

Pipeline

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

www.wsscwater.com

Hot off the presses!



Our 2003 Water Quality and Annual Reports are hot off the presses — both detailing our unwavering commitment to provide you with water that meets or surpasses U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for safety. The Water

Quality Report — delivered to you in late June — provides important information about the source of your water, how it is cleaned and answers to frequently asked questions. Our Annual Report focuses on the unusual weather events impacting

this region in 2003 and how WSSC employees demonstrated their resilience and proved they can successfully weather challenges on many fronts. From drought to deluge and blizzard to hurricane, our employees maintained their focus on public and environmental health to continue to provide you with safe, reliable water and wastewater services. If you would like copies of these reports, please contact our Public Communications Office at 301-206-8100, or read them on our website at www.wsscwater.com.



Drink Up!

WSSC's Patuxent Water Filtration Plant recently received the Chesapeake Section of the American Water Works Association's (CSAWWA) Best Taste Award. CSAWWA judges tasted the water from several surface water plants in Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Delaware. The Patuxent Plant supplies water to WSSC customers in portions of Montgomery County and Prince George's counties. To guarantee water quality, stringent tests are regularly performed for nearly 200 substances.



Rate increase takes effect

For the first time in six years, your enclosed bill reflects a rate increase. After absorbing cost increases for six years, a 3 percent combined water and sewer rate increase went into effect on July 1, 2004. For average residential customers, a 3 percent increase equals approximately 4 cents a day, \$3.46 a quarter, or \$12 - \$15 a year. The increase is necessary to help fund more than \$100 million in facility improvements that have been accelerated because they offer enhanced security benefits, in addition to upgrading our products and services.

Potomac Plant Improvements

We have recently embarked on an aggressive project to upgrade our Potomac Water Filtration Plant, which produces approximately 75 percent of the water used by our 1.6 million customers. These upgrades are designed to improve plant efficiency, reliability and security and include process treatment enhancements; electrical equipment upgrades; and new, state-of-the-art disinfection technology — including advanced ultraviolet (UV) disinfection facilities to provide additional protection. The estimated completion date for these upgrades is late 2008.

Cease The Grease Tip 5

Did you know that fibrous materials can swell up in your sewer pipes (and ours) - causing blockages that can create backups in your home or your neighbors' homes? Please don't put the following fibrous materials in your toilets and/or sink drains:

- Cigarette butts
- Feminine products
- Cotton balls
- Cereals and grains
- Diapers
- Paper towels
- Q-tips
- Bandages or gauze dressing

Water, Use It Wisely

WATER SAVING TIPS

- Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.
- Water deeply (up to one-inch) but less frequently to create healthier and stronger landscapes.
- Watering is best in the evening or early morning.
- When watering is necessary, don't water on windy days.



Lead levels well below federal standards

In the last issue of "Pipeline," we informed you that we had voluntarily expanded our lead sampling of area homes and would report on those results when finished. The recent round of voluntary lead tests in homes throughout Montgomery and Prince George's counties are complete and, like WSSC's 2002 results, are well below U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead and Copper Rule guidelines. Furthermore, recent results were generally lower than those from 2002. Historically, lead levels in WSSC's service area have been below the Federal Action Level for the past 10 years and continue to decline.

While WSSC continues to successfully meet EPA Lead and Copper Rule requirements, customers are reminded that it is possible for lead levels in certain homes to be higher than in others as a result of plumbing materials. Lead can leach into water from home pipes and fixtures. Customers concerned about lead, particularly if they have an "at-risk" person in their household (i.e., young children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers) should flush the cold water tap until the water turns noticeably colder (usually for 30 seconds to 2 minutes) before using water for drinking or cooking. Hot water should not be used for drinking or cooking, as lead levels generally are higher in hot water. For more information, residents can contact EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791 or the EPA website: www.epa.gov. Individuals may also contact WSSC's laboratory at 301-206-7575 to schedule a lead test (for a fee), or fill out an on-line testing request form at www.wsscwater.com.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
14501 Sweitzer Lane, Laurel, Maryland 20707
301-206-8000

www.wsscwater.com

