

# Currents

AMERICA'S  
BEST-TASTING  
DRINKING  
water

News and Developments for Customers of the Macon Water Authority

## MWA saving money in electricity and maintenance through lighting retrofit project



### A Macon Water Authority Green Initiative

The MWA recently completed a major lighting retrofit project – the first of its kind at the water/sewer utility – replacing more than 750 older, inefficient light fixtures with high efficiency LED lights and sensors, which have a 10-year life expectancy. The lighting upgrades encompassed the offices at the MWA Albert Billingslea Headquarters Building on Second Street and the MWA Support Services Center on MLK Boulevard.



This lighting retrofit project is expected to save the Authority approximately \$35,000 annually, including an estimated \$24,000 per year in electricity expense, \$7,250 in maintenance and \$4,600 in HVAC costs. The MWA also is expecting a rebate from Georgia Power to the tune of \$12,000.

Prior to the retrofit project, the older, conventional

lighting at the MWA consumed 146 watts when in operation. By comparison, the high efficiency LED lighting uses only 36 watts. The offices at the MWA now have separate, independent switching, with sensors to shut lights off automatically when the rooms are vacant. New LED lighting is in place on the exterior of the buildings as well.

In addition to providing improved light quality and light levels throughout these MWA facilities, the lighting retrofit project will provide environmental benefits through reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

“When I joined the Board, I wanted to see how the Macon Water Authority could use current technology to save money in electrical costs, while reducing carbon emissions,” says Dwight Jones, MWA District 3 Board Member. “This project does that, providing not only an effective rate of return financially, but also a great step forward in environmental stewardship.”

## The Value of Water: Imagine a day without it

During the month of October, water utilities across the country are raising awareness about the value of water. This national campaign initiated by the Value of Water Coalition is called: “Imagine a day without water.”

The goal of this initiative is to educate and engage the public about how water is invaluable and essential to everyday life. In addition, safe, reliable and plentiful water requires continued investment in infrastructure. According to advocates at the Value of Water Coalition, investing in water must be a priority.

As an example locally, the Macon Water Authority recently adopted a Capital



Improvement Plan (CIP) Budget that allocates nearly \$40 million dollars for infrastructure upgrades over the next five years. The CIP budget contains items and projects that are deemed necessary in order to maintain and support the infrastructure and mission of the MWA, which includes delivering clean, safe drinking water and sewer services to customers at affordable rates.

Water systems and resources in the U.S. are at risk due to aging and failing infrastructure. As an example, research indicates that somewhere in America a water main breaks every 2 minutes. Thus, reinvestment in water must be a priority to ensure the highest quality water and sewer services are available for communities to thrive, says Tony Rojas, MWA Executive Director and President.

## MWA joins Clean Air Coalition



A Macon Water Authority Green Initiative

For more than 10 years, the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition has worked to ensure that the people living, working and playing in the central Georgia region are breathing clean air. Now the Macon Water Authority (MWA) has joined those efforts.

The partnership with the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition is another indication of the Authority's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable “green” initiatives.

For example, the MWA recently completed a lighting retrofit project, saving money in electricity and reducing carbon emissions. (See story above.) The Authority also is the primary organizer of Macon's annual river cleanup (on Oct. 10 this year) – Ocmulgee Alive!

The Middle Georgia Clean

Air Coalition has helped assure that the central Georgia region is in compliance with all elements of the U.S. Clean Air Act. However, new and more stringent standards for air quality are expected from EPA in the future, so the work of the Coalition continues.

The Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition consists of 13 cities and seven counties working together to achieve measureable improvements to air quality in the region.

“With the Macon Water Authority's strong record as a protector of natural resources, it made sense for us to be involved in the Coalition,” says MWA Chairman Sam Hart, who chaired the Coalition from 2011-2012. “We seek clean air, clean water, really all means of environmental stewardship, not just to be in compliance with regulations, but to enhance economic development opportunities and to protect our quality of life as well.”

## MWA continues hands-on support of 5 x 5 Program

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) continues to support the Macon-Bibb County 5x5 Neighborhood Improvement Program, joining departments of the consolidated government and other local agencies to focus services, maintenance and upgrades in a concentrated, block-by-block effort throughout the community.

The 5x5 Program began in April of 2014 with the first round of neighborhood improvements, which now are being implemented county-wide and with the assistance of partnering agencies such as the MWA, Habitat for Humanity, the Sheriff's Office, and Rebuilding Macon.

The second round of focused services and improvements kicked off this spring in District 1, with the intent to move through all nine Macon-Bibb districts by the spring of next year.

The MWA role in the 5x5 Program is to provide its expertise by taking video of all sewer mains in the designated area to assure they are clear and operating properly, while checking for leaks in water lines and inspecting all meters and meter boxes for accuracy and needed repairs.



The Macon Water Authority is a partnering agency in the 5x5 Neighborhood Improvement Program, providing professional services that include checking and/or replacing meter boxes to make sure they are reading accurately and operating properly.



