



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District *of* Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Dedicates 125th Anniversary Garden to President Kathleen Therese Meany



The MWRD's Kathleen Therese Meany Presidential Garden was dedicated on June 20 at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant in Cicero, IL.

To commemorate the 125 years of service the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago has provided the Chicagoland region and to honor President Kathleen Therese Meany's 27 years of service, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held at a new sustainable garden on June 20.

The Kathleen Therese Meany Presidential Garden was constructed at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant in Cicero, IL. As the world's largest water reclamation facility, the Stickney WRP sits on 570 acres and is capable of cleaning 1.4 billion gallons of water each day. Hundreds of local and international visitors tour the plant for its

cutting edge technology, to view the full scope of wastewater treatment processes, and to learn about the District. This garden, which serves multiple purposes, will now be an added feature to these tours.

The garden was constructed in a courtyard surrounded by maintenance and operation offices, workshops and the plant control center. The District encourages communities to deal with water differently than in the past, asking them to consider gardens designed to infiltrate water into the ground instead of traditional grass turf. The District has native prairie property but in this courtyard there was only turf. The District has been the leading engineering organization in the wastewater industry since its founding and is well versed in concrete conveyance. Yet, green infrastructure is a new technology designed to deal with water on a property by property basis. With rain events that are increasing in intensity and duration, green infrastructure is being employed across the country to develop resilient landscapes that can adapt to the changing climate. (continued)

Our Water Environment: Take it personally

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.

MWRD Dedicates 125th Anniversary Garden to President Kathleen Therese Meany (continued)

The garden beds are made of a compost material created by using our biosolids, a product of the wastewater treatment process that is a sustainable alternative to chemical fertilizers. Our soil scientists will use the garden in the coming years as an experimental plot to test the efficacy of various biosolids products. The plant has formed a garden club and volunteer members will care for the garden. Biosolids are just one of the sustainable features of the garden. The path in the garden is a pervious surface allowing for water infiltration. This garden will also be irrigated using reclaimed water. Wastewater plants are a maze of underground buildings that connect the various treatment areas together. The courtyard serves as the roof of a large storage building and connecting corridor.

It has been a tradition at the District to honor those who have served long term positions on the Board of Commissioners and as President of the Board by renaming District facilities after them. The garden was named after President Kathleen Meany, who has provided 27 years of service to the MWRD. Her final term concludes in December 2014. Her dedication to the MWRD and the residents of Cook County are appreciated and will be remembered.

The MWRD's 100-year celebration included the construction of the centennial fountain and water cannon which was later named after longtime president Nicholas J. Melas. This fountain has become an attraction for the downtown area and was instrumental in the revitalization of this portion of Chicago. The District felt it was important to mark the 125th year milestone of the District yet remain conscious of our current economic environment.

"It's an exciting day as we mark our 125th year with a garden that symbolizes our evolution as an organization in the use of sustainable practices," said Executive Director David St. Pierre. "By combining our knowledge of green infrastructure with sustainable green practices, the District will continue to lead our industry into the future."

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