



FROM THE TAP

THE WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICE



MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!

Commission Meetings

December 19, 2007
January 16, 2008
February 20, 2008

FY08 Budget Public Hearings

Prince George's County
in Largo at 7:30 pm
February 6, 2008

Montgomery County
in Rockville at 7:30 pm
February 7, 2008

WSSC in Laurel
(if necessary)
February 13, 2008

*Locations and dates
subject to change.
Check our website or call
the Commission Office at
301-206-8000 to verify
dates and times.*



WSSC's 30 Year Infrastructure Plan

WSSC recently released the first phase of our 30-year infrastructure investment plan. The plan, crafted in cooperation with officials from Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, will provide the full requirement for refurbishing and replacing WSSC's aging water and wastewater systems over the next 30 years.

The 30-year plan involves a broad examination of the condition and lifespan of all of the WSSC's major assets. Among its significant findings:

- 85 percent of WSSC's water distribution system will reach or exceed its lifespan by 2020 and should be a top priority in the replacement process.
- Of the 5,400-plus miles of water mains, 1,300 are

more than 50 years old. Another 2,400 miles of pipes are between 25 and 50 years old.

- WSSC's wastewater collection system still has a substantial lifespan left. However, certain types of sewer pipe are in poor condition and several drainage basins will require significant attention over the next 30 years.

Last winter was a vivid demonstration of the consequences of aging water pipes. In February alone, WSSC had 479 breaks.

"If we do not address WSSC's aging systems, many of our customers will experience disruptions in service more often, and for longer periods of time," said WSSC former Chair and

current Commissioner Prem Agarwal.

"We are at a critical point. Our infrastructure is aging and much of it needs to be replaced. We are working with our Counties on the pace of renewal and developing a 10-year fiscal plan," said Andrew D. Brunhart, WSSC General Manager.

The news about WSSC's above-ground assets, including its buildings, plants and pumping stations is more promising. In general, these assets are in good condition.

The executive summary of the first phase of the 30-year infrastructure plan can be found on WSSC's Web site at www.wsscwater.com. The link to the executive summary can be found under Hot Topics.

Failing Septic Systems and Wells

WSSC receives inquiries every day from property owners and elected officials regarding failed septic systems or wells and requesting information about how to connect to WSSC's system.

The process of new connections can be confusing and complicated. Not everyone will be able to connect. No two situations are identical and no two solutions will solve the problem. For very specific engineering reasons and cost realities, the cost of these

connections can vary widely. Many property owners are also surprised when they learn that WSSC is not authorized to pay for these connections.

Property owners have many options and costs to consider. For help in asking the necessary questions and finding answers, WSSC has created a new document entitled "*Making the Connection: A Homeowner's Introduction When Your Well or Septic System Fails.*" While no single document could address every variable or question

involved, this new document provides a great starting point for anyone contemplating connecting to the WSSC.

If elected officials and staff have questions about this, feel free to call the Intergovernmental Relations Office at 301-206-8228. If property owners have questions, they should call the WSSC Permit Services office at 301-206-4003. The form can be found on www.wsscwater.com/info. Click the link [Making the Connection](#).



State Watch: 2008 Legislative Session

WSSC RELATED BILLS

The following bills impacting WSSC have been filed for the 2008 Regular Session. The Montgomery County House Delegation will act first on WSSC bills this year.

PG/MC 102-08 has been reintroduced as amended in the 2007 Session. *WSSC and Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission - Appointments - Interviews and Financial Statements.*

Montgomery County requested the bill because it found that "conducting and transcribing thorough and meaningful interviews [can be] a time consuming process." The bill allows the County Executives to limit interviews to those under serious consideration for appointment and fully delegate the authority to conduct the interview. This, according to the Montgomery County Government's testimony in 2007 "will make the process less wasteful and

less demanding for both the County and the applicant .

WSSC Commissioners voted to Support this bill November 2007.

