



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release

November 20, 2015

Sustainability efforts unearthed at MWRD's annual summit



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) President Mariyana Spyropoulos (front, third from right) and Chairman of Finance Frank Avila (front, second from right) presented awards at the MWRD's third annual Sustainability Summit to: (from l to r) Oak Lawn Public Works Director Steve Barrett, Oak Lawn Sewer Division Manager Bill Meyer, Oak Lawn Park District Horticulturist Dolly Foster, Oak Lawn Superintendent of Parks Joel Craig, Chicago Department of Transportation landscape architect Kris Sorich, T.Y. Lin International engineer David Gleason, Twin Oaks Landscaping Project Manager Shane Edwards and Janet Dukic, representing Westside Baseball of Oak Lawn.

Municipal leaders and environmental experts gathered to discuss and learn about best practices in sustainability, stormwater management, green infrastructure and renewable resources in water treatment through the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD) third annual Sustainability Summit.

This year's Sustainability Summit entitled "Becoming the Utility of the Future," held at the Katherine Legge Memorial Lodge in Hinsdale, brought together more than 75 experts to hear from the MWRD and its many local partners about the latest efforts to transform water and recover resources. The MWRD is striving to become energy neutral by 2023, while working toward the completion of the acclaimed Tunnel and

Reservoir Plan to reduce flooding and improve area water quality.

"The annual Sustainability Summit gives our many area partners a chance to hear how we are developing initiatives in sustainability and learning how they can bring these ideas, skills and best management practices back to their own communities and organizations," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "By bringing these like minds together, collaborating and searching for answers, we are all working to make the world a better place to live for future generations."

The event allowed for a series of panels that centered on resource recovery, water quality and re-use, renewable energy, stormwater management, chloride reductions on city streets and recent developments in the study and accessibility of biosolids. The MWRD worked with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Agriculture and several environmental groups to develop legislation that was signed earlier this year by Gov. Bruce Rauner to amend the Illinois Environmental Protection Act to create a new definition of exceptional quality biosolids and make this recovered resource more accessible. The law establishes the MWRD's biosolids program, which has been heavily sought after by farmers, golf course managers, landscapers, municipalities, park districts and homeowners. The MWRD (*continued*)



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is currently expanding the use of biosolids by mixing them with woodchips provided by the city of Chicago.

Awards were also given for exceptional biosolids use and stormwater management efforts. Biosolids award winners included Twin Oaks Landscaping, which developed the grounds at Maggie Daley Park using biosolids, and the Oak Lawn Park District and Westside Baseball of Oak Lawn for the beneficial use of biosolids on park grounds. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) was honored for its work incorporating green infrastructure into the Berteau Greenway project to better manage stormwater. CDOT reconfigured the Berteau Greenway in the 47th Ward by using a concrete diverter, which intercepts stormwater flow and directs it into a bump out that sends stormwater runoff from the street into a planted swale. The plants and soil absorb the stormwater and keep it from entering the sewer system and local basements. CDOT also replaced asphalt with green space to absorb stormwater; used plants to cleanse the stormwater of pollutants; and



For their work on the Biosolids Utilization Section with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), soil scientists were honored by MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos (fourth from right) and MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila (third from right) at the third annual Sustainability Summit. Dominic Brose (from l to r), Maricelo Sabido, Lakshwinder Hundal, Mina Patel, Andy Scott, Olawale Oladeji and Jeff Simpson were recognized.

employed a stone and gravel forebay to reduce erosion and filter out debris and sediment.

Oak Lawn was also honored for its participation in the MWRD's free rain barrel program. In only a few months since enrolling in the program this summer, the village ordered and received more than 4,000 rain barrels for its residents, the most of any participating community. In less than six months, the MWRD has distributed more than 20,000 free rain barrels among 59 communities and a dozen non-governmental organizations.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.