



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD, U.S. EPA, IEPA break ground at O'Brien WRP disinfection project

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Administrator Susan Hedman, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Lisa Bonnett, State Rep. Robyn Gabel, Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen and other area representatives joined the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners to break ground on the disinfection facility at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) today. A performance by the award-winning McCracken Middle School band was an added attraction.

Ground was also broken for the disinfection facility at the Calumet WRP on Chicago's south side. The work should be completed by December 2015, ahead of the 2016 recreational season. The MWRD's Thornton Reservoir, which will also dramatically improve water quality in the Calumet region, is scheduled to go online at the same time.



In the photo: Breaking ground on the MWRD's new disinfection facility at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant in Skokie are (L-R): State Rep. Robyn Gabel, IL Finance Authority Exec. Director Chris Meister, MWRD Commissioner Kari Steele, MWRD Vice Pres. Barbara McGowan, MWRD Exec. Director David St. Pierre, MWRD Chairman of Finance Mariyana Spyropoulos, Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen, MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, MWRD Pres. Kathleen Meany, MWRD Commissioner Patrick D. Thompson, U.S. EPA Region 5 Administrator Susan Hedman, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore, Friends of the Chicago River Exec. Director Margaret Frisbie, Illinois EPA Director Lisa Bonnett, and MWRD Commissioner Michael Alvarez.

"We are proud to begin the construction of disinfection facilities at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant and at our Calumet Water Reclamation Plant," said MWRD President Kathleen Meany. "These facilities are the important next step in the transformation of Chicago area waterways into a second lakefront."

In addition to directly improving the water environment, the two disinfection projects will create 750 construction, operations and support jobs.

Margaret Frisbie is executive director of the Friends of the Chicago River. She said that "the Chicago River is emerging as one of our region's most significant natural resources. Wastewater disinfection is the natural next step in ensuring that the river will become clean and healthy for the people who live here and visit as well as the wildlife that calls it home."

"The Chicago River is one of the most important waterways in Illinois and it should be protected," Governor Quinn said. "This project will not only create hundreds of jobs now, it will improve the quality of life of everyone who enjoys the river and help attract tourism that will boost Illinois' economy."

"Greeley and Hansen is honored to have collaborated with MWRD on this important project to support the District's vision for improving Chicago area waterways by delivering a cost-saving design for this advanced technology disinfection facility on a fast-track," said Greeley and Hansen Executive Vice President Paul Vogel. "This project demonstrates the District's leadership and commitment to being exceptional stewards of Chicago's water resources."

*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. **Our water environment, Take it personally.***