



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Platinum awards reflect MWRD's shining reputation for water treatment

A force of nature, water poses its share of uncontrollable challenges. Cleaning that water after it pours down drains, leaves households and runs off streets and sidewalks, however, presents more obstacles. Meeting that challenge year after year is what sets the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) atop the national charts.

The National Association for Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) recently lauded the MWRD for successfully meeting the highest standards in producing clean water. In recognition of decades of complete and consistent compliance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, the MWRD received Platinum Peak Performance awards at five of its water reclamation plants (WRPs), a distinction provided to treatment plants that have reached this status for five consecutive years. The following facilities have earned Platinum status:

- Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, 26 years
- Lemont Water Reclamation Plant, 21 years
- James C. Kirie Water Reclamation Plant, 13 years
- O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant, 12 years
- Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant, 10 years

In addition, the Egan WRP in Schaumburg earned a gold award for the fourth straight year, and the Stickney WRP in Cicero earned a silver award for meeting 99.94 percent compliance. Platinum Awards recognize 100 percent compliance with NPDES permits over a consecutive five-year period. If 100 percent compliance is maintained beyond the initial award, Platinum Award status is continued. Should 100 percent compliance not be maintained, member agency facilities must receive four consecutive Gold Awards to again be eligible for another Platinum Award in their fifth year of compliance. All seven MWRD



A settling tank at the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, where the MWRD has met national standards for 26 consecutive years, is part of a three-stage process that cleans water in about eight hours compared to several weeks of natural purification in waterways. Cleaner water and a strong record of compliance has reaffirmed the MWRD's status as an environmental leader.

WRPs have earned 99.6 percent or higher compliance since 2007.

“This recognition from NACWA demonstrates our commitment to protecting our water environment,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Our staff work diligently to clean nearly 500 billion gallons of water each year, and we could not accomplish this feat without the public. We encourage Cook County residents and business owners to be cognizant of what flows down their drains and limit water use especially on rainy days.”

The MWRD serves an equivalent population of 10.35 million, including 5.25 million people, a commercial and industrial equivalent of 4.5 million people, and a combined sewer overflow equivalent of 0.6 million people. Water funnels its way to *(continued)*

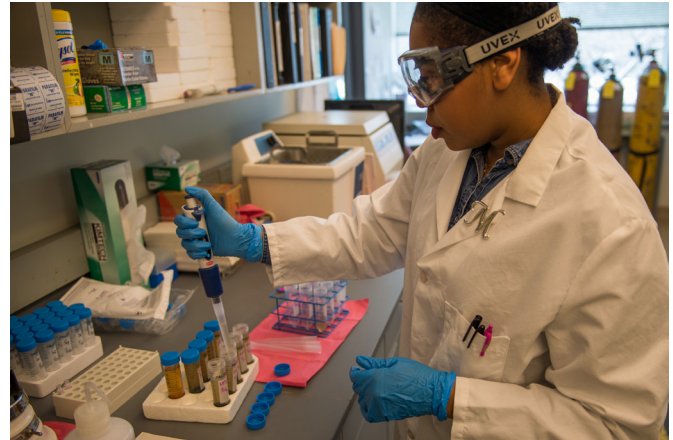
Platinum awards reflect MWRD's shining reputation *(continued)*

the MWRD from Chicago and 128 other municipalities in an 882-square-mile service area. The MWRD conveys that water to seven water reclamation plants, provides full secondary treatment and discharges clean water to local waterways. The MWRD is also responsible for stormwater management for all of Cook County, including areas outside of the MWRD's corporate boundaries for used water services.

"We are not only achieving the highest standards and recovering valuable resources, but meeting these expectations in the wake of changing weather patterns, increased impervious pavement and stormwater runoff, aging infrastructure and new demands for waterway activity," said MWRD Commissioner Kari K. Steele. "These awards affirm our mission to meet the challenges of producing clean water each day."

The Calumet WRP is the oldest of the seven WRP facilities, treating used water from a 300 square mile area in Chicago and the south suburbs. The plant provides primary, secondary and tertiary treatment thanks to disinfection technologies that utilize a chlorination and dechlorination process. This technology reduces the amount of pathogenic bacteria in the water released into the Calumet River system.

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MWRD employees are in the plants, tunnels, tanks and labs ensuring more than 5 million residents of Cook County have clean water.

The WRPs are implementing several innovations in renewable energy, while also developing reuse opportunities for water, energy, biosolids, algae, phosphorus and other nutrients collected during the water treatment process. Each of the seven plants has made strides in helping the MWRD meet its goal of becoming a utility of the future in resource recovery. Through these opportunities, the MWRD will add value in traditional and non-traditional ways while protecting the region's water quality.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for used water treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.