

Pipeline

Philadelphia Water Department Newsletter

October, 1993



Aloha!

Bonjour!

Hola'!

Due to the City's financial situation during the past few years, the *Pipeline* was on hiatus. But it's back. It has a new look. And we're glad we have the chance to bring you information about PWD again.

Many thanks go to Deputy Commissioner Dick Roy, who helped us buy a new desktop publishing system. We now produce the *Pipeline* in-house.

Of course, we couldn't do this without the fine expertise of Staci Woerle, our desktop publishing graphic designer, who transferred to Public Affairs from Water Revenue, and Bernie Rosenberg, our graphic artist and photographer, whose guidance and recommendations are greatly appreciated.

This month's *Pipeline* highlights some major accomplishments to date for 1993.


Ciao, for now!



Water Revenue Bureau Merges With PWD

This past year has seen many new changes at PWD. Most importantly, we welcomed aboard the Water Revenue Bureau (WRB). Before December 1992, WRB was a division of the City's Department of Revenue. To improve PWD's financial stability and enhance customer relations, the WRB was reorganized and placed administratively under the Water Department. City officials signed a memorandum of understanding outlining management responsibility and general direction of the new relationship. The spirit of the agreement is:

"To continue the trend toward more efficient and effective water revenue collection efforts and to better serve the citizens of Philadelphia... and... full integration of the City's water revenue collection efforts into the Water Department."

More than 450 WRB employees are responsible for meter reading, billing and collecting revenues for the Water Department. During the past several months, many of us at PWD have had the opportunity to meet and work more closely with WRB employees. We look forward to continuing a warm, working relationship with these new members of PWD. 

Monthly Billing


One of the first goals accomplished through the merger of the Water Revenue Bureau and the Water Department was the startup of a monthly billing system in January. Both customers and PWD administrators welcomed the long-awaited system.

Benefits of Monthly Billing:


For our customers, monthly bills are more manageable and can be budgeted with other household expenses. A typical bill for a family of two is between \$35-\$45 a month.

For PWD, monthly bills improve our collection and enforcement efforts, help us to quickly identify and assist low-income customers who have difficulty paying their bills, and permit us to read meters more frequently. Three immediate benefits include:

- ◆ a one-time cash advance which put off a water and sewer rate increase for six months;
- ◆ a reduction in the rate increase from 20% to 7%;
- ◆ a 25% improvement in "on-time" bill payments from customers.

By using a monthly billing system, WRB can now bill tenants when water and sewer bills are delinquent. If a tenant pays the bill, he or she has the right to withhold the amount paid from his or her rent. If neither the property owner nor the tenant pays the bill, the Water Department can shut off water and sewer service. Due to a state law, PWD could not use this option with quarterly billing. 

New Meter Reading Hours

Another accomplishment of the merger is a new meter-reading schedule. WRB's meter readers now work Tuesday through Saturday to help our customers who can't be home during the ordinary workday. And from April through early October, a second shift of meter readers worked from noon to 8 PM to take advantage of longer days and daylight-savings time. WRB hopes to catch working customers at home to get true readings that will provide accurate water and sewer bills. Operations Manager Tom Fenner, Meter Reading Unit, reports that a preliminary review of the new hours shows a two-percent increase in productivity. 



Our roving photographer catches residential meter readers before they begin their work day.

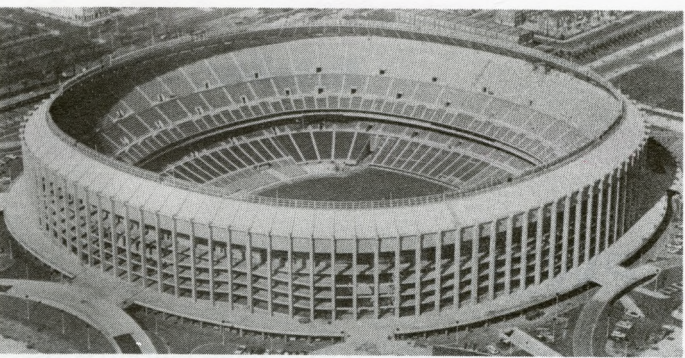
Did you know it takes two employees three hours to install one compression clamp lock (CCL) on a hydrant? See more heat wave facts on the reverse side.

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When The Heat Is On!

Summer's over and most of us probably don't miss the heat! This July's temperatures were so unbearable many Philadelphians turned on the nearest fire hydrant to beat the heat. Illegally opened hydrants caused such a high water demand, our water treatment plants and pumping stations couldn't replenish water fast enough.

463 MGs fills Veteran Stadium



Office of the City Representative

"We lost 15% to 20% of our water storage levels each day during the heat wave. At night, we only replenished 10%, compared to 95% under normal conditions."

Load Control Acting Chief George Kunkel

1993 Heat Wave Facts

- ✓ 1,567 open hydrants were reported to Customer Information on July 8.
- ✓ Crews were increased from 8 to 32 to shut off hydrants.
- ✓ More than 100 million gallons a day (MGDs) of treated drinking water were wasted from open hydrants.
- ✓ More than 400 MGDs of water were delivered for 7 consecutive days.
- ✓ Day with highest total consumption of water: July 8 - 463 MGDs.

Hydrant Facts

- ✓ 1 hydrant gushes 1,000 gallons of treated drinking water a minute.
- ✓ 3 billion gallons of treated drinking water are wasted each summer at a cost of \$1 million.
- ✓ 8,000 hydrosield locks & 4,500 compression clamp locks (CCLs) have been installed to date.
- ✓ 1 CCL costs \$550, including labor to install it. Total cost to date for CCLs: \$2.5 million.
- ✓ Cost to install a new hydrant: \$2,500.

