



Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Summer 2017

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**Customer Survey
Results**

**Do Not Take
Unmetered Water**

To Serve You Better

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WaterWorks keeps tap water flowing

Customers provided 144 grants totaling \$25,826 in 2016

Every summer, the water utility asks its customers to contribute to *WaterWorks*, a program that assists needy residents with their water bills. *WaterWorks* is jointly administered between the water utility and the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAP).

Your contributions provided \$25,826 in grants to customers in need in 2016. This amounted to 144 grants, with the average amount of the grant being \$179.35. A grant assists the customer in need with paying the water and sewer bill to ensure that they continue to receive water services. This might be an individual, a family or an adult with dependents. So, while 144 grants were provided, your contributions kept many more people supplied with water than the number would indicate.

Applicants must meet certain criteria to receive the grants, which

include water service termination or pending termination, financial crisis, and qualification under low-income guidelines. Grants have annual limits and are subject to availability of funds. CAP determines whether a customer qualifies under low-income guidelines established by the Minn. Department of Commerce.

The program received \$25,916 in contributions last year, of which \$5,000 came from matching funds from SPRWS. The remainder of the funds came directly from customer contributions. One-time contributions totaled \$4,127 while on-going contributions totaled \$16,789.

The families who benefitted from your generosity and the water utility thank those of you who contributed to *WaterWorks* last year. We ask for your continued support of the program in 2017.

A brochure with a contribution form is enclosed with this mailing for your use.

You can also sign up at www.stpaul.gov/waterworks.

Public hearings on proposed 2018 water rates, 2018 budget will be September 12

All customers and interested parties are invited to our annual public hearing on proposed 2018 water rates and the 2018 budget.

The public hearing will be held prior to the September 12 regular meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners. The public hearing

portion will begin at 5 p.m. in the lobby of Saint Paul Regional Water Services' administration building, located at 1900 Rice Street.

Details on proposed water rates will be available in late July on our website at www.stpaul.gov/water.

Our mission is to provide reliable, quality water and services at a reasonable cost.

To Serve You Better

To talk to a customer service representative call customer service at (651) 266-6350 and press "0" between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Bills may be paid in the following ways:

Credit Card

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express credit/debit cards. To make a credit card payment, or to get information on your account status 24/7, call (651) 266-6350 or go online to: <https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>. Or pay in person at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1900 Rice St., Maplewood

Money Order or Check

In person, by return mail with your bill stub, or in our drop box:

For next-day processing, at McCarrons Center. The drop box is located in the visitor parking area; available 24 hours a day.

Cash

In person only, at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Direct Payment Plan

Have your payment deducted electronically from your checking or savings account. You'll still receive a statement; it will indicate which date the payment will be deducted from your account.

It is illegal to take unmetered water

Do not remove, tamper with, or obstruct a water meter.

Water meters are the property of Saint Paul Regional Water Services. Removing or tampering with a water meter or the illegal taking of water can result in a \$1,000 fine.

It is illegal for any unauthorized person (including a licensed plumber) to alter, tamper with, relocate, willfully damage, or bypass a water meter.

If you have questions about your water meter, call SPRWS meter operations at 651-266-6850.

Customer survey indicates that SPRWS does a good job of providing water and services

Saint Paul Regional Water Services commissioned a customer survey that took place in the fall of 2016. About 400 water utility customers were interviewed in a phone survey that included both cell and land line phones. Many of things we asked about were personal to you, the customer. We asked what you thought of everything from our performance as a whole utility, to your individual experiences with our staff.

The results indicate that an overwhelming majority of customers find SPRWS doing a good or excellent job, with water quality and water value also ranking very high.

Customers like you rate the overall performance of the utility to be good or excellent. Most (89 percent) also believe that we do a good or excellent job of ensuring safe, reliable drinking water.

Most of you, 75 percent, think there are convenient payment options available, and 75 percent think that the water bill is clear and easy to understand.

Only about one third of you called us for any reason (29 percent) and 10 percent of you contacted us with a complaint. Of those who contacted us, 77 percent of you said you were either very, mostly or somewhat satisfied with the outcome of your experience with us. Only two percent said the reason they called was not resolved.

Few of you knew much about lead in drinking water. Only 22 percent knew you could call to find out if you had a lead service line, 18 percent said you had knowledge

we provided free lead testing of drinking water. However, 57 percent of you would like more information on lead in drinking water. (See <http://tinyurl.com/ya9anre2> for more information on lead in drinking water.)

Most of you drink your water straight from the tap (59 percent), although 26 percent of you drink filtered water and 11 percent drink bottled water. For those of you who use filtered or bottled water, 40 percent said it was because it tasted better, 17 percent said it was for convenience, and 6 percent thought it costs less than tap water. While 25 percent said it was because bottled or filtered water was safer, 86 percent of all respondents thought the safety of your tap water was good or excellent. This indicates a need for us to do a better job educating our customers about the value and safety of tap water versus bottled or filtered water. This is especially true of our non-white and lower income customers, who represented a lower percentage of people drinking tap water.

In regards to keeping you informed about changes in rates and services, 63 percent said we did a good or excellent job. Sixty-seven percent thought we did good or excellent informing you of construction or emergency water shut down that impacted your water service.

Overall, the majority of indicators show that you, our customers, think that we are doing a good or excellent job in meeting our mission of providing you with quality water and services at a reasonable price.