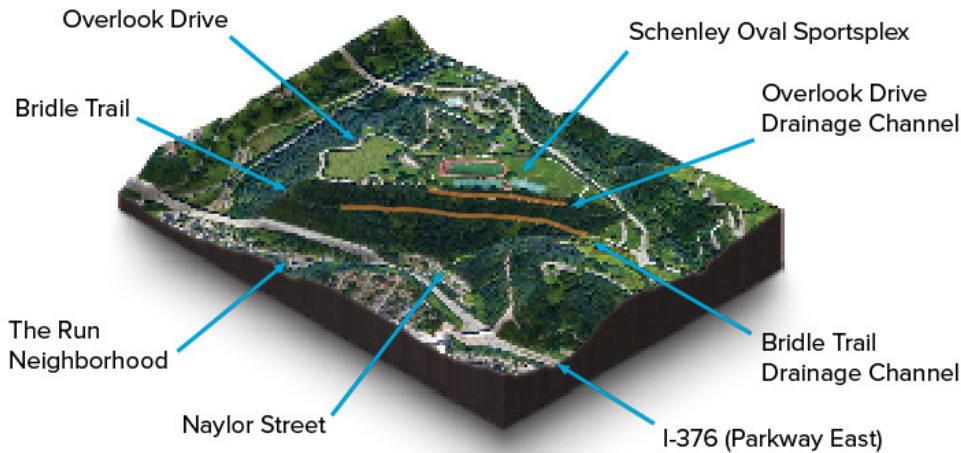


# CURRENTS

## AND ACTION! CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON STORMWATER PROJECTS IN FOUR MILE RUN.



*Pictured: Four Mile Run early action project locations.*

In early December we will begin the construction of two green infrastructure projects that will help to manage stormwater within Four Mile Run, which encompasses Schenley Park and several Pittsburgh neighborhoods including Greenfield, Hazelwood, Oakland, Squirrel Hill and the Run.

These projects, two engineered drainage channels, are being built in Schenley Park along Overlook Drive and next to the Bridle Trail. They create a path where water can flow. Right now, stormwater is mostly unmanaged. It flows off the steep hillside from Overlook Drive to the Bridle Trail below and further downhill, where it causes flooding. It also causes the combined sewer system to overflow into downstream neighborhoods and properties.

On the surface, the channels will resemble shallow ditches with sides sloping towards the center. At the bottom, a rocky bed will help slow down the flow of water, and an underground storage system will hold back excess rainwater.

The channels will provide a pathway where stormwater can lose momentum and will reduce the amount entering the combined sewer system during a storm. They will help to capture rainwater, reduce erosion in the park, and slow down water running from the top of Schenley Park to Naylor Street in Greenfield.

The projects were first introduced to the public in June 2019 and their construction will continue through early 2020. They are part of a larger plan to manage stormwater in Four Mile Run.

The Four Mile Run Stormwater project is a tremendous undertaking by PWSA, City of Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy to manage stormwater.

The construction of the drainage channels is one part of a much larger project. Other projects include the reconstruction of Panther Hollow Lake, regrading of Junction Hollow Valley, and restoring an outfall pipe along the Monongahela river.

These projects are still in their design phase, and we will present more information to Four Mile Run residents at a community meeting taking place on December 9, 2019. For more information about the Four Mile Run stormwater project, please visit [4MR.org](http://4MR.org).

### IN THIS ISSUE:

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### COMING UP:

#### 2019 Board Meetings

December 20

#### 2020 Board Meetings

January 24

February 28

March 27

April 24

May 22

June 26

July 26

No August Meeting

September 25

October 23

November 20

December 18

*Meetings begin at 10:00 am at 1200 Penn Avenue and are open to the public.*

#### Four Mile Run Quarterly Public Meeting

December 9

*Pittsburgh Greenfield School; 6:30 pm*

# RAW TALK

By Executive Director Robert A. Weimar

## Keeping Water Pumps Running Smoothly While Building Institutional Knowledge



PWSA's water distribution system is a vast, complex network of pipes, valves, pumps, and reservoirs that was designed to take advantage of Pittsburgh's unique geography. Much of the system runs on gravity, which is an incredible feat considering the miles of uneven terrain the pipes cross to deliver water throughout the city. In areas where there is not enough force to move the water, pumps are used to boost it along its journey. These "pump stations" are strategically placed throughout the system and help to maintain consistent pressure for all customers and the over 7,500 fire hydrants scattered around our distribution system.

