



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Road Show event at Von Steuben Metropolitan High School wraps up MWRD's 130th Anniversary celebration



Members of the public meet with MWRD Commissioners and staff during the Road Show event at Von Steuben Metropolitan High School on Nov. 16.



Commissioner Cam Davis addresses the audience at the Road Show event at Von Steuben Metropolitan High School in Chicago on November 16 while Peter Danos, Suburban Outreach Coordinator for U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, prepares to speak.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) has begun wrapping up the year-long celebration of its 130th anniversary. In 1889, the MWRD was created to protect the water supply source, Lake Michigan, and while operations expanded and its mission evolved since that time, the MWRD continues to provide the same level of service while showcasing its efforts by offering tours and reaching out to the community.

Staff participated in hundreds of events throughout the year to educate the public on the roles we all play in protecting our water environment. The MWRD hosted two road show events to bring Commissioners and subject matter experts directly to the public; the first was held at the Science and Arts Academy in Des Plaines, and the second was held at Von Steuben Metropolitan High School in Chicago. Students, families, teachers, job seekers and small business owners took advantage of the opportunity to meet with Commissioners and

staff to learn how to prevent basement backups, find a new career or explore business opportunities. STEM activities were also a highlight for students of all ages.

“It’s always important to educate students on initiatives we can take to improve our environment,” said Commissioner Cam Davis. “The Road Shows that are hosted by the District continue to spread awareness about all of the amazing initiatives that are happening around the County – such as electronic and pharmaceutical waste collection.”

Illinois Senator Laura Murphy was among the guests at the Des Plaines Road Show, and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth was represented by Peter Danos, Suburban Outreach Coordinator, at the Von Steuben event. The Cook County Sheriff’s Office collected hundreds of pounds of unwanted medications, electronics and paper for shredding and safe disposal during the Road Show events. *(continued)*

MWRD Road Show event at Von Steuben Metropolitan H. S., *cont.*



The Cook County Sheriff's Office collected hundreds of pounds of electronics at the Von Steuben Metropolitan High School Road Show event on Nov. 16.

We think it is important to educate the public about the District's work and help them understand what role they can play at home to protect the environment," said Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. "One of the first things is by not flushing medicines as this can have a harmful impact on the water environment. By partnering with the Cook County Sheriff's Office to collect unused medicines, we are taking small steps that can have a large impact."

In 2019, the MWRD reached out to other important stakeholders as well. Subject matter experts visited classrooms and community groups to answer questions and provide a more complete picture of what actions the MWRD takes during rainstorms or after the toilet is flushed.

Special events were held on MWRD properties, beginning with three open house and tours in May at the O'Brien, Stickney and Calumet Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs), and we welcomed 700 visitors as part of the Chicago Architecture Foundation's Open House Chicago at the O'Brien WRP to raise awareness of the architecture that is critical to housing these essential facilities. We hosted elected officials, farmers, soil scientists and engineers at our Fulton County site for a Field Day in July to develop best management practices in nutrient runoff reduction. In October,



MWRD Public Affairs Specialist Rebecca Wooley offers a lesson in water conservation to 7-year-old Elliott.



MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos greets Sanjay Patel, O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations, during the Von Steuben Road Show event.

we held the 7th annual Sustainability Summit at our Stickney WRP. In total, MWRD staff participated in 245 events, reached more than 130,000 people during outreach initiatives and 4,000 more visited our properties for tours. The MWRD partnered with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and held a Household Hazardous Waste event at the Brookfield Zoo in April which attracted 1,500 households. The MWRD also continued working to restore Cook County's tree canopy by distributing 14,000 oak saplings this year for a total of 72,500 since mid-2016.

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.