



PSC Water Currents

The water conservation and efficiency newsletter of the
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin



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Can you tell which toilet works better just by looking at it? The MaP – or Maximum Performance – test provides an independent way to measure the performance of high efficiency toilets. The MaP rating system has been endorsed by the U.S. EPA WaterSense program. The free MaP report evaluates more than 1,600 tank-type toilets and is updated twice monthly. The report is available at: <http://www.map-testing.com/>.

News

Report: Wisconsin utilities could save 164 MGD by 2030

Wisconsin water utilities could save at least 164 million gallons per day (MGD) by 2030 by implementing cost-effective and technically achievable water conservation measures, according to a December 2011 report. The PSC and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) jointly funded the year-long investigation into potential statewide water savings under several water conservation scenarios. The study found that reducing distribution system leaks and losses is the most cost-effective way for Wisconsin water utilities to achieve water savings. The study also evaluated the costs and benefits of implementing various conservation measures, such as toilet rebates, submetering customers, updating plumbing codes, conducting customer water audits, and implementing conservation-based water pricing. The report is intended to guide PSC and DNR decision making and to help water utilities plan their conservation programs. The final report from the ‘*Water Efficiency Potential Study for Wisconsin*’ is available at: <http://psc.wi.gov/water>.

Whitewater implements conservation rates

The PSC recently approved conservation-oriented water rates for the Whitewater Municipal Water Utility. Under the new inclining block rates, residential customers pay \$1.65 per 1,000 gallons for the first 2,000 gallons used each month and \$2.20 for each additional 1,000 gallons. The new rates became effective in November 2011 and will result in a monthly bill of about \$13.50 for an average residential customer. The new rates are intended to encourage water efficiency and reduce wasteful water practices because customers who use a larger volume of water will pay more per unit. Whitewater joins nearly 30 Wisconsin communities that have already implemented conservation-oriented rates. For more information about water rates and conservation pricing, visit: <http://psc.wi.gov/water>.



Study investigates Great Lakes water pricing



The Great Lakes Commission recently released the final report from its *Value of Great Lakes Water* initiative. The 18-month project was supported by the Great Lakes Protection Fund to investigate how public water is priced in the Great Lakes region and

whether price could be used as a water resource management tool to change consumer behavior for more efficient water use. The project team conducted a rate survey of the ten largest water systems in each Great Lakes state, developed a guidebook on water conservation pricing, and hosted workshops in Chicago, Illinois; Buffalo, New York; Racine, Wisconsin; and Ann Arbor, Michigan. The final report is available at: <http://glc.org/wateruse/watervalue>.

WaterSense releases specification for landscape irrigation controllers

Residential outdoor water use in the United States accounts for more than 7 billion gallons of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation. As much as 50 percent of this water is wasted due to overwatering caused by inefficiencies in irrigation methods and systems. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program has released its final specification for irrigation controllers, making them the first outdoor product category eligible to earn the WaterSense label. WaterSense labeled irrigation control technologies can significantly reduce overwatering by applying water only when plants need it. EPA expects that WaterSense labeled controllers will be available beginning in the spring of 2012. For more information, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense>.



PSC emergency contact number for water utilities

Wisconsin water utilities are required to notify the PSC of service interruptions that last for one hour or more and affect at least 500 customers, or every customer if the utility serves fewer than 500 customers (see Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 185.44). If your utility experiences an accident or a service interruption, please contact the PSC media line at (608) 266-9600.

Upcoming Events

- JAN** Wisconsin Water Well Association Annual Conference. January 11-12, 2012. Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. <http://wisconsinwaterwell.com/>.
- Wisconsin Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling Contractors Annual Conference. January 11-12, 2012. Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. <http://www.phcc-wi.org>.
- Deadline for abstracts – Wisconsin Water Association Fall Conference. January, 13, 2012. Conference September 19-21, 2012 in Appleton, Wisconsin. <http://www.wiawwa.org/>.
- Wisconsin Water Conservation Coalition Meeting. January 13, 2012. Waukesha, Wisconsin. <http://www.wisconsinwaterwise.org/>.
- Energize Monona: The Water-Energy Nexus. January 25, 2012. Monona, Wisconsin. Sponsored by The Natural Step Monona. <http://www.tnsmonona.org/year-of-water/>.
- FEB** Midwest Water Industry Expo. February 7-8, 2012. Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Water Association and the Central States Water Environment Association. <http://www.wiawwa.org/>.
- WWA Distribution Conference. February 7, 2012. Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Water Association. <http://www.wiawwa.org/>.
- 2012 Municipal Utility Legislative Rally. February 15, 2012. Madison, Wisconsin. Sponsored by MEUW, WWA, MEG, and WRWA. <http://www.meuw.org/>.
- Webinar - Introduction to WaterSense. February 23, 2012. Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/744129082>.
- MAR** Better Buildings, Better Business Conference. February 29-March 2, 2012. Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Sponsored by the Energy Center of Wisconsin. <http://www.ecw.org/university/index.php>.
- WaterSense Fix-a-Leak Week. March 12-18, 2012. <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>.
- WaterCon 2012. March 19-22, 2012. Springfield, Illinois. Sponsored by the IL Section AWWA and the Illinois Water Environment Federation. <http://isawwa-portal.com/WATERCON2012.aspx>.
- Wisconsin Rural Water Association Technical Conference. March 27-30, 2012. Green Bay, Wisconsin. <http://www.wrwa.org/>.

Focus on Wisconsin Water

Monona declares 2012 the “Year of Water”

The City of Monona has declared 2012 to be the “Year of Water.” The declaration is intended to raise awareness about how Monona’s citizens use and manage their water resources. The City has partnered with The Natural Step Monona, a grassroots nonprofit organization, to help citizens learn about water and take positive steps to change water use practices. Throughout the year, the City and The Natural Step Monona will provide public outreach, including presentations and articles focused on water issues. Students from the University of Wisconsin –Madison will actively work with community groups to take on projects that will protect water resources.



As a cornerstone to the year-long effort, the Natural Step Monona and the City have invited residential customers of the Monona Water Utility to compete in a Water Conservation Challenge. The challenge provides a fun way for residential customers to reduce their water bills and compete for cash and other prizes. The winners will be selected based on the households that achieve the greatest percentage reduction in water use compared to the previous year. In addition, contestants who demonstrate innovative methods for reducing water use will be eligible for additional prizes. All of the prizes were donated by local businesses. More than 100 customers have signed up for the contest. For more information about Monona’s “Year of Water” efforts, visit: <http://www.tnsmonona.org/year-of-water>.

Highlight your community’s water conservation and efficiency efforts in a future issue of Water Currents. Send a summary of your program or water-saving idea to water.currents@wisconsin.gov. Include your contact information, a link for more information, and an estimate of the amount of water saved or expected to be saved. Please limit your submittal to 250 words.

About this newsletter

Water Currents is published by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to provide information about water conservation-related news and events in Wisconsin. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Jeff Ripp, Assistant Administrator for Water, (608) 267-9813.



To submit information for consideration in future newsletters, send an email to water.currents@wisconsin.gov. Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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