Keeping the pumps in service requires continuous monitoring and maintenance. These mechanical devices move more than 50,000 gallons of water per minute. Most of our pumps and their motors were manufactured 50 to 80 years ago and continue to operate daily. Due to their age and mechanical complexity, it is not easy to keep our pump stations in operation. Repair work requires machinists, mechanics, electricians and engineers.

For decades we've relied on private companies to provide the skilled labor to assess and maintain our pump stations. Unfortunately, this robbed our staff of the opportunity to maintain and repair our equipment. In the long-term, outsourcing this work increases the time and costs of pump maintenance. With infrastructure as important as pumps, controls, and chemical feed equipment, our staff should be capable of performing routine maintenance as well as immediately resolving mechanical equipment breakdowns.

We have taken the challenge of maintaining our pumps head-on over the past 12 months. Our equipment repair specialists, plumbers, and electricians now all work together on routine maintenance as well as the more complex repair and replacement projects. Our PWSA team's work includes adjusting control sensors, replacing bearings, repairing motors, and realigning pumps to ensure it meets its design capacity efficiency to minimize our energy costs. In recent pump upgrade work, our in-house machinist even made new pump parts from scratch. Our staff have significantly reduced our need for private contractors, while ensuring that all our pump stations are in full working condition. Their efforts show the commitment and drive of our operators and tradespeople to deliver water to our customers.

We will continue to train our in-house staff and give them the opportunity to tackle our most complex tasks. They, along with the operators, engineers, laborers, and other crafts, are the heart and soul of PWSA. Their efforts keep the water flowing, so our customers do not have to think twice when they turn on the tap.



From left: Machinist Tim Kutrufis and Equipment Repair Specialists Vince Sciallo and Mike Rava work on pumps at the Bruecken Pump Station, near Highland Park

"I'm excited that we have been able to take advantage of our tradesmen and women's talents and allow them to gain vital experience, which they can call on over the span of their careers here at the Authority."

## Getting Stuff Done (GSD): Going above and beyond!

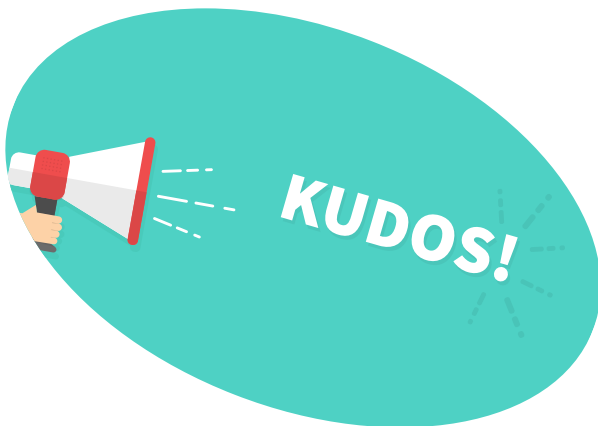


### Customer Contact Center Improves Call Wait Times

Within the past twelve months, our Customer Contact Center achieved a personal best by maintaining a spectacular record low abandonment rate of 2.6 percent, beating the industry average of 3 percent! The abandonment rate, or call wait time, is the percentage of inbound phone calls made that are abandoned by the customer before speaking to an agent. From October 2018 through October 2019, the Contact Center handled 176,035 calls that were responded to within an average of 1 minute and 9 seconds.



*Customer Service Representative Natasha Butler is one of the 14 members of our Customer Call Center who work hard to resolve customer questions as efficiently as possible.*



### Repair Respect!

We understand the frustration caused by a water main break in terms of water outages and traffic impacts. However, we very much appreciate it when a customer reaches out to acknowledge our crews for their hard work in repairing our infrastructure. This was the case when a customer residing in Lawrenceville reached out to praise the “wonderful” crew who repaired a water main break on 49th Street earlier this month. Thank you Utility Worker Derek Forrester; Laborers Bradley Manjack, Derek Darwin, and Shay O’Brien; Truck Drivers Donald Blanchard and Bob Munizza; and Heavy Equipment Operator Michael Germeyer, for your dedication as you continue to work hard in rain, shine, or snow!



