

# CURRENTS

## WORK COMMENCES ON CORROSION CONTROL UPGRADES

Orthophosphate expected to dramatically reduce lead levels



*The new orthophosphate facility in the Sycamore Grove picnic area in Highland Park is a critical part of our community lead response.*

After extensive analysis and approvals from our regulators, we are now hard at work building the facilities needed to add orthophosphate to our drinking water. This \$6 million investment will reduce corrosion from lead pipes and protect the health and safety of our customers.

Orthophosphate is a food-grade additive used by water utilities across the country to reduce lead levels in tap water. When water with orthophosphate runs through the system, it creates a coating on the inside of lead service lines and establishes a barrier between the lead pipes and the water. This is called corrosion control and it's an effective method, recognized

by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to reduce lead.

Adding orthophosphate to the drinking water system provides protection to customers while we work to replace our lead service lines. Changing drinking water treatment is a major decision that we're implementing after consulting international experts, conducting a comprehensive water quality study and securing regulatory approvals.

The orthophosphate construction project includes the four distribution points throughout our water system. One is located within the Aspinall Water Treatment Plant, another is at the Bruecken Pump Station, and two new facilities are being

constructed in Highland Park along Reservoir Drive.

The most noticeable new facility is the structure within the Sycamore Grove picnic area near our microfiltration drinking water treatment plant. It will house the equipment needed to add orthophosphate to our water supply and will serve the dual purpose of providing a public amenity for park users to enjoy.

We are on an aggressive schedule to complete construction and plan to begin feeding orthophosphate into the water distribution system by April 1st. Additional sitework and finishing the exterior of the Sycamore Grove facility will extend beyond this date.

Our priority is to provide customers with safe, reliable drinking water. The orthophosphate project is one of the most important steps we can take to improve water safety. This crucial investment in our drinking water system will serve Pittsburgh now and for future generations.

To learn more about orthophosphate and our work in Highland Park, visit [pgh2o.com/highlandpark](http://pgh2o.com/highlandpark)

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### COMING UP:

#### 2019 Board Meetings

March 22  
April 26  
May 24  
June 28  
July 26  
September 27  
October 25  
November 22  
December 20  
*Meetings are open to the public starting at 10:00 am at 1200 Penn Avenue.*

#### Homewood Cluster 4

February 28  
Carnegie Library Homewood

#### South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association

March 12  
Paul of the Cross Monastery

#### Lawrenceville 10th Ward Block Watch

March 12  
Goodwill's Workforce Development Center

#### Shadyside Action Coalition

March 14  
Winchester-Thurston

#### Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition

March 19  
Children's Institute

# RAW TALK

By Executive Director Robert A. Weimar



## Our Path With the PUC Continues

Through a change in state law, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) began overseeing PWSA in April 2018. The PUC now oversees customer service, operations, performance, and ratemaking. This transition offers PWSA customers new protections and opportunities. We believe PUC oversight only strengthens Pittsburgh's water future.

This month, PWSA made history by completing our first-ever PUC rate case. The new rates approved by the PUC will provide us with an additional \$21 million per year. The additional resources will be used to make sure we maintain our infrastructure and get ahead of the curve on important repairs – including replacing all of our lead service lines.

Our new rates also include an expansion of our Bill Discount Program. Income-eligible households can now receive a 75% reduction in monthly minimum charges. We're committed to balancing the needs of our most vulnerable populations, while also delivering a water system that our customers can rely on now and into the future. It's also worth noting that our new water rates remain lower than the privately-owned water company in Pittsburgh.

The next step on our path with the PUC is Compliance Plan approval. Our plan will be vetted by the PUC in a staged review process. In the

first stage, the primary focus will be on urgent infrastructure improvement and the revenue and financing requirements of maintaining service that supports public health and safety. In the second stage, the PUC will concentrate on PWSA's billing and collections practices and developing a stormwater fee.

**“We believe PUC oversight helps protect consumers, demands transparency and accountability, and keeps PWSA on the same performance expectations as other large utilities in the state.”**

Similar to our rate case, the plan must undergo a formal approval process involving the PUC and external stakeholders. Our team has already devoted hundreds of hours developing our Compliance Plan, having in-person workshops with various PUC bureaus and interested parties in Harrisburg, and responding to written inquiries from the intervening parties. Topics included in the plan range from service conditions in the field to the layout of our customer bills.

