



**DEPARTMENT OF WATER MANAGEMENT  
CITY OF CHICAGO**

**CUSTOMER NOTICE INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM**

July 2, 2012

Dear Neighbor,

At Alderman Michele Smith's (43<sup>rd</sup> Ward) request, I am providing you with information regarding a water construction project in your neighborhood. This is part of our approach to renewing our city's aging infrastructure. I see this as an opportunity to partner with you our customers. As part of this partnership, I want to be certain you are well informed about the project. You should know where to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Our crews will soon be installing 1,260 feet of 8-inch water main in N. Wells Street, from W. North Avenue to W. Schiller Street. The old pipe dates back to 1888, and needs to be replaced.

We are coordinating with Alderman Smith's office, and she has made clear we are to put great importance on your convenience and the quality of life in this neighborhood through the whole term of this project. Good communication is the key.

I have asked my staff to assemble the attached information for you and to monitor the project closely. We know that construction always involves inconveniences and noise. We will do everything possible to minimize inconvenience and noise and to conduct ourselves as good and thoughtful neighbors in the course of our presence on your street.

If you have questions or comments about the project, please feel free to contact Assistant Commissioner Tom LaPorte at 312-742-1021 at any time, you may leave a message.

I am also asking you to consider the enclosed information about our MeterSave Program and our Basement Flooding Partnership (BFP).

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Powers, P.E.  
Commissioner

cc: Alderman Michele Smith  
43<sup>rd</sup> Ward

Do you wonder what was happening in 1888? That's the year the old water main was installed beneath your street. Among other things:



**HARPO MARX**

- In Chicago, the Republican Convention opened at the Auditorium Building. General Benjamin Harrison and Levi Morton won the nominations.
- In Washington DC, the National Geographic Society was founded.
- The Kodak camera increased the popularity of photography as a hobby.
- An unknown inventor developed "Mum" deodorant, which is widely recognized as the first personal product designed to prevent body odor.
- American comedian Harpo Marx was born.
- "Jack the Ripper" murdered at least five women in London, England.
- William Bundy patented the timecard clock.
- The first organized rodeo competition was held, in Prescott, Arizona.

## **WELLS ST. WATER PROJECT PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Project:** The Department of Water Management will soon be installing 1,260 feet of 8-inch water main in N. Wells Street, from W. North Avenue to W. Schiller Street.

**Reason:** The old main consists of a 6-inch pipe, and we want to expand capacity. Furthermore, the old pipe dates back to 1888 and needs to be replaced.

**Timing:** We will begin installing the new water main shortly, and expect the water main work to be completed by mid September 2012. Restoration (to be completed by the Chicago Department of Transportation) will follow. Dates may change depending on weather and other factors. If there is any appreciable change, we will notify you.

**Traffic:** We will allow traffic to flow on N. Wells Street outside of our working hours. When we are working in the street, we have to close it to traffic for reasons of safety. You will always be able to reach your home or business, even if it means putting a metal plate in place. Outside of working hours, a lane will be left open for local traffic only.

**Parking:** We will post our work area for “No Parking” as needed, during work hours. We are agreeable to parking outside of those hours, but will have to insist that cars be moved by the start of the next workday. We will try to preserve as much parking as we can.

### **CONTACT NUMBERS**

**24-HOUR SERVICE AND INFORMATION LINE**

**3-1-1**

**ALDERMAN MICHELE SMITH**

**773-348-9500**

**ASSISTANT WATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSIONER TOM LAPORTE**

**312-742-1021**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What if there is a problem?** There are always surprises in any construction project. If you have any concerns or questions, you can ask our foreman in the street. You can also call Assistant Commissioner Tom LaPorte directly at 312-742-1021. His cell is on the voicemail message, in case it's off hours.

**Can I park when you're not working?** We have no problem with you parking outside of our working hours. We have to insist that cars be out of our way at the start of the workday.

**Will this ever end?** Yes. As a matter of fact, the water main installation is slated to conclude in mid September 2012. Restoration (to be completed by the Chicago Department of Transportation) will follow. We always hesitate to promise specific dates, since we are at the mercy of other factors like weather and emergencies elsewhere in town.

**Will you shut my water off?** Yes, maybe a couple of times. When we switch over the services from the old main to the new main, we interrupt service. We give you 24-hour notice when this is to happen. In any construction project, there is also a risk that an old pipe will break. They can be fragile. This may necessitate an emergency shutdown. If we do this, we will let you know what is happening, even though we may be unable to give prior warning.

