

The Water Conservation Audit

Across the U.S., drinking water and wastewater systems are facing an increasing list of challenges, from population increase to aging infrastructure, and cities are looking for ways to conserve this precious resource. According to the EPA's Energy Management Guidebook, water utilities could be the largest consumer of energy in any given community due to the age of facilities.



for small to medium sized facilities, a user can simply input information about their facility, and the tool will help track key energy consumption and cost indicators. A user can see how their facility compares to other facilities, and help identify opportunities for efficiency. According to the EPA, this system can help its users "make informed energy efficiency and energy conservation decisions".

"Many water systems have reduced expenses by implementing changes that require less energy to be consumed," states the EPA. Sounds easier said than done. Where does a city start?

The EPA suggests this route: Benchmark. Audit. Implement. To find out how your city's water and energy consumption across wastewater facilities stacks up, visit the EPA website and check out the free online energy benchmark and audit tools, including the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager and Energy Use Assessment Tool for Water and Wastewater Treatment Systems. Especially useful

When a city is ready to implement improvements, the EPA tools also provide links to innovative ideas and even public outreach materials. Programs discussed include case studies and best practices implemented by cities nationwide.

Improving efficiency in water and wastewater treatment systems – along with community education – can help your city safeguard its most precious natural resource. For more information, visit www.epa.gov. And be sure to check out more resources listed on page 4 of this issue.

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

The Water Conservation Audit.....1

Atlanta PSA.....1

YOUR COMMUNITY

Contractor Spotlight.....2

Introductions and Implementations.....2

Abilene Zoo.....3

PARTNER RESOURCES

Resources, Did You Know?, Business Development Directory.....4



Atlanta PSA Keeps Residents Informed

With over 170 years under their belt, Atlanta is well known as a fast-growing, innovative city. In the fall of 2011, spearheaded by City Council members Felicia Moore and Joyce Sheperd, the Atlanta City Council reached out to USP to offer affordable service line warranties to their residents to ensure they would have someone reliable to call in the event of an emergency. They continue to work to ensure every resident understands why the program is important. In addition to traditional press coverage, the City Council prepared a public service announcement featuring Moore and Sheperd.

"Our goal was to make sure that every resident in Atlanta knew about the program, and in fact, thousands have enrolled," said Dexter Chambers, Communications Director for the Atlanta City Council. "As long as we have this wonderful program in the city, we'll continue to run the PSA." As a result of their efforts, Atlanta has raised over \$100,000 in royalties for their Care and Conserve program, which assists residents unable to afford their monthly water bills. "I would highly encourage every city to bring this program to their residents. It's definitely worthwhile," said Chambers. "It's a great partnership and we look forward to future programs." Visit us at www.utilitysp.net for more information and ideas for launching a PSA.



Program Best Practices

Introductions And The Internet Create Smooth Implementations

Contractor Spotlight: Heiden Plumbing Co.



For over 80 years, residents in the Milwaukee, WI area have relied on the services of Heiden Plumbing Co. because of their solid

reputation. Today, the Wyderka family still owns and operates the business following the same guidelines set forth in 1925 – customer service.

“I grew up in the trade since it’s the family business,” said Andrew Wyderka, Service Manager and Vice President, “that was almost 20 years ago.”

With over 100 years of combined experience in the industry, Heiden Plumbing Co.’s commitment was confirmed after a story run by a local news station proved they were the best-priced and most effective plumber in the area.

“Three plumbers were contacted to look at a rigged toilet,” said Wyderka. After two technicians from other firms suggested the customer needed a repair costing several hundred dollars, Heiden’s technician informed the customer it could be fixed in 30 minutes for the nominal fee of \$85.

After all these years in the industry, Wyderka has seen his share of homeowners footing hefty repair bills. “I think the program offered is phenomenal for homeowners,” he said.

Wyderka has made a commitment to quality, which he considers to be number one in his business. “You have to provide good quality for a reasonable rate and that’s what we’ve pushed for over the years.”



By definition, introductions are a “presentation of one person to another”. The old saying, “you only get one chance to make a first impression” holds true in the form of introductions. Whether you’re introducing two new colleagues or a new service to a community, a good introduction can put people at ease while building a relationship of trust and understanding.

USP introduces itself in many ways to your residents. A major component of our turn-key warranty program is producing campaign letters to your residents, featuring information on both our company and warranties. But sometimes, a resident wants more information, and they may turn to city government for help. So, what can a city do to help address a resident’s concerns?



Green River, WY is an excellent example of how an informative implementation plan utilizing the Welcome Kit provided by USP created a smooth implementation for the City and its residents. The City posted a short message about the program on their website outlining enrollment and a graphic outlining different ways to enroll in the program.

“We wanted to give our residents access to as many resources as possible for this new program,” said Stephen Pyles, Public Affairs Specialist. “Providing residents easy access to this information has made for less confusion, and a higher response rate.”



Another great approach occurred in North Chicago, IL, where the City took advantage of the extensive materials provided by USP for resident education—an action which proved to have a positive impact on the program introduction. City officials utilized a graphic on their website showing the home structure. North Chicago also provided links to USP’s FAQ’s and a short educational video about the program. The visible communication efforts provided answers to many of the resident’s questions and limited additional phone calls.

