

May - June
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America's Best



Currents



Tasting Water

News and Developments for Customers of the Macon Water Authority

Consumer Confidence Report available electronically this year

As a result of a change in the rules and regulations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concerning the publication and distribution of Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR) by water utilities, the Macon Water Authority (MWA) is being allowed to replace its direct mailing of this annual water quality report with electronic delivery. The newly approved digital distribution method for the CCR will begin with this year's Report.

MWA officials will be able to forego the printing and insertion costs that come with directly mailing more than 50,000 documents to all Authority customers, instead providing a direct link to the annual Consumer Confidence Report on the utility's Web site at <http://www.maconwater.org/ccr.pdf>. However, the Authority will have a select number of printed reports available for customers upon request.

Consumer Confidence Reports – or water quality reports as they are sometimes referred – are produced annually by water systems to inform customers of “what is in their drinking water and



The MWA Consumer Confidence Report, an annual document explaining what is in the Authority's drinking water and why, is available electronically rather than by mail this year. Photo by Mark Strozier.

why.” The Reports became a regulatory requirement of public water utilities following the 1996 Amendments by Congress to the Safe Drinking Water Act, in an effort to increase the public's “right-to-know” about the nature of their drinking water.

The overall intent of annual Consumer Confidence Reports is to provide consumers with local water quality information that allows them to make informed public health choices, in addition to increasing dialogue between community water systems and their customers.

Some key details required in the annual Report – which contains water quality lab data from the 2012 calendar year – include: system information and the sources of water, detected contaminants, compliance with regulations, and additional educational materials highlighting opportunities for public involvement.

Rather than receiving a hard copy of the Consumer Confidence Report by way of an insert within their monthly MWA bill, as had been the norm in the past, MWA customers will be able to review the document on the Authority's Web site (<http://www.maconwater.org/ccr.pdf>) after July 1.

For more information on this year's MWA Consumer Confidence Report, contact Gary McCoy at 478-464-5653 or the MWA staff at 478-464-5650.

MWA honored for partnerships to keep Ocmulgee Alive!

The Georgia Rivers Alive Board of Directors chose the Authority's “Ocmulgee Alive!” as the 2012 Confluence Award winner, an honor based on the diversity of partnerships involved in an official Rivers Alive river cleanup event.

During the 2012 statewide Rivers Alive cleanup, over 29,000 volunteers cleaned more than 2,100 miles of waterways and removed more than 720,000 pounds of trash.

“Rivers Alive is an exceptional volunteer effort that connects motivated citizens with government and private companies to make a measurable impact on improving the waterways around our state,” says EPD Director Jud Turner.

This year's Ocmulgee Alive! is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 5, in part to coincide with clean water month in

October, as recognized by U.S. EPA and the water/sewer industry. The diversity and number of partnerships, which warranted the Rivers Alive Confluence Award, are reflected in the event's premier sponsors and participating organizations.

Last year, YKK USA, Graphics Packaging International, and newcomer Coca Cola Refreshments served as premier sponsors of Ocmulgee Alive! Other partnerships in the 2012 river cleanup included: the Georgia Wilderness Society, Mount de Sales Academy, the National Park Service/Ocmulgee National Monument, the Ocmulgee River Initiative, Mercer University, Historic Riverside Cemetery Conservancy, Tattnall Square Academy, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.



A.J. Hopkins (center) receives the 2012 Georgia Rivers Alive Confluence Award on behalf of the Macon Water Authority and its many diverse partners involved in Ocmulgee Alive! Presenting the Award to the Authority are Georgia EPD Outreach Unit Coordinator Harold Harbert (left) and Georgia Rivers Alive Chairman Lynn Cobb.



Board Member Spotlight: Dorothy Black, District 1

From more than 30 years of service as a public educator, to tenure on the Macon Water Authority (MWA) Board that has spanned over three decades, Dorothy Black has spent the equivalent of two lifetimes serving Macon-Bibb County citizens.

Ms. Black's career as a teacher began in 1955 in Jasper County, and included employment for the school systems of Jones and Bibb County as well. She taught science, dance and drama, with her interest in the performing arts reflected in her involvement in years past with the Macon Theater. She also managed the after-school program for River's Edge Behavioral Health Center. She retired as a school counselor and as the Career Coordinator for Bibb County

Schools in 1986, capping off 31 years of service in public education. Since that time, she has been involved in the Georgia Retired Teachers Association.

A decade after her “first” retirement, she began her career in public service when elected to the Macon Water Authority in 1997, to represent the citizens in District 1. Currently, she chairs the Finance and Pension Committees of the Authority, while also serving on the Personnel and Engineering Committees, the latter as Vice-Chair.

Ms. Black is a native of Macon, but also lived in Monticello while she was young following the death of her mother. She has called Macon home for the last 40 years, since moving back to Bibb County in 1973.

Ms. Black holds an undergraduate degree from Paine College in Augusta and a Master's degree from Fort Valley State University. She also has completed additional studies at the University of Georgia, Indiana University, and the Butler School of Library Services. While in school, she was a member of Zeta Phi Beta sorority.