The Compliance Plan and associated approval process is exhaustive, but we believe PUC oversight helps protect consumers, demands transparency and accountability, and keeps PWSA on the same performance expectations as other large utilities in the state. With PUC oversight, our customers can have peace of mind that we are monitored to use your rate money wisely. And as a publicly-owned utility, Pittsburghers can rest assured that we take every dollar and invest it back into their drinking water, stormwater, and sewer systems.



*Pictured above (Left to right): PUC Chairman Gladys M. Brown, PWSA Executive Director Robert A. Weimar, Acting Consumer Advocate Tanya McCloskey*

## Engineers' Society of Western Pennsylvania Names Weimar Engineer of the Year Award

Each year, ESWP convenes to present its Awards of Excellence to a handful of individuals and project teams.

We are incredibly proud to share that our very own Executive Director Robert A. Weimar was recently designated as 2018's ESWP Engineer of the Year!

Under his leadership, PWSA is making PWSA the water utility Pittsburgh expects

and deserves, and has proven that Getting Stuff Done is much more than just a catchphrase. As Bob says, "We are your neighbors, as well as public servants, who work for you. This is our water, and our future." Congrats, Bob!



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## A New Weapon to Fight Frozen Lines

### Thawing Devices Save Money and Time

When temperatures drop, the small diameter underground service lines that connect water mains to homes can freeze solid. A frozen service line prevents water from reaching your home, and even worse, can cause the service line to break.

This winter we added two new devices to help our field crews thaw service lines quickly and prevent disruptive and expensive breaks. The devices work by injecting hot water into the curb stop through a hose. Our crews know

when this non-invasive process is successful when they hear a loud popping sound, indicating that the ice jamming the pipe has melted.

These new tools are improving the service we provide our customers during the winter. We now spend less time repairing broken service lines and can direct efforts to other urgent repair and maintenance work. We will also spend fewer ratepayer dollars replacing broken service lines.



*Magikist Service Line Thawing Machine*



## Stormwater Improvements Coming to North Point Breeze

On February 19th, PWSA presented conceptual designs for the Thomas and McPherson Stormwater Improvement Project in North Point Breeze.

Residents of North Point Breeze and Point Breeze attended the meeting to share their thoughts about the design and inform our team about the stormwater challenges in the neighborhood.

The project area, which encompasses the 6700 and 6800 blocks of Thomas and McPherson boulevards, surrounding side streets and South Linden Avenue, is part of the A-42 sewershed, which flows to the Allegheny River. It is one of the largest contributors of combined sewer overflows to the river.

Our design concepts will use cost-effective and efficient stormwater

solutions to capture, detain, and allow for the infiltration of the first 1.5 inches of total stormwater runoff from the project site.

Residents expressed their excitement about the project and shared their preference for the type of stormwater solutions to use within the project area. This is the beginning of the project and the first opportunity to gather input from residents. We will continue to work with the offices of Councilmembers Strassburger and Burgess and the Point Breeze Organization to build awareness about future outreach opportunities.



PWSA's Ana Flores discusses design solutions with residents in the Thomas and McPherson project area.



## PWSA IN THE COMMUNITY

**We engaged with the community at the following meetings:**

**Greenfield Community Association Annual Meeting**  
January 27  
*MaGee Recreation Center*

**Homewood Concerned Citizens Council**  
February 6  
*Carnegie Library Homewood*

**Friendship Community Group**  
February 19  
*Friendship Perk and Brew*

**Thomas and McPherson Project Meeting**  
February 19  
*Linden School*

**Interested in learning more?**  
**Contact [communications@pgh2o.com](mailto:communications@pgh2o.com) to schedule a presentation in your community.**

# PWSA Responds to Water Main Breaks in Freezing Temperatures

Cold weather kept crews busy combatting main breaks in neighborhoods throughout the city.



16-inch water main break at the Duck Hollow Trail, February 15, 2019

Water main breaks are more likely to occur when there is a large change in temperature. Freezing and thawing soil creates movement in the ground which can bend or shift pipes. When the soil shrinks or swells, it places excess tension on water pipes that can make them snap. Cold temperatures also increase the pressure inside the pipe. When the pressure gets too high for the pipe to contain, it ruptures.

