

WHAT'S ON

TAP?



NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS | VOL. 16 ISSUE 10

General Manager's Message:



Dear Customers,

A top priority at DC Water is to be as open and transparent as possible. Our operations and capital projects are almost entirely funded by you, our ratepayers, and you have every right to know how that money is spent. We can tell you about it, but it's even better if you see the incredible progress for yourself. That's why I'm thrilled about the recent tours we offered which are featured in this issue.

Every year, we host dozens of groups from around the country and the world at our Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant (AWWTP). But this fall, we reserved several days just for customers to take a special Halloween tour of the facility. The spots filled up fast and the tours were a huge success. Participants saw firsthand the tremendous resources we devote to returning clean, safe water to the Potomac River.

In late October, we also partnered with our contractor on the First Street Tunnel Project, Skanska Jay Dee, to take 103 Bloomingdale and LeDroit Park residents deep beneath their neighborhoods to see the incredible scale of our flood relief efforts.

We depend on your support and will continue to look for opportunities to invite you to see why we are so proud of the work we are doing on your behalf.

George S. Hawkins
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DC Water makes electricity from sewage

In early October, DC Water unveiled the \$470 million waste-to-energy project that can produce a net 10 megawatts (MW) of electricity from the wastewater treatment process, providing clean, renewable energy. DC Water CEO George S. Hawkins was joined by DC Mayor Muriel Bowser and many other officials to commission the project.

The program was only viable through the use of innovative technology never before used in North America. DC Water brought the CAMBI® thermal hydrolysis process to the continent; in addition, Blue Plains is now the largest thermal hydrolysis installation in the world. The process uses high heat and pressure to “pressure cook” the solids left over at the end of wastewater treatment. This makes the energy easily accessible to the microbes in the next stage—anaerobic digestion. The microbes eat organic matter and produce methane, which is fed to three large turbines to produce electricity enough to power one third of the plant. Steam is also



captured and used in the system.

Finally, the solids at the end are a cleaner Class A biosolids product that DC Water uses as a compost-like material for urban gardens and green infrastructure projects.

Hawkins, said “This project embodies a shift from treating used water as waste to leveraging it as a resource. We are proud to be the first to bring this innovation to North America for the benefit of our ratepayers, the industry and the environment.”

The ceremony included dedicating the facilities to Walt Bailey, who retired this year after serving DC Water for 43 years.

Please consider the gift of water



As you think of the perfect gifts this season, please take a moment to consider those in need. Many people right here in our city have trouble paying their water bills each month. DC Water employees started the SPLASH fund (Serving People by Lending a Supporting Hand) for those customers in dire need who would be facing a service shut-off without assistance. SPLASH is funded solely by contributions from custom-

see **SPLASH** continued on back



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Residents visit Lucy the TBM

DC Water and Skanska-Jay Dee (JV) welcomed Bloomingdale and LeDroit Park residents for an informative session and tour of the First Street Tunnel project site, complete with a visit to Lucy, their neighborhood tunnel boring machine. This area of the District has historically seen flooding and sewage back-ups during heavy rains. DC Water and the former Mayor's taskforce devised 25 tactics to address the problem.

The First Street Tunnel was accelerated to store nine million gallons of combined sewage deep underground during heavy rainstorms.



When the storms subside, the sewage will be pumped into the existing sewer system where it can be treated at the Blue Plains AWWTP before being returned to the Potomac River.

On October 24, more than 100 members of the community braved the 160-foot

descent and walked into the tunnel, boarding TBM Lucy to see how she operates. Some residents are experiencing construction close to home, and this was an opportunity to learn exactly what is going on below their streets.

SPLASH *continued*

ers, employees and the community. The Greater Washington Urban League manages the fund and DC Water pays all administrative fees so that every dollar raised can be distributed to eligible customers. Extended payment plans are available for eligible households facing a high water bill.

You can donate to SPLASH on your bill with round-up options or, if you have any questions regarding SPLASH, please call us at (202) 354-3600.

DC Water's "#2 Tour" ranks #1

DC Water hosted three days of Halloween tours at the Blue Plains AWWTP, giving visitors the chance to see large-scale technology in action and trace the journey of used water as it gets cleaned at the "resource recovery" plant.

It may come in as sewage, but less than 24 hours after its arrival, used water is separated into liquid and solid. The liquid side is cleaned through physical and biological processes, treated, filtered and put back into the Potomac River in a far cleaner state than the river itself. The solids are pressure-cooked and turned into energy.



One tour-taker, Jody Pozen, said via Tweet, "Thanks DC Water for the tour! I've never had so much fun talking about poop, I mean 'nutrients.'" And another—"Thanks for keeping all that c#@p out of the Potomac."

SPOTLIGHT ON: DC Beekeepers Alliance

A 2013 *TIME* Magazine article about the importance of the honeybee



to our agriculture and economy describes a demonstration in which a grocery store removed from its produce section all of the foods that exist because of honeybees: 237 out of 453 food items vanished. That is because the bee's ability to pollinate makes it an important part of the food chain.

But the honeybee is disappearing in alarming numbers. One local group is doing its part to keep the honeybee community vibrant. The DC Beekeeper Alliance is a team of beekeepers who collect and protect bees. The team trains those who want to become future beekeepers. The DC Beekeepers Alliance also takes part in outreach to educate the public on honeybees, pollination and the environment. DC Water worked with the DC Beekeepers Alliance to establish beehives on rooftops of its Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant to play a part in saving the honeybee from extinction.

Without bees, we wouldn't have sources of food and beautiful floral landscapes. The DC Beekeepers Alliance supports and protects the District's honeybees and their habitats and welcomes all those who are beekeepers and enthusiasts.

For more information visit dcbeekeepers.org



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