# SECOND FRONT

## Adopt-A-Stream Training Being Offered Dec. 12

Want to learn how to gauge the quality of the water resources used to provide you with your drinking water? Consider becoming a Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Volunteer by participating in the various monitoring programs available to the public.

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) will be hosting an annual recertification for current volunteers on Saturday Dec. 12. The workshops will feature classroom instruction beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the MWA Support Services Training Room located at 918 MLK, Jr. Blvd. in Macon. The classroom portion of the workshops then will be followed by hands-on training at Amerson River Park, which will start around 2:00 p.m.

The MWA is a proud partner with Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, even providing test kits on loan for use



The MWA will be hosting Georgia Adopt-A-Stream training workshops on Saturday Dec. 12, providing local volunteers with an opportunity to obtain recertification for chemical and bacterial monitoring of local waterways.

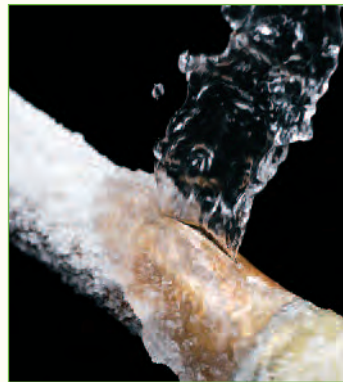
by local Adopt-A-Stream volunteer groups. Georgia Adopt-A-Stream encourages individuals and communities to monitor and/or improve Georgia's waterways by utilizing available technical support and training such as what's being offered at the MWA on Dec. 12.

The Adopt-A-Stream training being hosted by the MWA on Dec. 12 will feature certification for volunteers in both chemical and biological monitoring.

For more information on this and other opportunities for Georgia Adopt-A-Stream training, contact Mark Wyzalek, MWA Director of Laboratory/Environmental Compliance, at 478-464-5678, or by emailing [mwyzalek@maconwater.org](mailto:mwyzalek@maconwater.org).

### It's about that time... to protect those water lines

This fall is the time to prepare for the freezing temperatures that lie ahead, as MWA customers are encouraged to weatherize their homes or property to prevent potential water leaks or pipe bursts this coming winter. These tips may save you time and money by preventing unnecessary water loss and property damage due to busted water lines, especially those hidden within irrigation systems.



- ❄️ Tape or wrap exposed pipes with protective insulation.
- ❄️ Don't forget to insulate your water heater too, especially if it is in the garage.
- ❄️ Drain your entire sprinkler system after use.
- ❄️ Drain all outdoor faucets as well, by turning off the shut-off valve and turning on the faucets to allow the water in the line(s) to drain.
- ❄️ Disconnect garden hoses from outdoor faucets and allow them to drain, too.
- ❄️ Store garden hoses in warmer places during the winter.
- ❄️ Always know how to shut off the main valve servicing your property, in the event a water leak or pipe burst causes flooding.

For additional weatherization tips, log onto our website at [www.maconwater.org/winterization-tips](http://www.maconwater.org/winterization-tips).

### There's no such thing as a "flushable" wet wipe

While wet wipes may be marketed as being "flushable," they actually will not "break up" or disintegrate like traditional toilet paper.

As a result, wet wipes can combine with grease or other materials to clog your home's plumbing as well as the sewer lines of the MWA collection and conveyance system. The subsequent sewer spills and overflows these wet wipes can cause may also harm our environment and impact public health.

In addition, when "flushable" wet wipes reach one of the Macon Water Authority's two wastewater treatment plants, they can damage pumps, gears, and other parts of the treatment processes.

To help prevent these unseen issues, please do not flush non-dispersible materials such as wet wipes, paper towels, facial tissues,

rag or cloths, cotton swabs, dental floss, feminine hygiene products, cat litter, or anything other than toilet paper.

While it's imperative that customers also don't pour fats, oils or grease (FOG) down the drain, it's equally important that they don't use the toilet as a trash can either, especially for "flushable" wet wipes.



### Among several MWA payment methods is the convenient, easy and free option to pay by phone

MWA customers have several choices for paying their monthly water and sewer bill. You can pay by cash, check, or credit card, doing so either in person, by a direct draft from a bank account, by logging into your account online, or by phone.

One of the newest methods for paying your water and sewer bill is the Authority's automated First Billing payment system, which was implemented in the spring of 2014. This new method allows customers to pay their bill by phone at any time of day, even after hours, and without the assistance of a Customer Care Representative.

To pay your bill by phone through MWA's automated First Billing payment system, simply dial our main number at 478-464-5600, and then choose option 2 when prompted by the recorded announcement. If you would like to speak with a Customer Care

Representative, however, you can press option 6 instead. In addition, you can access the MWA automated First Billing payment system directly if you'd like by dialing toll free at 1-844-677-7551.

When you access the automated First Billing payment system, you can check your account balance, which is updated each day, as well as make a payment using a credit card or even a checking account number.

Paying your monthly MWA bill by phone is:

- 1. Convenient**
- 2. Easy**
- 3. Free**

The results of a recent survey reveal that MWA customers are very pleased with the various payment methods at their disposal. Don't forget to add our automated First Billing payment system to the list of options that are available to you.



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