PG/MC 104-08 has been introduced on behalf of the Prince George's County Council. *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Budget Approval.*

This bill provides that if the county councils of Montgomery and Prince George's counties fail to concur on the operating budget by a certain time, the WSSC proposed operating budget will prevail. If the county councils of Montgomery and Prince George's counties fail to concur on the capital budget of the WSSC by a certain time, the funding levels may not exceed the previous year's approved funding levels.

WSSC Commissioners have not taken a position on this bill to date.

PG/MC 106-08 has been introduced on behalf of the Prince George's County Council. *Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Systems Development Surcharge-Exemptions.*

The bill expands the SDC exemption allowances by the Counties from *property used "exclusively" for programs and services to youth to property used "primarily" for programs and services to youth.* The bill also changes the program sunset from 2009 to 2012.

WSSC Commissioners have not taken a position on this bill to date.

PG/MC 115-08 has been introduced by Del. Anne Healey. *Prince George's County Energy Tax-WSSC.*

The bill provides that the sale or use of energy or fuel used by WSSC in Prince George's County is not exempt from a certain tax,

except under certain circumstances.

WSSC Commissioners have not taken a position on this bill at this time.

Contact the WSSC Intergovernmental Relations Office at 301-206-8228 with questions or for information.

2008 SESSION DATES

1/9/08: First day of the 2008 Session of the General Assembly

4/7/08: Sine Die, last day of the 2008 Session



Federal Lookout: 2007 WRDA Becomes Law

For the first time in almost 6 years, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) passed Congress and become law, despite White House objections. The WRDA became law on November 9, 2007, following a Senate override of the President's November 2nd veto by a vote of 79 to 14. The House vote to overturn the veto came days earlier on November 6 by a vote of 361 to 54.

This measure provides the authorization for projects and policies of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and includes two critical environmental infrastructure authorizations for the national capital region, one designated for Chesapeake Bay-related activities and the other for the Anacostia River Basin.

In a move to get WRDA back on its two-year

authorization schedule, both Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), who chairs the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee, and Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN), who chairs the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, have indicated that they are committed to introduce and move a new version of WRDA in 2008. The goal of this action is to

bring the bill back to its two-year renewal cycle. The last version of the bill was enacted in 2000.

The bill could potentially impact the WSSC. The WSSC routinely participates in Anacostia River-related studies as an Advisory Member. There could be programs impacting the Anacostia River Basin and Chesapeake Bay programs



A Great Place to Work...

WSSC was honored again for its exceptional work environment in receiving the 2007 Workplace Excellence Award from the Alliance for Workplace Excellence. This is the third year in a row that WSSC has been given the prestigious honor.

The Workplace Excellence Award recognizes visionary employers that are paving the way to a workplace where men and women are able to experience professional

fulfillment, success and personal wellness not only at work, but also at home and within the community.

“WSSC is a team of more than 1,400 outstanding employees. This award honors, once again, the dedication and hard work of each and every employee,” said WSSC General Manager Andrew Brunhart.

The 2007 Workplace Excellence recipients represent over one million

employees from small, medium and large private, nonprofit and public sectors. WSSC is one of 59 employers in the Greater Washington, DC area who will be receiving the Workplace Excellence Award during a ceremony on June 14th at the North Bethesda Marriott Hotel and Convention Center.

Businesses being honored with the Workplace Excellence Award are required to complete a comprehensive and rigorous

assessment process led by an Independent Review Panel. The panel consists of professors, Ph. D. professionals and Ph. D. students of business, industrial and organizational psychology and Human Resources.



SLMBE Celebrates Vendor Days

By Towanda Livingston, SLMBE Director, WSSC

The WSSC SLMBE has partnered with other departments to host a new monthly outreach effort called “Vendor Days.” This includes WSSC staff from Acquisition, Construction, Logistics, A/E, IT, SSMO, and Customer Care. Throughout the year, SLMBE vendors are

invited to participate in matchmaking and business development workshops with targeted groups within the Commission.