Our system includes over 1,000 miles of water mains, some of which are over 90 years old. In January 2019, PWSA made 78 separate water main repairs. In extreme circumstances, when the demand to repair broken pipes exceeds our full-time and contractor capacity, PWSA prioritizes work by considering public safety, service disruption, traffic impact, and water loss.

The length of time to make the repair depends on several factors. Before

any repairs are made underground, PWSA must call 8-1-1 (PA-One Call) to have the pavement marked to ensure repair crews do not strike gas, electric or other utility lines. We must then locate the water main break by excavating the site. Crews work as quickly as possible, and most repairs take about four to eight hours to complete. After the break is repaired, the road is temporarily restored using what is called a “utility cut”. We cannot provide permanent pavement restorations until temperatures are warmer in the spring.

For more information on this process please see PWSA’s FAQ on “[Street Restoration](#)”.

We notify impacted customers using automated calls to let them know what is happening and how long repair work is expected to last. To receive these calls, make sure your contact information is updated by clicking on the “[Update Contact Info](#)” button on our homepage. Customers can also call our Emergency Dispatch, which is available 24/7, at 412.255.2423.

For more information, please see PWSA’s FAQ on “[Winter Water Main Breaks](#)” at [pgh2o.com/FAQ](http://pgh2o.com/FAQ).

**In January 2019,  
PWSA made 78  
separate water main  
repairs.**



## Media and Press Releases

### MEDIA COVERAGE

**PWSA constructing facility to reduce lead in city’s water,** *Post-Gazette*

**New water treatment facility will reduce lead levels in Pittsburgh’s water system,** *NextPittsburgh*

**PWSA To Spend \$50M To Replace Lead Pipes,** *Associated Press*

**PWSA, city to rework cooperation agreement,** *Post-Gazette*

**PWSA to introduce digital alerts for customers’ water use,** *Post-Gazette*

**Robert Weimar: Record rainfall poses big problems for Pittsburgh,** *Post-Gazette*

### PRESS RELEASES

**PWSA Receives Award for Centre and Herron Green Stormwater Project in Upper Hill District,** *February 18, 2019*

**PWSA Takes Important Step to Improve Water Safety,** *February 12, 2019*

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Approves New Rates and Tariff,** *February 7, 2019*

**PWSA Seeking New Cooperation Agreement with City of Pittsburgh,** *February 4, 2019*

# An Inclusive Approach to Delivering Safe, Reliable Water

We are gathering input and advice from a broad representation of the community we serve.

In recent months, PWSA established several advisory groups to consider issues concerning lead, stormwater, customer assistance, and water quality. They will provide an inclusive well-rounded look at several areas to ensure that programs and services are implemented fairly, using industry best practices, and communicated broadly across our service area. Below is a summary of the goals each group is tasked to meet.

## Lead Advisory Committee

As part of our overall Community Lead Response, we've established a Lead Advisory Committee to bring together community leaders, construction, and public health experts to weigh in on PWSA's lead line replacement program. The primary goals of the committee are to provide oversight of the planned lead line replacement program in 2019, connect PWSA with community advocates, and help reach as many residents as possible about accessing free lead test kits, free water filters, or lead line replacement.

The Advisory Committee meets a requirement of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC). The group has met twice since January and will continue to meet quarterly for two years.

## Stormwater Advisory Group

PWSA formed a Stormwater Advisory Group to provide guidance on how to address the way we charge for stormwater operations, maintenance, and investment in stormwater systems. The Advisory Group consists of 20



*A meeting of the Stormwater Advisory Group at PWSA.*

stakeholders from the public and private sectors who are familiar with the impacts of stormwater. Their goal is to develop a recommendation for implementing a dedicated stormwater fee and incentive programs to fund stormwater management efforts throughout Pittsburgh. The group first met on November 29th and will continue to meet through the spring of 2019.

## Low-Income Assistance Advisory Committee

As part of our initial rate case settlement, we agreed to form a Low-income Assistance Advisory Committee (LIAAC). It is comprised of representatives from the PUC Office of Consumer Advocate, Neighborhood Legal Services Association, Pittsburgh United, Dollar Energy Fund, and local community and social service groups, such as Homewood Concerned Citizens Council and

the Thomas Merton Center. The group will meet quarterly to review assistance program metrics, and to provide feedback on customer outreach. The first meeting of the LIAAC will take place on March 4, 2019.

