



An old saying goes something along the lines of “necessity is the mother of invention.” This old adage has been proven to be true time after time through the ages. Early man found ways to harness the power of fire in order to keep warm and cook raw meat. Later, the wheel was invented to make movement much easier. More recently, significant advances in technology has made communication almost instantaneous –although the constant ability to be reached by a “smart” phone can, at times, cause one to wonder if this is a real improvement over the days of “snail mail” and fax machines (those of us over 40 can appreciate the time when a vacation meant actually getting away).

City management is not immune to the relentless and, at times, necessary evolutions in the ways cities operate and provide services for their residents. Over the past several years, the concept of public/private partnerships has emerged and, in some cases, become an important compliment for core city services. Sometimes referred to as P3, there is even a National Council for Public Private Partnerships. Water infrastructure partnerships include water system upgrades/improvements financing. Generally, when done properly, these partnerships can provide necessary funding and professional management oversight for large infrastructure related projects—bringing valuable services to the general public.

Aging city water infrastructure has become an ever increasing concern for cities across the nation. Water and sewer lines, in many cases, are growing old and in need of replacement. Local residents are also finding the laterals serving their homes and for which they own and are responsible for are also growing old and rapidly becoming in need of repair. And, the cost of these repairs are usually expensive.

In recognition of a need to help residents cope with unexpected and costly repair costs associated with failed water and/or sewer service lines, the National League of Cities (NLC) partnered with Utility Service Partners, Inc. (USP) to provide cities across the country with the opportunity to participate in the National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program. The program, administered by USP, sponsored by the local city, provides inexpensive water and sewer line warranty products for the city’s residents to cover the cost of repair or replacement of the water or sewer service lateral in the event of a failure.

Since introducing the program in November 2010, more than 125 cities in 27 states, to date, have adopted the program, including nine in Iowa. In that time, over 1,200 service lines have been repaired or replaced saving those residents in excess of \$1,000,000 in repair costs that would have otherwise come from their pockets.

The NLC Service Line Warranty Program is provided at no cost to the city and Utility Service Partners enjoys an A+ Better Business Bureau rating with a three year history of zero complaints. As everyone, cities and residents alike, are watching their dollars, the NLC Service Line Warranty Program is an example of a cost-free P3 program that may be the right solution for your city.

For more information on the NLC Service Line Warranty Program, please visit www.utilitysp.net or contact me at (214) 632-6947 or oarras@utilitysp.net.

Utility Service Partners Oscar Arras

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