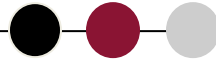




# PSC Water Currents

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



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## **Water Saving Tip**

The popularity of social networking sites continues to grow. Sites such as MySpace and Facebook offer a new way for utilities to reach out to their customers and to promote water conservation. Many water-related groups and pages already exist. EPA recently launched a “Water Is Worth It” page on Facebook to raise awareness about the value of water and water-related resources.



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Washington-DC/EPA-Water-Is-Worth-It/175423483336?ref=mf>

## **News**

### **Franklin water utility adopts conservation rates**

The Franklin Water Utility received PSC approval in December 2009 to implement inclining block rates that are designed to encourage water efficiency. Residential customers will be charged \$3.50 per 1,000 gallons for the first 10,000 gallons and \$3.65 per 1,000 gallons for the next 10,000 gallons used each quarter. Rates increase to \$4.00 per 1,000 gallons for water use over 20,000 gallons in a quarter. Franklin relies on Lake Michigan water supplied by the Oak Creek Water Utility. The new rates will reduce demand for Great Lakes water and allow customers who reduce their usage to save money on their water bills. Franklin joins a growing list of Wisconsin water utilities that are promoting water conservation and efficiency as a way to reduce costs and to protect existing water supplies. For more information about the utility’s conservation efforts, visit:

<http://www.franklinwi.gov/display/router.aspx?DocID=328>.

## Federal stimulus pays for water saving appliances

Beginning in January 2010, Wisconsin residents will be eligible for rebates on qualified ENERGY STAR appliances, including water saving clothes washers and dishwashers. As part of the federal *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, Wisconsin will receive more than \$5 million to administer through the existing Focus on Energy Program. The rebates include up to \$100 for qualified clothes washers and \$25 for dishwashers that save both water and energy. After toilets, clothes washers represent the second largest indoor water user in the home, or about 22 percent for an average household. Many Wisconsin water utilities have already enacted programs to replace toilets, restrict outdoor water use, and improve distribution system efficiency. Water utilities can expand their water conservation efforts by informing their customers of the types of incentives that are available under this limited-time program. For more information on the appliance rebate program, visit the Focus on Energy website at: <http://www.focusonenergy.com/recovery>.



## PSC expands toilet rebates in Madison

The PSC approved the Madison Water Utility's request to expand its toilet rebate program to include apartment buildings larger than four units. Madison already offers rebates of up to \$100 to single-family residential and small apartment customers to replace outdated toilets. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, replacing older inefficient toilets with new 1.28 gallon per flush WaterSense-labeled high-efficiency toilets (HETs) can save up to 11,000 gallons per year. The Madison Water Utility expects to replace up to 25,000 toilets over 10 years, resulting in savings of an estimated 273 million gallons per year. Madison launched its conservation program in 2008 to delay the need to construct new wells and to protect groundwater supplies in Dane County. For more information about Madison's toilet rebate program, visit: <http://www.cityofmadison.com/water/>.



## EPA announces specification for WaterSense homes

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released its final WaterSense Single-Family New Home Specification in December 2009, creating the first national, voluntary specification for water-efficient new homes. WaterSense labeled new homes will allow flexibility to meet homeowners' needs but will be 20 percent more efficient than typical new homes. WaterSense homes must be independently inspected and certified by an EPA licensed certification provider to meet the WaterSense criteria for water efficiency and performance. WaterSense labeled new homes are designed to work well with other green building programs, such as ENERGY STAR, LEED®, and the National Green Building Standard. The final new home specification is available at: [http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/home\\_finalspec508.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/home_finalspec508.pdf).



## **New guide helps to reduce water loss**

For many Wisconsin utilities, controlling water losses and unaccounted for water is a cost-effective component of their overall water conservation programs. Water losses from Wisconsin utilities accounted for 24.5 billion gallons in 2008. Now there is a new resource to help utilities in controlling losses. In November 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a draft guidance document titled *Control and Mitigation of Drinking Water Losses in Distribution Systems*. This guidance is intended to assist public water systems, states, and primary enforcement agencies under the Safe Drinking Water Act in improving water efficiency and long-term sustainability in small public water systems. The document provides information on controlling and mitigating water loss through water loss control programs, water metering, water audits and leak detection, and other best practices for operations, maintenance, and prevention. The document is available at: [http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw000/pws/pdfs/analysis\\_wa-03\\_water\\_loss\\_doc\\_final\\_draft\\_v62.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw000/pws/pdfs/analysis_wa-03_water_loss_doc_final_draft_v62.pdf).