## Water Quality Advisory Board

In November 2018, we reconvened the Water Quality Advisory Board. It is made up of regional experts from academia and technical fields. This group is charged with providing input on our plans to improve water quality and treatment. Their first order of business was to review our strategy for applying orthophosphate to reduce corrosion from lead pipes. The Advisory Board meets quarterly to fully vet water quality decisions and to ensure they align with the latest research and best practices.



## Employee Spotlight

Paul Spara, Network/Systems Administrator



We are fortunate to have Paul Spara, Network/Systems Administrator, as part of our Management Information Systems (MIS) division. He brings a lifelong passion for technology to the organization and a goal-oriented approach to get stuff done.

He was recently part of the team that helped to implement a new voice-over IP phone system (VoIP). Although Paul had installed phone systems before, he had never implemented an IP based system. “I had the knowledge to put the system in place but had never used these skills in this way. It was a great learning experience and rewarding to be part of the project team.”

His interest in technology started at a young age when he received his first computer at the age of 11 or 12.

He was always curious about how they worked and would often take them apart to understand their inner workings. This led to a laser eye focus on technology and networking classes all through school. But, by his senior year of high school, he felt burned out by the idea of working in information technology (IT) and decided to pursue a college major in turf grass thinking he’d work on a golf course.

That lasted two weeks. He quickly changed his major to IT and never looked back. He graduated from Penn State’s main campus earning his IT degree and has put it to good use ever since.

Paul joined us in June of 2018 and is happy in his new role. He has made significant contributions to the MIS team as well as the organization and has learned a lot in the process. He enjoys working with his co-workers and appreciates the collaboration and amount of communication they have within the MIS group.

Paul never thought he would move to Pittsburgh. Growing up and spending most of his life in the country, moving to a city was not on his radar. But after family tragedies in early 2018, he needed a change. The opportunity with PWSA came at the right moment

and he jumped at the chance to join the organization. He found a house to accommodate his girlfriend and three dogs. They are all finding Pittsburgh a great place to call home.

When he’s not working, Paul is an avid snowboarder – though he hasn’t had a chance to go too much this season. He has conquered slopes in Colorado, Vermont, and New York. “After 20 years at the sport, I am reasonably good, but this is one area where cerebral palsy affects my abilities,” he stated. “I can go down just about any hill, but because of challenges with balance, my friends beat me to the bottom every time.”

At work Paul is not held back by cerebral palsy. “I overcame a lot of insecurities during my internship,” he explained. “I worked at a help desk and was on the phone talking to customers all day, every day. After a while I just didn’t think about it and now it’s not an issue.”

One of Paul’s next goals is to begin working on his master’s degree. He is currently studying for the GMAT and plans to enroll in a graduate program focusing on IT management either in the fall of 2019 or spring of 2020.

## PWSA Headquarters Taps It

Drinking tap water make sense. Not only is it inexpensive and abundant but choosing tap water over bottled water helps the environment and prevents plastic from clogging our storm drains. PWSA recently installed two state-of-the-art water filling stations at its headquarters building to encourage employees and visitors to be wise and choose PGH2o over bottled water. By using the refill stations for one month, we’ve consumed the equivalent of 1,000 12-ounce bottles!



### Five Reasons to Drink Tap Water Versus Bottled Water:

1. 36 ounces of water is needed to produce one 12-ounce plastic water bottle
2. 50% of bottled water is repackaged tap water
3. Bottled water produces 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide yearly
4. One billion dollars' worth of plastic is dumped in U.S. landfills every year
5. 17 million barrels of oil are consumed per year to produce bottled water