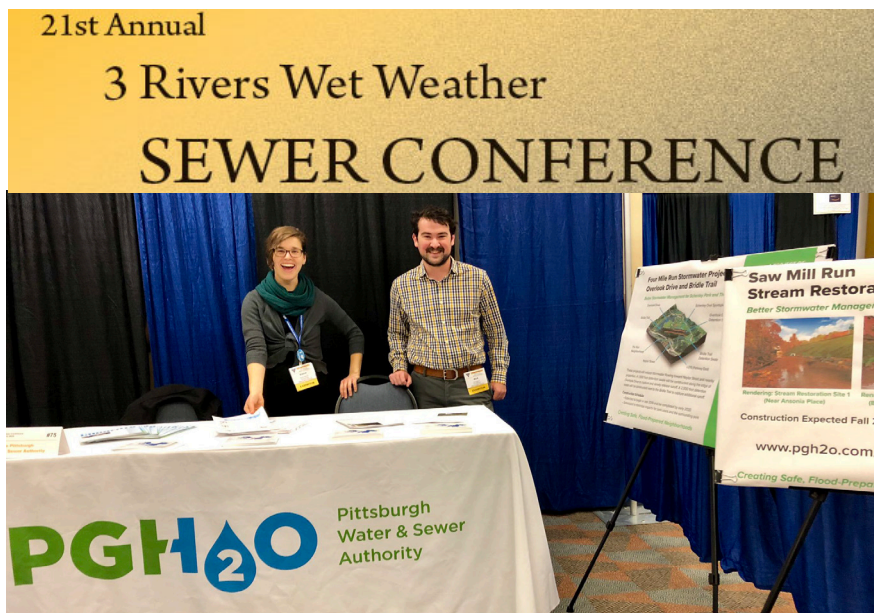
## Continuing Community Engagements!

Our staff has continued our outreach efforts with residents at local community meetings and events. Most recently, we hosted information tables at a Halloween event in Brightwood and a Community Summit in Uptown, and also attended a meeting in Oakland. All three neighborhoods are part of our upcoming Lead Service Line Replacement Project.

We had an opportunity to exhibit our stormwater projects at the 21st annual 3 Rivers Wet Weather Sewer Conference in Monroeville to learn, educate, and share experiences for overcoming the wet weather problems that have plagued the Pittsburgh region for decades.



From left: Public Affairs Associate Nick Letzkus and Lead Program Customer Assistance Representatives Bianca Alton and Tasha Butler at Brightwood's annual Halloween Parade and Pumpkinfest on October 26.



From left: Public Affairs Associates Nick Letzkus and Elaine Hinrichs hosting the PWSA Stormwater table at the 3 Rivers Wet Weather Sewer Conference on November 13-14.



## PWSA IN THE COMMUNITY

**Over the past month, we engaged with the community at the following meetings and events:**

**Brightwood Halloween Parade and Pumpkinfest**  
October 26  
*Horace Mann Field*

**Oakland Planning and Development**  
November 7  
*Oakland Career Center*

**Uptown Partners Pittsburgh**  
November 19  
*Pittsburgh Association of the Deaf*

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

## Re-Enroll in Bill Discount and Shut off Moratorium Programs Today!

Eligible Customers can save approximately \$320 per year on fixed water and sewer bills.

We are encouraging our income-qualified customers to re-enroll in our Customer Assistance Programs for 2020.

The Winter Moratorium provides eligible customers with the assurance that their water service will not be shut off from December 1st through March 31st if they are unable to pay their bill. This moratorium is available to single-family residential customers earning an annual income that is at or below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

In addition to the Winter Moratorium, we offer a Bill Discount Program and Cash Assistance Grant. The Bill Discount Program offers a 75 percent discount on fixed water and sewer charges, a savings of approximately \$320 per year. The Cash Assistance Grant Program provides up to \$300 per year to assist eligible customers, who are at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, with paying their charges.

