

Community's Fire Protection Enhanced by Water Delivery System

Many customers are unaware of the important role WaterOne plays in providing fire protection to the community.

Delivery & Availability

WaterOne's delivery system and availability of fire protection capacity helps fire departments throughout the county meet their needs.

This is a factor that's considered when fire departments are rated by the insurance industry. Because of recently upgraded fire ratings in two cities served by WaterOne, businesses may experience lower property and casualty insurance premiums.

Fire Protection Capacity

In the majority of WaterOne's service area where fire protection is available, it is provided without regard to the amount of water that a customer may use.

Many people naturally think fire hydrants are the primary facilities needed to provide fire protection. Though the utility maintains tens of thousands of fire hydrants, fire hydrants are only a small portion of the facilities and costs required to provide fire protection capacity.

The largest portion of fire protection cost is related

to many other facilities which must be sized larger to ensure that fire protection capacity is available. For example pumps, reservoirs, and water mains must all be sized larger to include the capacity for fire reserves, in addition to capacity to meet regular water use demands.

Proactive Fire Hydrant Maintenance Program

Not only does the utility provide for fire protection capacity, it also has a proactive fire hydrant maintenance program. Each year crews check over 15,000 fire hydrants throughout the utility's service area to ensure they are functioning properly.

In addition to fire hydrants and water mains maintained by WaterOne, there are also a number of private fire lines and hydrants located throughout the utility's service area that are maintained by the property owners.



Good News for WaterOne Customers No Rate Increase in 2004

WaterOne's 2004 budget was adopted by the utility's Governing Board at its December board meeting. The 2004 budget does not require an increase in water rates or system development charges. This marks the sixth year out of the last seven that customers of the utility have not had a water rate increase.

Proactive Response to Mainbreaks

WaterOne crews were kept busy this past year responding and repairing a record number of main breaks. In 2003 there were 851 main breaks, compared to a six-year average of 592 breaks per year. A primary factor in the increase of main breaks was extreme drought conditions that can result in shifting of the ground around pipes. WaterOne makes it a priority to repair breaks within four to eight hours, depending on the size of the break.

In keeping with its goal to be proactive, WaterOne has initiated an Asset Management Plan for identifying water main infrastructures that will need replacement in the future. This long-range strategy will help the utility identify, evaluate and implement distribution and transmission main replacements within a specific time frame. Each year, when the program is fully implemented, mains that meet established replacement criteria would be scheduled for replacement.

Water mains represent a significant and vital investment to WaterOne. The replacement value of WaterOne's 2242 miles of water main infrastructure is valued at approximately \$1.36 billion.

Website Payment Options a Hit

WaterOne's web site was redesigned in 2003 to make available new features and options for customer convenience and easy navigation, as well as provide expanded payment options. Since the new on-line payment options were implemented, many customers have chosen to pay their water bills using debit/credit cards. Others have taken advantage of signing up on-line for *Aquamatic*, WaterOne's free direct payment service.

Other new features of the redesigned web site include simple on-line forms for *Water Service On or Off*, and *Change of Customer Information*. Check out these options and many other new features at: www.waterone.org.

WaterOne Committed to Environmental Awareness

Several members of WaterOne's management staff and Board attended an Environmental Leadership Forum, hosted by Olathe Municipal Services. The forum was part of a research project of the American Water Works Research Foundation.

The forum united leaders representing water utilities, water agencies, environmental groups, elected officials, and research groups from the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. Participants helped identify water related environmental leadership strategies that could be pursued. Similar forums have been held in California and Florida.

WaterOne has a firm commitment to environmental awareness. Over the years it has supported numerous environmental efforts through educa-

tional campaigns, Earth Day celebrations and National Drinking Water Week programs in schools and the community.

The Conservation Services Department at the utility provides educational programs year-round to help customers become more efficient water users.

WaterOne employees recycle paper, corrugated cardboard and aluminum cans at its facilities, and the utility is committed to the proper disposal of old tires, batteries and lubricants. WaterOne also supports efforts to keep area rivers clean and is a member of *Friends of the Kaw*, a group committed to protecting and preserving the Kansas River for future generations.

Planning For the Future

WaterOne's current treatment and pumping capacity is 165 million gallons per day (mgd). Scheduled improvements will increase the capacity to 180 mgd by the summer of 2005.

Once those improvements are made, the utility's existing treatment facilities will be maximized. It will be necessary to build a new treatment facility to serve future customers.

It has been determined that obtaining a new water supply on the Missouri River is the best long-term solution. This option has been recommended by the utility's consulting engineers, Black & Veatch, and verified by an independent peer review panel.

The Missouri River provides the best drought protection with over 10 times the flow of the Kansas River. It has the best water quality with least potential for taste and odor problems, and offers the lowest overall cost and rate impact.

Long-range master planning is a key step to ensure an adequate water supply, not only for customers today, but for the customers of tomorrow.

WaterOne has prepared a brochure, "*Planning Your Water Supply, Drop by Drop*." The brochure can be viewed on the utility's website at www.waterone.org or obtained by calling Customer Service at 913-895-1800.

How to Identify A WaterOne Employee

Avoid scams and ripoffs by unscrupulous individuals posing as utility workers. Make sure you know how to identify a WaterOne employee:

- * All field employees wear uniforms marked with the WaterOne logo
- * Employees carry a WaterOne photo I.D. at all times
- * Vehicles that employees drive are clearly marked with the WaterOne name and logo.

If someone comes to your home representing WaterOne and you want to verify that they are an employee, please ask to see the individual's I.D. or call 913-895-5500.



Employees Open Their Hearts to Help Others

WaterOne employee donations for the 2003 United Way Campaign totaled \$22,500, an approximate increase of 20% over last year's contributions.