

CURRENTS

PWSA Receives Environmental Justice and Equity Award AMWA recognition applauds equity-based Community Lead Response program

► PWSA is pleased to accept the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies' (AMWA) **Environmental Justice and Equity Utility Management Award** for our **Community Lead Response**.

This inaugural award, which was accepted by PWSA Chief Executive Officer Will Pickering at the Association's 2023 Executive Management Conference, **recognizes member utilities that commit to advancing equity and justice in their communities** through assessment and planning, equity in access and costs, civic involvement in decision-making, and integrative strategies.

Through our multimillion-dollar lead safety and remediation Community Lead Response program, PWSA prioritizes our most vulnerable populations as we work to replace all lead service lines in the system. While implementing optimal corrosion control is crucial to reducing lead levels across the board, the only real solution to lead in drinking water is to remove the source – dangerous lead pipes.

When the Community Lead Response program was

started in 2016, there were **an estimated 16,000-18,000 lead service lines throughout our water service area that would need replaced**. While the construction process for lead service line replacement is straightforward, much consideration had to be paid to which lead lines would be replaced first. To answer this question, PWSA developed a prioritization model to make this determination in an equitable and standardized way.

PWSA's overarching goal was to replace lead lines first in neighborhoods where they posed an exacerbated risk. Research has shown that lead impacts the developing brains of young children and can impact fetuses during gestation. Additionally, placing the financial burden of replacement on homeowners disproportionately impacts low-income residents.

To date, **PWSA has replaced over 10,500 public and 7,300 private lead service lines**, at no direct cost to the customer. To complete these replacements, PWSA has inspected the service line material at over 21,000 locations within its service area, which amounts to approximately



Several members of our Community Lead Response team take a moment to celebrate this award. Congratulations!

25% of all water connections in the system. Our work is not done, though, as we continue towards our **overall goal of replacing all lead lines in the system by 2026**. To do this, we will continue to aggressively pursue **state and federal funding**, saving our customers money during a period of unprecedented investment in our essential water systems. As a publicly owned and operated water utility, every dollar we receive is reinvested back into our water system.

“AMWA applauds Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority on winning the association's inaugural Environmental Justice

and Equity Utility Management Award,” said AMWA CEO Tom Dobbins, CAE. “The authority's comprehensive efforts to replace lead service lines in its community to protect the most vulnerable serve as a guide for its peer utilities, public health officials, regulators, and others. Congratulations on this achievement.”

For more information on the Community Lead Response, including an interactive lead inventory map, instructions for identifying a lead service line, and information on our Lead Reimbursement program, visit lead.pgh2o.com. ♦

New RAVE Profiles Highlight Our Partnerships with MWDBEs

► Partnerships with local, diverse business enterprises can help to bolster the economic vitality of our region and create opportunities for all those who call Southwestern Pennsylvania home.

As we reported in our [2022 Supplier Diversity Program Annual Report](#), last year we contracted with nearly 70 minority, women, veteran, LGBT, disabled-owned, and small businesses, collectively referred to as **MWDBEs**, creating tens of millions of dollars in economic value in Allegheny County.

These businesses are critically important partners, supporting us in our delivery of safe, reliable water services to our communities, all while

upholding our [mission, vision, and core values](#). To highlight some of the outstanding diverse businesses we work alongside, our Supplier Diversity and Development Services teams are excited to announce new **PGH2O RAVE (Recognition and Appreciation of Vendor Excellence) Profiles**.

First up in this series: [The Wilson Group](#).

Since 2013, this Pittsburgh-based minority business enterprise has supported PWSA's copying, printing, and scanning needs. Notably, they also helped spearhead a printer rationalization study, implementing more efficient multi-function printers to replace older desktop models.



Boasting more than thirty years of experience designing and implementing workflow solutions, the organization has employees more than 50 individuals for their more than 2,000 customers, including Pittsburgh Parking Authority, Peters Township School District, and Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Our long-term partnership with the Wilson Group is made possible by their willingness to go above and beyond to

help our teams. Due to their exceptional service and robust qualifications, PWSA recently extended our contract term for an additional five years.

Thank you to The Wilson Group for their vendor excellence!

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Facebook](#) for more RAVE Profiles and PWSA news. ♦

TEAM PGH2O

Technology Services Team Gives Back to Our Region

► As public servants, we here at PWSA understand the importance of giving back to the communities our customers – and many of us – call home.

Our Technology Services team recently modeled that commitment by volunteering with [Strip District Neighbors](#), a local non-profit dedicated to promoting economic development and a high quality of life while preserving and enhancing the integrity and character of the Strip District.

For about two hours on a recent, sunny Friday afternoon, 17 Technology Services teammates took to Penn Avenue and nearby side streets to pick up trash and litter. Representatives from Strip

District Neighbors were very appreciative, mentioning it can be hard to get volunteers to perform what can be dirty or underappreciated work.

The team is also in the midst of a food drive to benefit the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, so far raising around \$300 worth of food and supplies for those in need.