People in Household	Annual Income Eligibility (150% of Federal Poverty Level)	Annual Income Eligibility (250% of Federal Poverty Level)
1	\$18,735	\$31,225
2	\$25,365	\$42,275
3	\$31,995	\$53,325
4	\$38,625	\$64,375
5	\$45,255	\$75,425
6	\$51,885	\$86,475
7	\$58,515	\$97,525
8	\$65,145	\$108,575
For more than 8 people, add this amount for each additional person.	\$6,630	\$11,050

Customers can review the income eligibility chart above to determine if their income, based on household size, falls within the eligibility guidelines.

ALCOSAN also offers a Clean Water Assistance Fund for a credit of \$128 per year. When combined with our Bill Discount program, customers can realize a total of \$448 in annual savings.

“Enrollment has increased during the first two years that comprehensive assistance programs have been in place, but only a fraction of our eligible customers are taking advantage of them. We’re making every effort to engage with our communities to spread the word and boost participation,” said PWSA Executive Director Robert A. Weimar.

All programs are administered by Dollar Energy Fund and require annual enrollment. Customers interested in enrolling or renewing their enrollment should contact Dollar Energy Fund at (866) 762-2348. More information on any of these programs can be found online at [pgh2o.com/CAP](http://pgh2o.com/CAP).

“We’re pleased to offer multiple programs to help our customers manage their bills. Eligible residential water and sewer customers can have their bill reduced by over \$320 per year by enrolling in the Bill Discount Program.”

PWSA Board Chair Paul Leger



## Media and Press Releases

### MEDIA COVERAGE

**Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador Program Reaches 10,000 Strong**, *weather.gov*

**Drinking Water Quality Program Extends Across Campus**, *The Piper (CMU)*

**Pittsburgh looks for neighborhood-focused sustainability and solutions at EcoDistricts Summit**, *Public Source*

**Enrollment open for 2020 PWSA low-income assistance programs**, *Post-Gazette*

**A Program That Helps Low Income Pittsburgh Residents pay their water bills Through the Winter Is Now Open for Enrollment**, *WESA*

### PRESS RELEASES

**1600 More Locations Added to Lead Service Line Replacement Program**, *November 22*

**PWSA Releases 2019 Update “Pittsburgh’s Water Future: PGH2O 2030 and Beyond”**, *November 21*

## Employee Spotlight

### Lucas Erny - Senior Manager of Field Operations



Lucas Erny is our one of our Senior Managers of Field Operations. He earned the PGH2O Gold Drop Award last May for his exceptional efforts within the authority, setting a high standard and inspiring our team to go above and beyond expectations.

We are recognizing him this month for his outstanding and innovating work in leak detection!

#### **What is a brief overview of your current responsibilities and goals?**

Pinpointing leaks that have not surfaced, or surfaced that are damaging customers' properties. We also investigate leaks caused by other utility facilities, and possible landslides, or sinkholes due to a water main break or a possible water main break. We pitch in to help our crews on a daily basis when we have leaks on hills or busy intersections for effectiveness. I also follow up when leaks are repaired in most cases. I also like to communicate and prepare the job.

When pinpointing difficult leaks, I do an overview of the job and remain on site when we are digging to find the source. My goal is to continue to find leaks, to keep the people safe, and reduce water that is wasted on leaks.

#### **What drew you to PWSA in the water utility sector?**

What drew me to PWSA/water utility sector are the challenges. We have to roll out and pinpoint water sources, such as mine shafts, natural springs, customers using water, water main leaks, French drains, wet basement floors, abandoned service lines, storm drains, and sewers. Everyday there is something different. In leak detection, the odds are always against you and you always have to expect the unexpected. It may get very frustrating at times, but staying focused and determined is the key, and that is the challenge I like about the water sector. It keeps your mind sharp.

#### **How are you employing 'loggers' on fire hydrants to detect leaks? Are they effective?**

We have been installing some new Fluid Conversion System advanced fixed base loggers. Yes, it's been very effective. We can hear a leak from the office and know where to begin the investigation in the field. For example, a leak could be on the top of Mount Washington and end up surfacing at the bottom of the hill on E. Carson Street. We have already had several successful leaks found using this method and this newer technology.