"Hydrant abuse is a big expense to the City. Eighty percent of hydrant maintenance is needed because vandals tamper with hydrants."

Hydrant Crew Chief Jose Vargas



Office of the City Representative

Jose Vargas looks on as a crew repairs a damaged hydrant

Living Lead Free

In 1992, the Department's Bureau of Laboratory Services (BLS) successfully conducted its Water Sampling Program for Lead in Drinking Water. BLS tested at-risk homes with water service lines made of lead or residential water-supply plumbing systems containing lead solder.

Lead Sampling Program

January to June

162 homes tested
25 homes or 15% exceeded federal action level of 15 parts per billion
Mandatory public education campaign

July to December

143 homes tested
14 homes or 9.79% exceeded federal action level of 15 parts per billion
Voluntary public education campaign

Because of the high results during the first round of testing, we immediately began a public education campaign alerting customers to the potential of lead leaching into drinking water. Philadelphia was the first city in the country to begin an extensive lead public education campaign.



Bunnies were used for the public education campaign to help us send a serious message in a non-threatening way.

Lead Public Education Campaign

500,000 Living Lead Free billstuffers for our customers;

50,000 Lead-Free Kids, Lead-Free Homes brochures for hospitals, day care centers, nurseries and schools; 5,000 additional brochures printed in Spanish;

News alerts for radio, TV and newspapers;

An exclusive story to the Philadelphia Daily News, whose readership most closely matches the demographics of the population at risk;

Ads for daily and community newspapers, reaching an estimated circulation of 4.6 million people;

Public service announcements (PSAs) for radio and TV. PWD received the Philadelphia Chapter of the Public Relations Society Pepperpot Award for Single Piece/Broadcast for our animated PSA for TV;

Employee appearances on WPHL-TV's "Delaware Valley Forum."

The Department is now implementing a unified corrosion control program, using zinc orthophosphate at our three water treatment plants. Zinc orthophosphate is added to water during the treatment process to minimize lead leaching into the water. BLS will conduct another round of lead sampling in January 1997 to determine the effectiveness of our corrosion control program.

Letters

From Our Customers

Dear Mr. McGovern:

We, the staff and management of A.J. Crumbley Enterprises, Inc. would like to commend your employee, Ms. Gloria Hayes, for her professional and courteous disposition. Please allow this letter to serve as a symbol of our appreciation for her pleasant and unusual handling of the difficult task she has.

If more employees had Ms. Hayes' demeanor, the department would be more warmly received.

Sincerely,

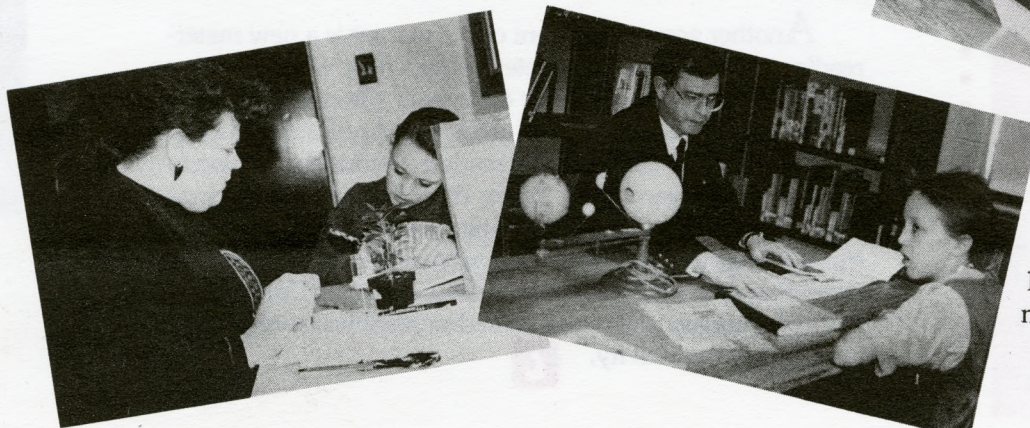
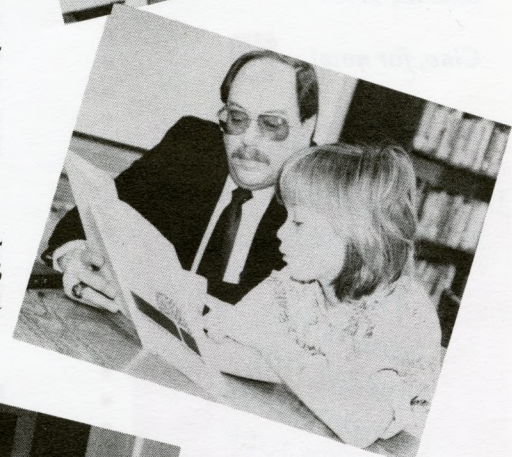
Charles C.
24th Street

Spotlight

A special employee for a difficult job. That's Gloria Hayes. As a water distribution repairperson in Emergency Support Services' Shutoff Unit, it's Gloria's job to shut off water service to customers who have delinquent water and sewer bills. Handling frightened and irate customers who might have to live temporarily without water can be a trying experience. But Gloria performs this task like a diplomat.

"I never really like shutting off someone's water but it has to be done. You can make the job what you want it to be, so I go out of my way to treat all my customers with respect. I try to get along with all of them."

Gloria Hayes



PWD employees served as mentors during the Annual Science Fair at Bridesburg Elementary School.

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