To support these kinds of volunteer efforts, PWSA provides volunteer time off to many of its employees. Our goal in doing so is to cultivate a workplace culture that enhances and serves the communities in which we live and work; create community engagement opportunities that are meaningful, purposeful, and



help those in need; and enrich and inspire the lives of our employees.

Thank you to the Technology Services team for taking the time to give back to our region in this way! ♦

PWSA Awarded \$37.3 Million from PENNVEST

► PWSA was recently awarded a \$37.3 million funding package from the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) for **Small Diameter Water Main Replacement projects**.

These projects will improve water reliability and safety through the replacement of approximately four miles of aging or undersized water mains in two Pittsburgh neighborhoods. In line with PWSA's role to protect public health, **we'll replace any lead service lines encountered as part of the replacement work at no cost to the customer.**

The funding package is split between \$2.5 million in grants, which do not need to be repaid, and \$34.8 million in low-interest



PWSA contractor crews installing a new water main.

loans. Over time, funding from state and federal partners helps to reduce the cost to ratepayers during a period of unprecedented investment in our essential water systems. Construction will take place in Brighton Heights and Squirrel Hill South from the spring of 2024 through mid-2025. Under this contract, we'll replace any lead service lines found at the 621 locations we'll touch as

part of water main replacement efforts.

Since 2018, PWSA has received from PENNVEST a combination of \$619 million in low-interest loans and \$48 million in grants, totaling \$667 million. As a publicly owned and operated water utility, every dollar we receive is reinvested back into the water systems that serve our communities. ♦

PGH2O IN THE COMMUNITY

Inspiring Next-Gen Water Professionals

► PWSA was honored to host students from Pittsburgh Public Schools at the Water Treatment Plant recently as part of our **Explore & Tour a Career in Water** initiative. This program – led by Melody Carter-Frye, PWSA's Workforce Development Manager – gives students a glimpse into the variety of career paths available in water, infrastructure, and the professional trades.

As part of their visit, students were led step-by-step through our water treatment process. Along the way, they learned how each of our dedicated water production employees play a part in our delivery of approximately 70 million gallons of drinking water every day,

even getting to meet and talk with some of these individuals.

At PWSA, our treatment system is operational 24/7/365. The treatment plant employs utility workers, inspectors, equipment operators, service technicians, scientists who work in our accredited laboratory, and environmental safety and compliance professionals who collectively ensure the water produced is of the highest quality and meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements.



PPS students with Kevin Wood, PWSA Senior Manager of Water Quality, on the Allegheny.

PWSA is happy to open the door to local students to show them the variety of rewarding careers available in the water, infrastructure, and public services spaces. ♦

PGH₂O

WATER
WISE

FOGs: Keep away from your drain!



Rich foods are an enjoyable part of any fall celebration. But the **fats, oils, and grease (FOGs)** produced when cooking can create serious problems in our sewers.

When FOGs — like cooking oil, fat from meat, dairy, gravy, or peanut butter — are poured down kitchen drains, they harden inside pipes, restricting wastewater flow. These blockages are a main cause of sewage backups, which can result in costly cleanup and repairs.

This holiday season, give thanks to your pipes by properly disposing of FOGs:

- **Cool It:** Allow FOGs to cool to a safe handling temperature after cooking.
- **Can It:** Pour cooled FOGs into a sealable container, like a jar or can. Store the container in the refrigerator until it's full.
- **Trash It:** Never put FOGs down sink drains or in-sink garbage disposals. Scrape food scraps into the compost or trash. Wipe up FOGs left on pans or dishes with a paper towel then discard in the trash. When your sealed FOG container is full, trash it.

Learn more on our **Defend Your Drains** website.

Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their PGH2O bill. These programs are managed by our **PGH2O Cares team**, a group of education and outreach professionals dedicated to working directly with our most vulnerable customers to bolster enrollment in our Customer Assistance Programs and identify ways to reduce water usage.



For more information about our programs, including the **Winter Shut Off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Flexible Payment Plans, Hardship Grant, and Lead Line Reimbursements**, please visit our [Customer Assistance Program](#) page or contact the PGH2O Cares team at 412-255-2457 or cares@pgh2o.com.

Additional Assistance Programs

Additional assistance programs are offered separately from PWSA's own Customer Assistance Programs. Please see below for a listing of available programs.

The **Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) Clean Water Assistance Fund** is available to eligible residential customers. It is administered by Dollar Energy Fund. To learn more and apply for assistance, visit the [Clean Water Assistance Fund](#) page.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

If you can, consider donating to our [Hardship Grant Program \(www.pgh2o.com/give\)](#).

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our [online billing and payment portal \(www.pgh2o.com/ebilling\)](#) ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

Track Water Use

Visit our [Customer Advantage Portal](#) to track water use in real time and receive alerts when there's a spike in water use.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages?

It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO:

Call PWSA Customer Service:
412.255.2423 (Press 5)

Visit our [Update Contact Information portal](#).

Stay in the know with PGH2O!

Join our email list to make sure you're getting the latest news and updates. Signing up is simple on our [News & Events](#) page.

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[nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com)

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