreds of visitors from around the world toured the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) water reclamation plants (WRPs) and other facilities. Since the interest in MWRD operations did not wane, the MWRD Office of Public Affairs developed a way to keep the information flowing through monthly live, virtual tours. Hundreds of people “attend” the live virtual tours each month. Due to such high demand, the MWRD has now produced a one-hour experience that takes viewers to the WRPs, onto the waterways and into the Deep Tunnel system through a combination of photos, videos and aerial footage.

“With stay at home orders in place, the public had more time to surf the internet, so our tours have proven to be very popular,” said President Kari K. Steele. “In some ways, the virtual tour is even better than the live experience because there are certain locations that are not safe for the public to enter but our videos can take them there.”

The recorded tour will fill a niche that the live version can’t – requests from around the world and from different time zones.

“We have had people from multiple countries participating in the virtual tours and many others reporting that the time difference was inconvenient so to accommodate these requests we made the recording for an on-demand opportunity,” said Commissioner Josina Morita.

Content includes the history of the MWRD and how it reversed the flow of the Chicago River, which is brought to life with historical imagery from the MWRD’s archives. The tour provides an in-depth look at wastewater treatment, including underwater and microscopic views of the process. Aerial drone footage captures highlights of the



*Public Affairs Specialist Justin Brown.*

construction of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan in addition to property the MWRD leases for recreational uses.

Teachers and educators find the tour useful for their students, especially when discussing the timely topics of climate change and water conservation.

Developed by Public Affairs Specialist Justin Brown, the tour uses graphics and animation as well as photos, videos and aerial footage captured by Brown and his colleague, Public Affairs Specialist Dan Wendt, to provide a behind-the-scenes perspective of the MWRD’s work.

“It’s great to be able to share these incredible views and to explain what we do to a larger audience,” said Brown.

The virtual tour video is posted here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXMrBYek4>.

To register for a live presentation, visit:

<https://mwrdd.org/facility-and-virtual-tours>.

*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 [mwrdd.org](http://mwrdd.org).*