**Why should I be nice about this?** The crew working in the street will work hard to be good neighbors, and to respect both your convenience and your quality-of-life. By working together, we can complete this important project as friends working for the improvement of our community.

## **DOES YOUR BASEMENT FLOOD?**

**The Department of Water Management would like to work with you and your neighbors to reduce the risk of basement flooding. We are promoting a collective response as the only strategy—homeowners joining together on a neighborhood basis to work with us on practical steps (public and private) to protect your property and peace of mind.**

Want to learn more? <http://www.cityofchicago.org/watermanagement/bfp>



**DEPARTMENT OF WATER MANAGEMENT  
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## **What is MeterSave?**

**MeterSave** is a program to encourage Chicago homeowners to voluntarily install meters to monitor water usage. Meters allow single family and two-flat homeowners to pay for only the water actually used, encouraging efforts to save water and money while protecting one of our most precious natural resources.

Water charges in non-metered homes are tied to factors such as building size, lot-size and number of plumbing fixtures. Metered homes are billed according to actual use. This means that with minimal effort, participating homeowners could save money on their water bills.

### **Homeowner Incentives**

**Non-metered homeowners participating in MeterSave are eligible for the following:**

- ❖ **A 7-year guarantee** that the home water bill will be no higher than it would have if the meter had not been installed. Bill will not exceed the assessed rate for that year.
- ❖ Choice of one of the following (while supplies last):
  - rain barrel,
  - water meter monitor (a refrigerator magnet that shows water usage)
  - outdoor water conservation kit *or*
  - indoor water conservation kit
  - And, two of the above incentives if a whole block volunteers!

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **How and when do I sign up?**

Interested non-metered single family and two-flat homeowners may visit [www.metersave.org](http://www.metersave.org), call 311, or call 312-744-4H2O. Please have your 12-digit account number ready. Space is limited based on funding availability and the number of volunteers.

#### **What will it cost to participate?**

The City of Chicago Department of Water Management will install a water meter complete with the automatic meter reading (AMR) technology in your home FREE of charge.

AMR technology allows readings to be transmitted via wireless radio technology to Water Management vehicles as they drive by, eliminating the need for readings to take place inside the home. Bills will be issued bi-monthly and reflect only the actual amount of water used.

#### **Do I have to be current on my water bill?**

Yes. Homeowners must be current on payment plan and water bill to participate in this limited time offer of a 7-year guarantee.

For payment plan information call 312-744-4H20 (4426).

### **When can I have a meter installed?**

Online meter installation scheduling is available at [www.metersave.org](http://www.metersave.org) Otherwise, Water Management will contact you to schedule a time for meter installation.

### **Small changes made by Chicagoans can have a tremendous impact on the sustainability of our water supply, such as:**

- ❖ *Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving.* This can save over 500 gallons per month per person.
- ❖ *Install high-efficiency, low-flow toilets.* Toilets alone consume 26% of household water consumption. A leaky toilet wastes 200 gallons of water per day.
- ❖ *Install high-efficiency washing machines.* This can save energy and water consumption.
- ❖ *Fill the sink with dishwasher instead of washing dishes with an open tap.* This saves 25 gallons per wash.
- ❖ *If you own a dishwasher, wait until you have a full load to run it.* Dishwashers typically use half the energy, one-sixth the water, and less soap than washing dishes in the sink.
- ❖ *Garden with plants that are native to Chicago.* This can reduce outdoor water use by 20-50%.
- ❖ *Use rain barrels to capture rainwater for watering lawns and gardens.*
- ❖ *Use a timer or a rain sensor to monitor lawn irrigation:* Sprinkler systems use thousands of gallons of water per cycle. Installing a timer or rain sensor will save money and water by preventing needless watering.
- ❖

## **WATER**

### **Our Most Precious Resource**

Lake Michigan has lost almost 32 trillion gallons of water--the equivalent of over 45 million Olympic-sized swimming pools of water-- over the past decade. Our region could face severe water shortages by 2050 if we fail to take decisive action.

### **More than half of water consumption in Chicago occurs within homes.**

Over 5.4 million people-- 44% of the population of the State of Illinois, depend on the Chicago Department of Water Management to provide a reliable supply of drinking water from Lake Michigan.

### **Volunteer for a meter today to save water and money!**

Please go to [www.metersave.org](http://www.metersave.org)  
By phone call 3-1-1, or 312-744-4H2O.



**Save Water Save Money!**