Workshops are focused on specific departments to assist the SLMBEs with identifying contractual opportunities with the WSSC, to attend in-depth information sessions, and provide educational/training workshops. In addition to the

educational benefits afforded to attendees, these events serve to improve communication between contract decision makers and SLMBE vendors. Vendor Days will educate SLMBEs on the Centralized Bidder Registration (CBR) system, preparation of bid documents, procurement practices of the WSSC, as well as, a host of other developmental workshops.

September featured Acquisitions. October featured Logistics. Vendor Days are free to the Public To learn more, please contact the SLMBE Office at 301-206-8800 or visit our web site at www.wsscwater.com.



Honoring Those Lost in the Line of Duty

WSSC held a special memorial ceremony on October 17, 2007 to honor seven employees who passed away during the performance of their duties.

A bronze memorial dedicated to the employees who lost their lives while on the job during the past 89 years was unveiled during a program at the WSSC headquarters in Laurel. It will be a permanent fixture in the lobby.

The honorees are Alonzo Sharps (1935); Harry Mobley Jr. (1966); David Huffman (1982); Paul Smith (1997); Michael Johnson (1997); Johnnie McBride (2004); and Leland Grow (2005).

“This memorial continuously honors those WSSC employees who have lost their lives in the service of Prince George’s and Montgomery county residences,” says General Manager Andrew Brunhart.



General Manager's Message



Andrew D. Brunhart
General Manager, WSSC

Thirsty? Try the Tap.

The following appeared in The Washington Post on October 14, 2007 page B08.

Pop quiz. You are running out the door but want to grab a drink. You know that drinking water is good for you, so you reach in the fridge for some agua. Do you grab (a) one of your store-bought bottles of drinking water that can cost over \$1 or (b) your reusable sports bottle filled with drinking water from your tap that costs a fraction of a penny?

We at the [Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission](#) (WSSC) want the 1.8 million people we serve every day (and everyone else) to know why water straight from the tap is good for you, good for your pocketbook and good for the environment.

"But the quality is different," you say. "Bottled water is tastier and healthier." Not so. Water from the tap repeatedly wins taste tests across the country. And tap water includes fluoride, an essential additive to help children develop strong teeth.

According to a recent study from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), a growing number of young children are getting more cavities. A leading suspect is bottled water. Why? Most bottled brands do not contain fluoride.

"But bottled water is convenient," you say. "I can just grab one and go." Let me ask you another question. What's more convenient? Turning on the tap, filling a sports bottle and putting it in the refrigerator, or getting in the car, driving to your store, loading water into your cart, standing in the supermarket checkout line, putting the water in your car, driving it home and loading it into your fridge?

There isn't any question that using tap water is also better for your pocketbook. It simply costs less. A lot less. One dollar of WSSC water will fill more than 2,000 20-ounce plastic bottles, just like the one you buy at the store or get from a machine for \$1.25. It's easy to see the better value.

"But is our tap water safe?" you ask. According to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), the United States has one of the safest water systems in the world. The WSSC tests the drinking water hundreds of thousands of times a year. In our 89 years of providing tap water to [Montgomery](#) and [Prince George's](#) counties, our water quality has always met or surpassed EPA standards.

Finally, there is the environmental impact of drinking from a bottle instead of from the tap. Every plastic bottle of water requires the use of oil for making the bottle and transporting it to stores. Every day, an estimated 60 million plastic water bottles are thrown away. Most are not recycled. Millions end up in our local landfills.

In June the U.S. Conference of Mayors recognized the problems created by the rampant use of bottled water. It passed a resolution promoting the use of tap water and called for greater scrutiny of the impact of discarded bottles on landfills.

The WSSC is taking action as well. For years we have used small bottles of water with our name on them as a promotional tool. They have been a popular giveaway at community events, and we get many more requests than we can accommodate. But we will end that practice. We will still gladly come to community events and bring educational materials. But when our current supply of bottled water runs out, we will purchase no more.

So those are the facts. Tap water is safe. Tap water is healthy. Tap water is less expensive than bottled water, and it is better for the environment. Fill up that reusable sports bottle today.



Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

Intergovernmental Relations Office

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