Involved in a number of ministries through her church, Ms. Black is a member of St. Paul AME in Macon, where she was selected as Missionary Queen for the Sixth Episcopal District. She was also selected as Senior Cherry Blossom Queen for 2010.

For more information on Ms. Black and the other MWA Board Members, log onto www.maconwater.org.

SECOND FRONT

Drinking Water Week reflects global outreach by MWA

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) celebrated Drinking Water Week in fine fashion this year, hosting an open house for the public and entertaining international guests seeking insights on the water industry and water utility operations in the United States.

Nearly 100 guests took part in the Open House at the MWA Frank C. Amerson, Jr. Water Treatment Plant on Thursday, May 9, touring the plant and getting an operator's perspective on how to produce the Best Tasting Drinking in North America. The Amerson Plant has been awarded the state's best water plant on four separate occasions as well.

Also during Drinking Water Week, the MWA hosted a small contingency of young professionals from Bolivia who were taking part in the Rotary International Group Study Exchange, being hosted by the three local Rotary Clubs in Macon - the Macon Rotary, the Downtown Rotary, and the Uptown Rotary Clubs - who are within Rotary's District 6920.

The Rotary Group Study Exchange (GSE) program has six different areas of professional and community development interests. The four



MWA Top Operator Bill Maine provides insights on operations at the Authority's Amerson Water Treatment Facility for a delegation of Rotary Group Study Exchange professionals from Bolivia during Drinking Water Week in May.

professionals from Bolivia touring the MWA Amerson Plant during Drinking Water Week were involved in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene area of study within the GSE program.

"As a part of the Rotary Group Study Exchange,

professionals from other countries come to the United States to understand how areas (of the business or community) work, so they can return to their country to apply what they've learned," says Elizabeth Hardin, a local Rotarian who was hosting the delegation from Bolivia while they were visiting Macon. "Rotary GSE has a vocational and cultural emphasis, with the ultimate goal to advance humanitarian efforts around the world."

The Rotary GSE delegation from Bolivia included Rotary team leader Teresa Adachi, GIS specialist Ruth Anivarro, Biologist Andrea Prieto, and Engineer Afnan Agramont, who all spent more than a month in the state of Georgia, touring water and sewer utilities and gaining insights from water professionals. Lessons learned hopefully will have a positive impact on public utility operations in their community back in Bolivia.

"The trip to Macon was amazing, and everyone was so nice and helpful in answering our questions about water and sanitation issues we face in our home country," says Adachi. "We are so impressed by the operations and people at the Macon Water Authority"

MWA Backflow Prevention Program ensures customer safety, system integrity

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) goes to great lengths to provide clean, safe water for its customers, while protecting the water quality and operational integrity of its system.

Clean drinking water running through MWA pipes is designed to flow in one direction; however, should water flow opposite of its intended distribution the resulting *backflow* can be potentially harmful to consumers. Backflow can bring with it possible contaminants to the water system via a cross-connection with a source of pollution. As a result, the MWA Backflow Prevention Program (BPP) is designed to reduce this risk to public health.

The Authority's BPP, which was established in the fall of 2003, is in compliance with the Georgia Rules for Safe Drinking Water. It was nearly 10 years ago when MWA officials began to identify customers in need of backflow prevention devices, who in turn were ranked or prioritized according to their vulnerability as a potential source of harmful backflow.

"Our intent has been to identify and reduce the risk of contaminants from unclean water flowing back into our system," says MWA Executive Director Tony Rojas. "Our Backflow Program is designed to protect our customers, as well as the public's drinking water, and we err on the side of overprotection for the sake of public health."

Today, the Authority's attention has shifted from verifying backflow device installations to now include backflow device inspections.

"We have approximately 6,500 customers who send in backflow inspection reports that we track for compliance," says Michel Wanna, MWA Director of Engineering, whose division oversees the Authority's BPP. "We only have a handful still needing to install their devices, so we also are concentrating on re-testing all devices to make sure they work as intended."



This backflow prevention device, which is installed on the customer's side of the water meter, protects MWA drinking water from contaminants that might enter the system from cross-connections to potential sources of pollution.

MWA not affiliated with Direct Mail solicitations

Macon Water Authority (MWA) customers may have received - or may be receiving - a direct mail solicitation for products or services offered by HomeServe USA Repair Management Corporation. As a result, MWA officials are clarifying that these offers are not affiliated with the Authority, which neither recommends nor cautions their use by Macon and Bibb County homeowners.

In the case of this mailing from HomeServe USA Repair Management, the company is informing MWA customers that they are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the exterior water service line from the service connection or well to the foundation of their property, in an attempt to offer Water Line Protection Programs.

Should the MWA send direct mail to its customers, it will come as official correspondence from the utility. In addition, should MWA employees in the field approach a customer's property on official business, they will be clearly identified with a stated purpose.

For more information, contact our Customer Care at 478-464-5600.

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