



PSC Water Currents

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



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Water Saving Tip



Cutting back on outdoor water use is an easy way to save water. Most turf grasses need only an inch of water per week and naturally go dormant during hot weather. Soil type and weather also play a role in your lawn's water needs. UW-Extension publishes information to help with maintaining beautiful, water efficient lawns at:

clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/home.htm

Have a good idea to share? Email your tip to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us.

News

New Berlin offers toilet rebates



The City of New Berlin's water and sewer utilities are sponsoring a toilet rebate program to encourage customers to install high-efficiency WaterSense toilets. Toilet flushing is often the largest water use in the home and New Berlin estimates that its customers can save more than 10,000 gallons and \$70 per year by replacing outdated, inefficient, or leaky toilets. The utilities are offering rebates of up to \$100 per toilet on a first-come, first-served basis for the first 300 toilets replaced. WaterSense labeled toilets are designed to use 1.28 gallons per flush and are certified by independent laboratory testing to meet rigorous performance criteria. For more information about the City of New Berlin's toilet rebate program and other water conservation efforts, visit: www.newberlin.org/government/departments/utilities/toilet-rebate-program.aspx.

Appliance rebate program ends

Focus on Energy has announced that it will run out of funding for the state energy efficient appliance rebate program in April 2010. The U.S. Department of Energy allocated \$5.4 million to Wisconsin under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide rebates for the purchase of new ENERGY STAR® qualified home appliances, including clothes washers, dishwashers, and water heaters. More than 28,000 rebate applications have been processed since the program began on January 1, 2010. To take advantage of the remaining funding, consumers must purchase their appliances by April 30, 2010, and applications must be postmarked by May 31, 2010. Rebates will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis and it is possible that applications could be denied if the funding runs out. To get the most up-to-date information about these rebates call (800) 762-7077 or visit www.focusonenergy.com/recovery.



Georgia adopts water statewide conservation standards

Water availability is a growing issue throughout the United States. To address concerns about its long-term water supply, the State of Georgia enacted the Water Stewardship Act on March 18, 2010. The Act is a comprehensive water conservation law that requires higher efficiency standards for toilets, faucets, urinals, and cooling towers. The Act also standardizes water loss reporting by public water utilities, establishes a statewide outdoor watering schedule, requires utilities to bill based on actual water use, and mandates sub-metering of multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Georgia's law takes effect in July 2012. Two other states, California and Texas, have also adopted similar high efficiency plumbing standards that take effect in 2014. For more information about Georgia's Water Stewardship Act, visit: www.conservewatergeorgia.net.

Editor's Note: The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin requires all water utilities to bill customers based on metered water use and to report standardized water loss information as part of their annual reports.

WaterSense announces specification for showerheads



WaterSense announced the final specification for showerheads in March 2010. Standard showerheads use 2.5 gallons of water per minute (gpm), but showerheads that earn the WaterSense label must use no more than 2.0 gpm. The WaterSense specification includes performance criteria to ensure a good shower experience. EPA worked with a variety of stakeholders—including consumers who tested various showerheads—to develop criteria for water coverage and spray intensity.

EPA estimates that if every household in the United States installed WaterSense labeled showerheads, it would save 250 billion gallons annually and reduce the nation's energy bills by \$2.5 billion for heating water. Manufacturers can now submit their showerheads for testing to earn the WaterSense label, and consumers will soon be able to renovate their bathrooms with a full suite of WaterSense labeled products, including faucets and toilets. For more information, visit: www.epa.gov/watersense.

Upcoming Events

- MAY** National Drinking Water Week. May 2 – 8, 2010. Sponsored by AWWA.
<http://www.awwa.org/>.
- Water Supply Regulatory Affairs Seminar. May 6, 2010. Madison, Wisconsin.
<http://www.wrwa.org/>.
- Southeast Wisconsin Water and Energy Efficiency Expo. May 7 – 8, 2010. Waukesha, Wisconsin. <http://www.wisconsinwaterwise.org/>.
- Madison Water Utility Open House. May 8, 2010. Madison, Wisconsin.
<http://www.cityofmadison.com/water/>.
- Central States Water Environment Association Annual Conference. May 11 – 14, 2010. Madison, Wisconsin. <http://www.cswea.org/>.
- Water Efficiency Seminar, Wisconsin Water Association. May 13, 2010. Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin. <http://www.wiawwa.org/>.
- JUN** Northwest Wisconsin Water Conservation Workshop. June 10, 2010. Hudson, Wisconsin. Contact info@hudsonwaterutility.com for information on registration.
- AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE 10). June 20 – 24, 2010. Chicago, Illinois. <http://www.awwa.org/ACE10/>.

Save the Date! The Alliance for Water Efficiency is hosting a water conservation tracking tool workshop on September 15, 2010, at the Monona Terrace in Madison, Wisconsin. The tracking tool is designed to help water utilities with planning and evaluating water conservation programs. The workshop is open to all and registration will be available as part of the Wisconsin Water Association's annual conference.



Focus on Wisconsin Water

Water Star recognizes communities for water conservation, protection efforts



The Wisconsin Water Star program was officially launched on Earth Day 2010. The purpose of the program is to recognize local governments that have made extraordinary efforts to protect Wisconsin's water resources. These actions include implementing water conservation programs and enacting policies and practices that protect surface water and groundwater quality. Suzanne Wade, a UW-Extension basin educator and Water Star program coordinator, says "I'm amazed at the local wisdom that municipal staff and elected officials have used in solving problems. Water Star celebrates the positive steps municipalities are taking and provides a way for them to share their good work." *Continued on page 4.*

Water Star, from page 3.

Water Star is a public-private effort that is sponsored by the Rock River Coalition, the Town & Country RC&D, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW Cooperative Extension, Ruckert-Mielke, Natural Resources Consulting, Inc., MSA Professional Services, UW-Extension Environmental Resources Center, and Dane County. Cities, villages, towns, and counties that are in compliance with their water-related permits are eligible to apply using an online application. The application ranks more than 270 actions and sub-actions related to public lands, drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater management. Water Star recognizes differences among communities and each applicant is required to answer only those questions that apply to them.

Several municipalities and counties participated in the pilot testing of the Water Star application process. These local governments will be the first to receive recognition under the program. Pilot test participants included: the City of Fitchburg, City of River Falls, and Dane County (gold candidates); the City of Beloit, the Village of Mukwonago, and Waukesha County (silver candidates); and the City of Darlington and the City of Manitowoc (bronze candidates).

Each Water Star community will receive a certificate of recognition, a special sign that announces the community as a program participant, access to electronic logos and promotional materials, a listing of their community on the program's Web site, and guidance on how to improve their Water Star rating. For more information about Water Star, or to submit an application for your community, visit: <http://www.waterstarwisconsin.org/>.

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@psc.state.wi.us. 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, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 267-9813.



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

To subscribe, visit: <http://psc.wi.gov/utilityinfo/water/current/subscriptionPage.htm>.