



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6633

public.affairs@mwr.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

July 8, 2015

Ukrainian delegation tours MWRD properties, discusses water issues with commissioners



In the photo (L-R): Dan Collins, managing civil engineer for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD); Borys Potapenko, Ukrainian Congress Committee of America delegate; Ostap Kryvydyk, senior professional staffer for Ukraine Parliament; Marta Farion, vice president of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, Illinois Division; MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos; Andrii Levus, member of Ukraine Parliament; Ruslan Khariv, director of the SPR-Group; Oleg Magamadov, strategic development director for the SPR-Group; and Alena Khariv, financial director of the SPR-Group.

Officials with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) welcomed a delegation of Ukrainian leaders and water treatment experts to share knowledge and discuss water management issues in the wake of regime changes in Ukraine.

The visit was part of a brief U.S. tour involving Andrii Levus, member of Ukraine Parliament, and members of the SPR-Group, a leading Ukrainian company in design, construction, reconstruction and upgrading of wastewater treatment facilities on a “turn-key” basis. Despite recent tensions in Ukraine, the SPR-Group reconstructed 12 water treatment plants that manage all phases of the treatment process under one roof to treat up to 119 million gallons of water per day. Using environmentally friendly, cutting-edge technology, the SPR-Group developed reliable, cost effective, fully automated, odorless and silent facilities to manage water treatment on a small scale, providing a unique comparison to the MWRD, which handles the largest water treatment plant in the world at the Stickney

Water Reclamation Plant (WRP), where 1.44 billion gallons of water are treated daily.

“It is incredibly important to learn about these new technologies and how other parts of the world are developing new solutions in managing water resources. The ongoing work in Ukraine might be on a different scale and in a different context, but like Ukraine, we are all tasked with the same goals in improving our water quality and eliminating flooding,” said President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “We appreciate our visit with the Mr. Levus and the SPR-Group and believe building a relationship with our counterparts will foster significant benefits.”

Levus also visited the U.S./Ukraine Working Group Yearly Summit hosted by the Center for U.S.-Ukrainian Relations in Washington, D.C., and met with members of Congress and other officials at the White House. As part of its trip, the SPR-Group visited Michigan leaders and water treatment facility experts in the region as well as leaders in the Ukrainian-American community. The



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meetings were intended to prompt discussion about the SPR-Group’s business model for water treatment and its vision for positive change in Ukraine.

Levus said, out of the post-Soviet Union countries, Ukraine is the leading nation for potential technical innovation. Between ongoing conflicts with Russia and dealing with the consequence of previous leadership, the future of the Ukraine is largely dependent on establishing relationships in the U.S. Considering the major presence of ethnic Ukrainians in Chicago, Levus encouraged the MWRD to work with the Ukrainian delegation to promote water quality issues in the Ukraine.

Kiev, which is a sister city to Chicago, has also experienced several challenges in managing stormwater. President Mariyana Spyropoulos explained the value of green infrastructure in managing stormwater.

In the Ukraine, the other challenge is investing in in-

frastructure to improve water quality and eliminate algae blooms. President Spyropoulos explained that the MWRD is in the process of building the world’s largest wastewater phosphorus recovery system with the potential to return 10,000 tons of usable phosphorus per year and eliminate it from waterways.

The delegation met with MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila for a tour of the Stickney WRP in Cicero, IL. Commissioner Avila worked with Paul Bandriwsky, vice president of the Illinois Division of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, to arrange the tour.

“We hope we were able to give them a different perspective of how we manage our abundant but critical supply of water,” said Commissioner Avila. “The Great Lakes is home to more than 20 percent of the world’s surface freshwater. It’s important that we are leaders in improving our water quality among the international community.”



Ruslan Khariv, director of the SPR-Group, and Mariyana Spyropoulos, president of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, shared their approaches to handling stormwater in Ukraine cities and in the Chicago area respectively.



Oleg Magamadov (left), strategic development director for the SPR-Group, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Chairman of Finance Frank Avila toured the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. The SPR-Group has mastered the art of creating small scale treatment plants in Ukraine, while the MWRD manages the largest in the world.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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.