## New Hires

**Thomas Warner**

*Senior Manager, Projects/Construction*

**Patrick Yates**

*Engineering Technician 1*

**Kenneth Kitzing**

*Laborer*

**Michael Kovacic**

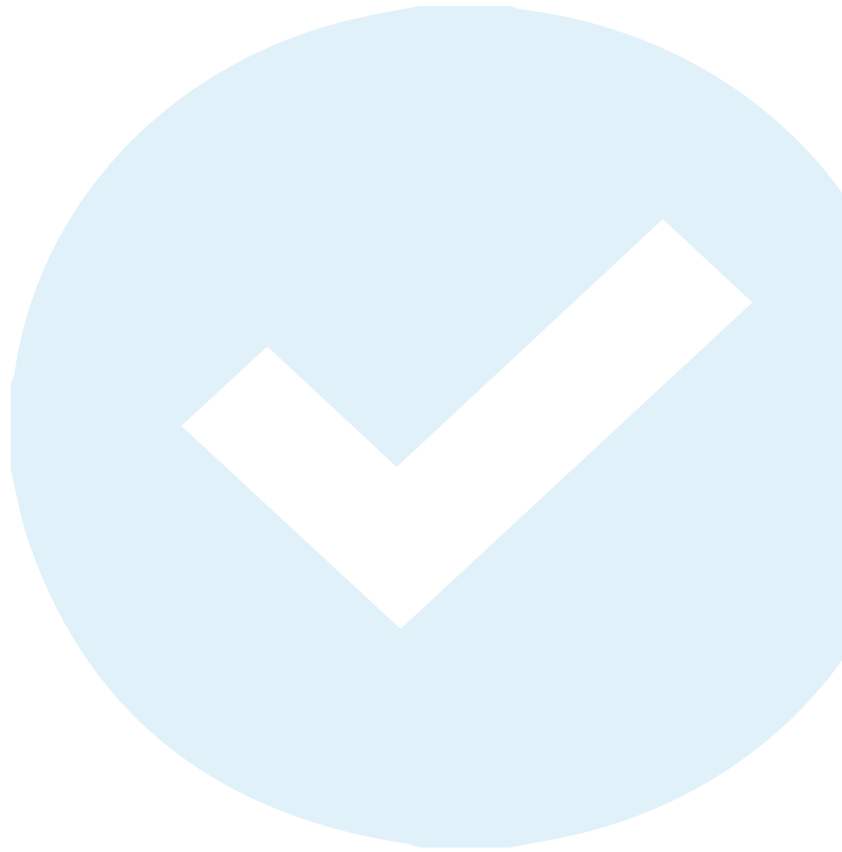
*Laborer*

**Renee Adair**

*Customer Service Representative 1*

**Amber McNeal**

*Customer Service Representative 1*



**WELCOME ABOARD!**

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## Job Postings

Interested in working with us? PWSA is looking for dedicated people to join our team.

**Director Engineering & Construction**, Engineering & Construction

**Information Technology Director**, Administration/Management Information Systems

**Engineering Tech I**, Administration/Customer Service

**Project Manager**, Engineering & Construction

**Public Affairs Associate**, Public Affairs

**Accounting Specialist**, Finance

**Plant Operator**, Water Treatment Plant

**Electrician**, Water Production

**Plumber**, Field Services

**Customer Service Representative** (Full-time and Part-time), Customer Service

Visit [www.pgh2o.com/employment](http://www.pgh2o.com/employment) to learn more.



## PWSA Recognized for Sustainability

### American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) honors given to Centre and Herron Stormwater Project

On February 16th, PWSA received the 2018 Sustainability Award from the Pittsburgh Section of the ASCE for the Centre and Herron Green Stormwater Infrastructure project, located in the Upper Hill District.

This innovative project directs stormwater runoff from surrounding streets into a 585 foot-long bioswale, where it is absorbed by plants or soaks into the ground. This project is designed to capture the first 1.5 inches of rainfall and it manages approximately one million gallons of runoff annually.

For more information about this exciting honor, please read the [press release](#).



The project team (photographed from left to right) was honored to receive the award. Award presented by Cathy Bazán-Arias, P.E., ASCE Pittsburgh Section 2018 Awards Committee; recipients include Megan Zeigler, PWSA; Jayson Livingston, Environmental Planning and Design; and Zachary Miller, Vigliotti Landscape and Construction, Inc.

## 2019 YTD Expenditure

Report includes all paid Vendor Invoices and Contractor Pay Applications from January 1, 2019, through February 18, 2019, received but not yet finalized/approved.

