



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release

November 1, 2016

ASCE Illinois lauds MWRD, Hernandez with prestigious civil engineering awards

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) was saluted by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Illinois Section during the group's annual Awards Dinner Gala held at the Intercontinental Hotel on Oct. 13. The MWRD's Thornton Composite Reservoir was honored with the Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement award for projects over \$25 million, and the MWRD's Arturo Hernandez was honored as the Young Government Civil Engineer of the Year.

The reservoir is part of the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) to protect Lake Michigan's drinking water supply from sewage, improve the water quality of area waterways and provide an outlet for area floodwaters to reduce street and basement sewage backup.

"Given the amount of excellent civil engineering projects taking place in our state, we are ecstatic to be honored in this company with the American Society of Civil Engineers," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "When we envisioned the largest combined sewer overflow facility in the world, we knew we were facing many challenges, but after seeing the dramatic decrease in combined sewer overflows in the Calumet area, we quickly learned in one year that the reservoir is providing instant protection for our water environment."

The Thornton Composite Reservoir, part of Phase II of TARP and one of three planned reservoirs, is a major step towards achieving these goals. Completed in 2015, the reservoir has a storage capacity of 7.9 billion gallons and a surface area of approximately 83 acres. It serves a 90-square-mile area in Cook County by holding water before it can be treated and cleaned at the nearby Calumet Water Reclamation Plant. The reservoir is located in the expanded north lobe of the Thornton Quarry, one of the largest active aggregate quarries in the world.



The MWRD along with officials from co-primary contractors (F.H. Paschen/Cabo Construction Corporation, Joint Venture and Walsh/II in One, Joint Venture) and co-primary consultants (Black and Veatch Corporation Inc. and MWH Americas Inc.) received the Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement award from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Illinois Section. On hand with the engineers to receive the award were MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore (fourth from right) Vice President Barbara McGowan and Commissioner Frank Avila.

"The Thornton Composite Reservoir is the Grand Canyon of the South Suburbs, providing grand rewards by reducing flooding and protecting water quality for rivers and streams in our region," said MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore. "The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is proud to deliver protection to the people who call this area home and we thank the American Society of Civil Engineers Illinois Section for this recognition."

MWRD Associate Civil Engineer Arturo Hernandez is responsible for reviewing Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO) permits to ensure the design of sanitary and stormwater systems meets the WMO requirements and supports the MWRD's core mission of protecting the health and safety of the public. Hernandez has nine years of public sector experience, working with both Cook County and the MWRD in the Engineering and Maintenance and Operations departments. Hernandez is credited with implementing a risk and information-based methodology in sewer *(continued)*

ASCE Illinois lauds MWRD, Hernandez *(continued)*



John Lazzara, secretary for the American Society of Civil Engineers Illinois Section, presents the MWRD's Arturo Hernandez with the Young Government Civil Engineer of the Year award.

inspections and developing a local sewer system permit database through geographic information systems. His efforts have reduced expenses, allowed for quicker identification of problem areas and led to more efficient and accurate permit reviews.

Other honorees at this year's Awards Dinner Gala include: Gary Goodheart of Patrick Engineering, Monica



MWRD engineers (from left) Adel Awad, Brian Warwczak, Meagan Matias, Lou Storino and Bipinbhai Patel were honored for their work helping create the Thornton Composite Reservoir.

Crinion of WBK Engineering, Paul Loete of the Illinois Department of Transportation, Wilbur Milhouse III of Milhouse Engineering, Primera Engineers, Ltd., the Lake County Forest Preserve District, the Village of Elk Grove and Navy Pier, Inc. for its new Centennial Wheel. The ASCE Illinois Section also celebrated its centennial anniversary.

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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.