



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD pollution boat crew, Commissioners rescue Blackhawks' fan from Chicago River

While thousands of enchanted Chicago Blackhawks fans lined up along the parade route to cheer for the National Hockey League's top team last Friday, Commissioners and staff of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) participated in one fan's water rescue.

Commissioners Mariyana Spyropoulos and Kari Steele, along with Captain J. Jacob, Pollution Control Technicians Robert Chmela and Dave Zintak and other staff, had just toured the water intake cribs aboard a MWRD pollution control boat. As they headed back to the Chicago River through the lock of the Controlling Works near Lake Shore Drive, they witnessed someone in the river attempting to exit by climbing a wall.



MWRD Exec. Director David St. Pierre, Pollution Control Technician Robert Chmela, Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos, Pollution Control Technician Dave Zintak, Comm. Kari Steele and Boat Captain J. Jacob display resolutions during the July Board meeting. Captain Jacob guided the boat while Chmela and Zintak rescued a man from the Chicago River during the Blackhawks parade.

"We could see that a man was struggling to escape, but because the wall was so high, it would have been nearly impossible," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "Captain Jacob didn't hesitate to guide the boat near the man so he could be rescued."

At first, the man refused to leave the wall, but the commissioners and staff were able to direct him to approach the boat.

"We were lucky he could swim," said Commissioner Steele. "That helped us reach him so the crew could pull him up the side and into the boat."

Once the gentleman was safely aboard, Captain Jacob brought him to the Joint Marine Facility where the Coast Guard, Chicago Police, Illinois Conservation Police, Chicago Fire Department and MWRD share docking space for river access.

"I'm very proud of our staff," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "They take their work seriously and are committed to protecting the health and safety of all of our residents."

Our water environment, Take it personally.

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