Josh Wheeler, Public Works Director for North Chicago, said they posted the information to “cover all communication channels...for fear that people may throw away the mail.”

Achieving a response rate of over 14%, North Chicago only received a little over ten calls from residents, proving the information posted helped to reduce confusion and questions among citizens.

It is USP’s hope that we can provide an exemplary introduction to your city with our Welcome Kit and extensive resource information. For more information on ideas for your city, contact Blake Stogner, Business Development Program Manager, at 214-552-4098 or via email at bstogner@utilitysp.net.

Municipal Happenings: Abilene Zoo in Texas

The next time you're in Abilene, TX, be sure to stop by the Abilene Zoo and see their animals from around the globe. As the only zoo in the region, the Abilene Zoo is home to many unique and endangered animals from around the world with an intimate and unique experience for every visitor.



"It's a really fun and interesting place to spend a few hours," said Bill Gersonde, Director of the Abilene Zoo. "Not only will you have a wonderful experience seeing the animals, but also the beautiful grounds. It's really a quality family place to learn about animals and let the kid's burn off some energy."

Established in 1966, the historic zoo recently underwent a \$1.1 million renovation allowing the facilities to expand exhibits and add new creatures. With over 200,000 visitors yearly and home to more than 600 animals, the zoo's most unique feature is the giraffe bridge which allows visitors to not only get closer to the animals but actually feed them.

"The Giraffe Bridge is a popular exhibit," said Gersonde. "It's in the center of the zoo and folks have the opportunity to feed the giraffes from the bridge. We also have feeders at the Wetlands of America exhibit where people can feed ducks and a lake where people can purchase fish food for the carp."

In addition to the amazing animal encounters, the Zoo is still a buzz after the recent hatching of their Caribbean Flamingo chicks in May and July. These chicks join a collection of truly unique zoo babies which also include

four prairie dog pups born in March, a maned wolf pup born last December and five African lions born in 2010. The Zoo offers a variety of exhibits and educational classes. Recently, the zoo added the Elm Creek Backyard, named after a local creek and featuring animals you might just see in your own backyard.

"Two years ago we also opened the Elm Creek Backyard with a collection of animals from the immediate region," said Gersonde. "There's everything from scorpions to mountain lions, a walk through bird exhibit, turkeys and bobcats. There's also a large area with aquariums of snapping turtles and fish. There's a whole assortment of North American wildlife."

The Abilene Zoo is located in Nelson Park in Abilene, TX. For more information, please visit their website at www.abilenezoo.org.

"I would love for everyone to come out and see us," said Gersonde. "We're making improvements continually. Those that have been here before should be sure to come back from time to time."

Customer Survey Highlights



Good news travels fast!

USP sends a customer satisfaction survey after every repair. Not only do we have a **98% satisfaction rate**, but 96% say the program positively influences their opinion of their city.



Does your city have a story to share?

Do you have a story to share about your city, our program or a question about resources and best practices? Share your ideas and questions with Hayley Martin at hmartin@utilitysp.net or (724) 749-1042 and your city could be featured in our next quarterly newsletter.

Resources



Did You Know?

Instant access to your city's NLC Service Line Warranty program participation information is just a click away.

To begin, follow these simple instructions:

1. Visit www.utilitysp.net.
2. Click **Partner Materials** in the lower left corner.
3. Log in with your partner reporting login credentials.
4. **To get the latest stats on enrollment and royalties, click on Partner Reports.**

Tutorials – USP provides helpful tutorials on the website to help you understand report information, navigate the website and more in the Partner Report Training section, accessible from the Partner Materials home page, which includes the following:

Partner Materials Training Video – a step-by-step tour of the website.

Partner Training Manual – a PDF manual you can view, search or print with step-by-step instructions including login, reporting details, creating additional logins for other city members and more.

Report Types – USP offers two types of reports capturing important information – customers, claims and royalties.

Partner Summary Report will show the current enrollment count for residents and the number of claims filed to date.

Royalty Reports provide a summary of royalties earned and paid to your city. These royalties are a great help to your city and may be used for special programs or services.

Finally, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact a business development representative. They will be happy to assist you.

In addition to the EPA resources described on page 1, here are some other resources for water audit software tools you may find useful.

City Resources

AWWA (American Water Works Association) offers a free water audit software on their website at www.awwa.org. The site also features information and useful ideas for sustainable water utilities and improvement of utility management.

EPA.gov and Energystar.gov also offer helpful tools for increasing your utility's efficiency, such as an Energy Portfolio Manager and Guideline for Energy Management.

For cities that want to perform a comprehensive energy audit, but cannot afford it, funding is available through federal, state and private sources:

- Rural Energy for America Program: www.federalregister.gov
- Energy Audits and Renewable Energy Development Assistance Grants: www.grants.gov
- Rural Assistance Center: www.raconline.org
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program: www.eere.energy.gov
- USDA Rural Development Program: www.rurdev.usda.gov



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