



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Visitors to MWRD plants learn how water is transformed



Visitors to the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant were greeted by Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Commissioner Kari K. Steele and MWRD staff.



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago staff and President Mariyana Spyropoulos greeted more than 130 visitors to the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant for open house activities on May 21.

Unless it is flooding basements, water that runs through households is usually taken for granted after it funnels down the drain. But a few hundred curious area residents discovered what happens to that water through a special opportunity offered by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). Nearly 400 members of the public came out to tour MWRD facilities at six plant locations and were greeted with tours and free oak tree saplings.

“We are excited to open our doors to the public as we are a welcoming and transparent agency,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, who greeted visitors and helped lead tours of the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. “We all play a role in protecting our water environment, so we thank everyone for attending and for learning more about where water goes after it has been used.”

Visitors to the MWRD’s open houses learned how the MWRD is recovering resources and transforming water at these fascinating and important facilities. The MWRD, which owns and operates the largest water reclamation plant in the world at Stickney WRP, treats more than 1.4 billion gallons of water per day, and has the capacity to treat more than 2 billion gallons per day. The MWRD serves 10.35 million people in an 883.6-square-mile area



MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila and wife Sherry passed out oak tree saplings at the Kirie Water Reclamation Plant in Des Plaines.

of Cook County, which includes Chicago and 128 suburban communities.

The free open houses and tours on May 21 were part of the Value of Water Coalition’s Infrastructure Week (May 16-23), which sheds light on the importance of maintaining and modernizing the nation’s infrastructure. Across the country, water treatment agencies and members of the Value of Water Coalition in cities like *(continued)*

Visitors to MWRD plants learn how water is transformed *(continued)*



MWRD staff at the Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant gave personal tours and handed out oak tree saplings to visitors.

Chicago, Los Angeles and Cleveland hosted tours to explain why water infrastructure matters to their communities and the nation.

“The District offers tours throughout the year of our facilities, and we encourage the public to spend some time getting to know how our systems operate,” said Commissioner Kari K. Steele, who helped lead tours at the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant on Chicago’s south side. “Disinfection came online at the Calumet and O’Brien plants, so visitors are getting their first look at the new process that is transforming the water we release.”

Commissioner and Chairman of Finance Frank Avila participated in tours at the Kirie Water Reclamation Plant in Des Plaines and at the Egan Water Reclamation Plant in Schaumburg. “It was great to see so many people stop by for these special tours,” Commissioner Avila said. “We have many exciting initiatives taking place at each of our plants as we work to become energy-neutral by 2023.” Besides offering visitors an exclusive look at its plant operations, the MWRD promoted its efforts in improving regional stormwater management by giving away hundreds of free potted oak tree saplings to restore the region’s depleted canopy and help reduce flooding. The program was launched this spring and will continue with free



About 100 visitors came out to tour the MWRD’s O’Brien Water Reclamation Plant in Skokie and took home with them nearly 50 oak tree saplings to help the MWRD restore the canopy and collect stormwater.



At the Egan Water Reclamation Plant, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Commissioner Frank Avila talked water quality, resource recovery and ways to combat flooding by replenishing the canopy to collect stormwater through the MWRD’s new free oak tree sapling giveaway program.

tree distributions every Wednesday at MWRD plants. For more information about obtaining free tree saplings, visit www.mwrdd.org.

Facility tours are offered for groups of up to 25 at MWRD’s seven Cook County treatment plants and the Mainstream Pumping Station in Hodgkins, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., scheduled on an as-needed basis. All tours must be scheduled at least one month in advance and are open to adults of all ages and student in seventh grade or higher. Contact the MWRD Office of Public Affairs for more information at (312) 751-6633 or email public.affairs@mwrdd.org.

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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.