## **Fix-a-Leak Week activities**

Did you know that an American home can waste, on average, 11,000 gallons of water every year due to running toilets, dripping faucets, and other household leaks? EPA estimates that nationwide, more than 1 trillion gallons of water leak from U.S. homes each year. EPA is sponsoring the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual “Fix a Leak Week” from March 15 – 21, 2010, to raise awareness about water leaks in the home. EPA, the PSC, and other WaterSense partners will promote water efficiency through targeted media campaigns, including newspapers, television, and the radio. Utilities can take part in Fix-a-Leak Week by planning and coordinating events in their communities. Suggestions include involving school children in detecting leaks, offering interviews to local newspapers, or scheduling events with local plumbers. The PSC plans to provide useful information and sample bill stuffers on its web site that utilities can use. For more information, visit: [http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water\\_efficiency/fix\\_a\\_leak.html](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/fix_a_leak.html).



## **Water conservation guide for businesses**

Demand-reduction strategies that target residential customers are often the first step in creating an effective utility water conservation program. But, many utilities could realize even greater savings by working with government, commercial, and industrial customers to reduce water use. The East Bay Municipal Utility District, located in California’s San Francisco Bay area, has developed a guidebook that provides information on water saving technologies applicable in the commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors. The *WaterSmart Guidebook: a Water Use Efficiency Plan and Review Guide for New Businesses* offers water-saving tips applicable to a wide range of industries. The guidebook is available at no cost through the Alliance for Water Efficiency’s resource library at: [http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/WaterSmart\\_Guidebook\\_for\\_Businesses.aspx](http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/WaterSmart_Guidebook_for_Businesses.aspx).

## Upcoming Events

- JAN** Wisconsin Water Association 2010 Annual Conference Call for Presentations – Deadline. January 15, 2010. <http://www.wiawwa.org>.
- Economic Opportunities in Water Technologies: WGWA Lecture Series. January 19, 2010. Milwaukee, WI. [http://www.wgwa.org/invitations/2010\\_lecture\\_invite.pdf](http://www.wgwa.org/invitations/2010_lecture_invite.pdf).
- 2010 Wisconsin Municipal Utility Legislative Rally. January 27, 2010. Madison, WI. Registration materials available at: <http://www.wrwa.org/>.
- WaterSmart Innovations 2010 – Deadline for Abstracts. January 29, 2010. Conference will be held October 6 – 8, 2010 in Las Vegas, NV. <http://watersmartinnovations.com>.
- FEB** 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Water Industry Expo. February 9 – 10, 2010. Wisconsin Dells, WI. <http://www.cswea.org/events/2010%20Expo%20Brochure10.26.09%20draft.pdf>.
- Marquette Law School Public Service Conference: Water and People. February 26, 2010. Milwaukee, WI. <http://law.marquette.edu/jw/psconference>.
- MAR** Better Buildings, Better Business. March 3 – 5, 2010. Wisconsin Dells, WI. <http://www.ecw.org/university/ecuevent.php?ecuid=64>
- Wisconsin Section – American Water Resources Association Annual Meeting. March 4 – 5, 2010. Madison, WI. <http://state.awra.org/wisconsin/2010meeting.html>.
- Wisconsin Groundwater Association Annual Meeting. March 19, 2010. Waukesha, WI. <http://www.wgwa.org/events.html>.
- Wisconsin Rural Water Association 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Technical Conference. March 23 – 26, 2010. Green Bay, WI. <http://www.wrwa.org/>.
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### 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, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 267-9813.



To submit information for publication in future newsletters, send an email to [water.currents@wisconsin.gov](mailto:water.currents@wisconsin.gov). Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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