



Pipeline

APRIL–JUNE 2007



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www.wsscwater.com

General Numbers:

301-206-WSSC (9772)

1-800-828-6439

TTY: 301-206-8345

To report a water or sewer emergency:

301-206-4002

WSSC provides water and wastewater services to Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

We are entrusted by our community to provide safe and reliable water, life's most precious resource, and return clean water to the environment, all in a financially responsible manner.



20% post-consumer content

The worst February – ever – for water pipe breaks

In a stark reflection of serious problems with old water pipes, WSSC unfortunately set a new record for water main breaks during February. Decaying pipes are especially vulnerable to breaks when temperatures move up and down quickly, which happened often, and by the end of the month WSSC had 477 broken water mains. This is more than double the previous February record of 218 breaks, set in 1995. Anyway you look at it, thousands of customers were inconvenienced.

WSSC is facing the same problem confronting water providers across the country. As underground pipes age, the number of water main breaks continue to increase. WSSC work crews now spend more time on emergency repairs than on planned maintenance.

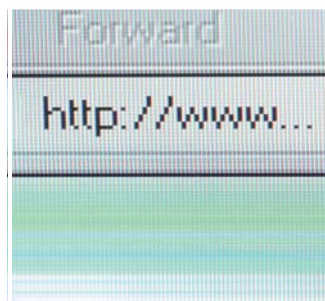
“Unfortunately, with our old pipes, our customers can expect more months like the one we had in February,” said Andrew Brunhart, WSSC General Manager. *“Our customers were extremely patient and we thank you for your understanding.”*

WSSC will be 89 years old this year, and pipes that are showing their age need to be replaced. Many of the breaks occurred on mains that are more than fifty, sixty, and even seventy years old. Plans to replace the old pipes at faster rates are being developed – a 30-year infrastructure investment plan will be completed within the year.



“Pipes are expensive, but invisible. Pipes are hearty, but ultimately mortal... Increased expenditures are needed... The bills are now coming due, and they loom large.”

- The American Water Works Association, 2001



New E-billing feature now available to customers

The latest WSSC initiative in leveraging new technologies to enhance service is up and running. Customers now have a new option to view their water and sewer bills online and securely pay by credit card. To take advantage of this new service, go to the WSSC website, www.wsscwater.com, and go to the option for online credit card bill payment.

Don't let sewer backups happen to you

There are a lot of things that can go wrong in a home, but few troubles are more disgusting than a sewer backup. Fortunately, most sewer clogs are preventable.

To protect pipes, homes, and household budgets, people should not pour cooking fats, oils or greases down kitchen drains. Instead, WSSC urges residents to pour grease into an empty can (soup cans work great), and then either save the can in the freezer for another day or toss in the trash. Recycling facilities are beginning to appear, collecting grease for eventual re-use as a biofuel, but those sites are few and far between at the moment.



Protect our streams and rivers

Sewer system overflows are a national problem, with up to 75,000 major events reported annually to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Locally, overflows can cause environmental harm when grease clogs form anywhere in the 5,200 miles of WSSC sewer pipe that run through Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

When a sewer overflows from a manhole, untreated wastewater will likely end up in one of the creeks or streams that eventually feed into the Chesapeake Bay. WSSC customers can help prevent thousands of gallons of sewage from reaching the Bay by keeping fats, oil and grease out of their drains and pipes.

Does your homeowner association, service group, or school class want to learn more about how the wastewater system works, and ways to protect your home and the environment? Call WSSC at 301-206-8100 to schedule a free presentation, day or evening.

Your phone call can help us protect the environment



Water that is healthy and safe for drinking, if accidentally released by a pipe break, can upset the environmental balance of a river or stream.

Untreated wastewater flowing through a manhole cover can harm aquatic life if it enters a stream.

To prevent environmental harm, WSSC mobilizes as quickly as we can to respond to the breaks and clogs, but we need the public's help. We need you to call us when you see a water main break or a sewer overflow.

Over 10,000 miles of water and sewer pipes lie under the streets and along the streams of Montgomery and Prince George's counties. WSSC crews work 24/7, 365 days a year, to ensure service delivery to our customers, but they can't be everywhere. Fortunately, WSSC customers know the importance of environmental protection, and we appreciate your support.

If you see or suspect a pipe break or blockage, at any time of the day or night, please call 301-206-4002, or toll free 1-800-828-6439, and help us protect the environment.



Seeking CAB and EAC members

For nearly 20 years WSSC has learned from our customers through their participation on two advisory groups: the Customer Advisory Board (CAB), and the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC). Both groups have openings and are seeking applications from WSSC customers in Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

The CAB reviews and provides advice on WSSC policies, programs and services as they affect customers. They meet on the third Wednesday of the month, at 7:30 pm, in Laurel, and they serve without compensation. If you are interested in applying, email Dawn Forsythe at dforsyt@wsscwater.com, or call 301-206-8100.

The EAC provides input on environmental issues and WSSC projects. They meet on the first Thursday of the month, at 7:00 pm, in Laurel, and they also serve without compensation. If you are interested in applying for the EAC, email Martin Chandler at mchandler@wsscwater.com, or call 301-206-8052.