Capital	\$ 14,041,058
Operations	\$ 2,996,100
Pennvest	\$ 72,305
TOTAL	\$ 17,109,464





# WATER WISE

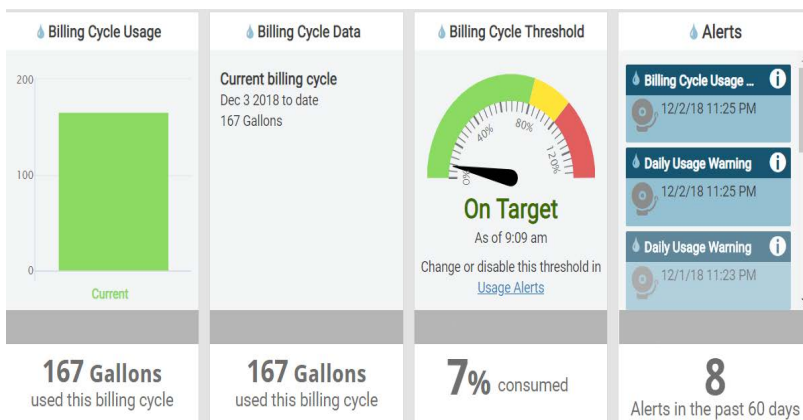
## Track Your Water Usage With Our New Customer Portal

In December 2018, we announced a free Customer Usage Portal so customers can keep track of their water consumption in real time.

Tracking usage can help take the guesswork out of your water bill, by allowing you to monitor your water consumption on an hourly basis. The portal uses our advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) technology to display details of your water consumption online.

In addition to an online dashboard, customers can set thresholds to receive text message or email alerts when their water usage is higher than their average consumption. Customers can also add multiple users to receive alerts so that an entire household, or tenants of a rental property, can be aware of their water consumption.

The information required for enrollment is located on your monthly bill and instructions for accessing the Customer Usage Portal are available at [pgh2o.com](http://pgh2o.com) under the "Usage Alerts" tab. Customers who need assistance can call PWSA Customer Service at 412.255.2423



Winter Stormwater Tip:  
No Dumping



A variety of pollutants are often found in our storm drains, such as plastic water bottles and concrete debris. With over 30,000 storm drains to maintain, we often have to rely on the public to notify us of clogged drains or illegal dumping. You can notify us by sending a photo with location to our Twitter account @Pgh2o, or call our Dispatch 24/7 at 412-255-2423. Thank you for playing a key role in keeping our pipes and waterways clean!



## Customer Assistance Program

Our Customer Assistance Program is designed to provide financial relief for low income residential customers who are having difficulty paying their water and sewer bill.

For more information about our programs, including the Winter Shut-off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Cash Assistance, and Private Lead Line Replacement Community Environmental Project, please visit [pgh2o.com/CAP](http://pgh2o.com/CAP) or call Dollar Energy Fund at [866.762.2348](tel:866.762.2348).



## Stay in the Know by Giving Us Your Digits

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages? Please verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

### HOW DO I UPDATE MY CONTACT INFORMATION?

Call PWSA Customer Service: [412.255.2423](tel:412.255.2423)

Or visit our website: [pgh2o.com](http://pgh2o.com) and click on "Update Contact Info"

*PWSA is committed to maintaining and protecting the confidentiality and privacy of our customers and will not share your information with third party vendors.*

## Board of Directors

Paul Leger  
*Chairman*

Margaret Lanier  
*Vice Chairperson*

Jim Turner  
*Secretary*

Deb Gross  
*Assistant Secretary*

Chatón Turner  
*Member*

## Executive Leadership

Robert A. Weimar  
*Executive Director*

Debbie Lestitian  
*Chief Corporate Counsel/Chief of Administration*

Barry King  
*Interim Director of Engineering*

Jennifer Presutti  
*Budget Director*

Kelly Morgano  
*Human Resources Manager*

Rick Obermeier  
*Director of Field Services*

Will Pickering  
*Senior Manager of Public Affairs*

Julie Quigley  
*Director of Administration*

## Stay in Touch with PWSA!

PWSA wants to have an ongoing dialogue with our customers and the Pittsburgh community. Join our mailing list at [pgh2o.com/subscribe](http://pgh2o.com/subscribe) to receive press releases, our monthly newsletter, and other announcements you won't want to miss.

✉ [pgh2o.com/subscribe](mailto:pgh2o.com/subscribe)

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