



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Open houses encourage closer glimpse of MWRD treatment plant operations and value of water infrastructure



Visitors to Calumet and Stickney Water Reclamation Plant on May 20 toured plant facilities by bus and interacted with plant staff to learn the importance of MWRD work protecting the regional water environment.

About 1,000 visitors joined the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) for interactive tours of MWRD water reclamation plants and engaged in activities with MWRD staff to observe how critical infrastructure and resourceful engineers, scientists and plant maintenance and operations staff keep the regional water environment protected.

For the first time since the pandemic began, the MWRD opened its doors to tours of its facilities for all ages. The open houses took place at the MWRD’s Egan Water Rec-

lamation Plant (WRP) in Schaumburg, Hanover Park WRP in the northwest suburb, Kirie WRP in Des Plaines and O’Brien WRP in Skokie on May 13, followed by open houses on May 20, at Calumet and Stickney WRPs in Chicago and Cicero, respectively.

“Our infrastructure is designed to collect and treat wastewater and protect the water quality of the water supply source in Lake Michigan,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “Without our water reclamation plants that operate 365 days a year, and 24 hours a day, and the integral people who

Open houses encourage closer glimpse *cont.*

manage them, billions of gallons of water would not be captured to prevent water from flowing to unwanted places.”

Visitors could tour plant facilities, take home a free tree sapling or milkweed packet, drop off electronics or unwanted medicine with the Cook County Sheriff's Office, view microorganisms under a microscope, craft bit beads and learn about coding, meet Analytics Lab personnel, learn about hiring and careers, and learn more about MWRD aquatic biology studies.

The events were part of National Infrastructure Week, May 15-19, highlighting the importance of infrastructure in Americans' daily lives. The United for Infrastructure program is part of Accelerator for America Action, which advocates for investment in infrastructure through a steering committee that includes the Value of Water Campaign and American Society of Civil Engineers.

“We pride ourselves on our essential work and wanted to share our story with the public,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Transforming wastewater into clean water while recovering resources like energy and valuable nutrients is the backbone of our work.”

Created in 1889 as the Sanitary District of Chicago to reverse the flow of the Chicago River and protect public health, the MWRD today is an award-winning agency responsible for treating wastewater and providing stormwater management for residents and businesses in an 882.1-square-mile service area that covers Chicago and 128 suburban municipalities. The MWRD strives to protect businesses, homes and neighborhoods from flood damage, clean wastewater entering water reclamation plants, manage water as a vital resource and protect area waterways and the source of drinking water in Lake Michigan.



Over two Saturdays in May visitors to six MWRD water reclamation plants learned how the MWRD transforms more than 400 billion gallons of wastewater into clean water while recovering valuable resources.

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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.