#### **What do you most like to do in your free time?**

In my free time I enjoy hanging out with my 9-year-old son, Ethan. I've been playing drums and guitar for about 33 years and I really enjoy playing live shows. Other than that, I spend a lot of time remodeling houses.



*Consistent noise picked up by a logger helps to pinpoint the exact location of a leak.*

**“What drew me to PWSA/water utility sector are the challenges. Everyday there is something different. Staying focused and determined is the key, and that is the challenge I like about the water sector.”**



## New Hires

**James Turner**

*Senior Project Manager*

**Matthew DeMarines**

*SCADA Technician*

**Carol Moye**

*Field Service Technician II*

**WELCOME ABOARD!**

## Job Postings

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

**Document Management Specialist**, Legal

**Project Manager**, Engineering & Construction

**Engineering GPS Field Tech I**, Engineering & Construction

**Lead Program Customer Assistance**, Engineering & Construction

**SCADA Technician**, Water Quality & Production

**Chemist I**, Water Quality & Production

**Plant Operator**, Water Quality & Production

**Electrician**, Water Quality & Production

**Senior Manager Performance**, Finance

**Budget Analyst**, Finance

**Contract Specialist**, Finance

**Plumber**, Field Services

**Help Desk Technician II**, Information Technology

**IT Security Analyst**, Information Technology

**Engineering Technician I**, Customer Service

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

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

## More Lead Line Replacements Slated in Four Pittsburgh Neighborhoods

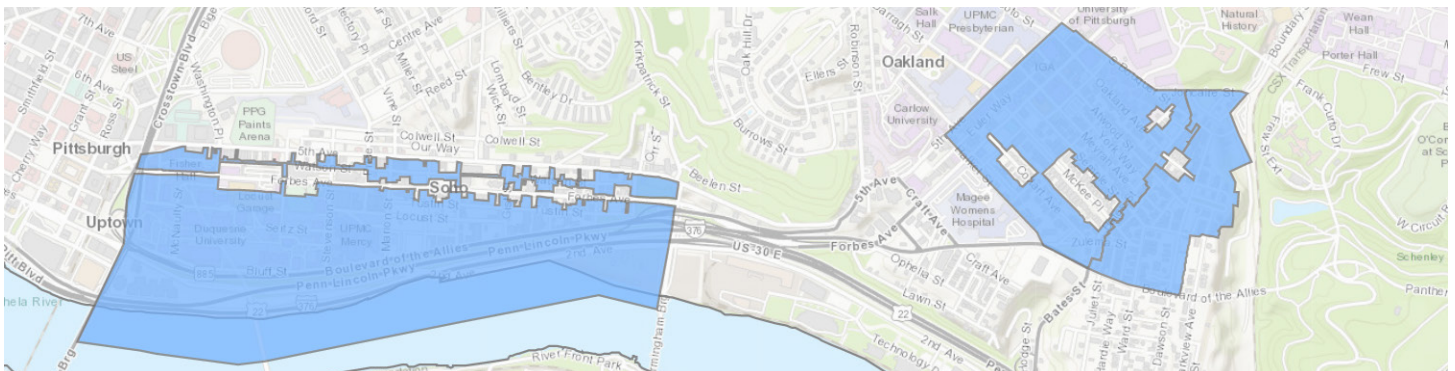
In 2020, we will add even more locations to our work list for free lead service line replacements.

We have continued to evaluate the work we are accomplishing, our costs to-date, and the funds we have available from PENNVEST and determined that there is still funding available for an approximately 1650 more lead line replacements in Marshall-Shadeland, Spring Hill/City View, Central Oakland, and the Bluff neighborhoods of Pittsburgh.

“Through an effective use of PennVEST funding and skilled construction project management from our team, we’ve been able to continue to extend this program across

hundreds of more sites in our service area, which I think is a great accomplishment,” said Executive Director Robert A. Weimar. “We will continue to evaluate our productivity and add more locations if we can.”

We recently met with residents at community meetings hosted by the Oakland Community Development Corporation and Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh to discuss the upcoming work and what residents can expect. They have received packets in the mail about the program and how we will work with them to complete this important water quality upgrade.



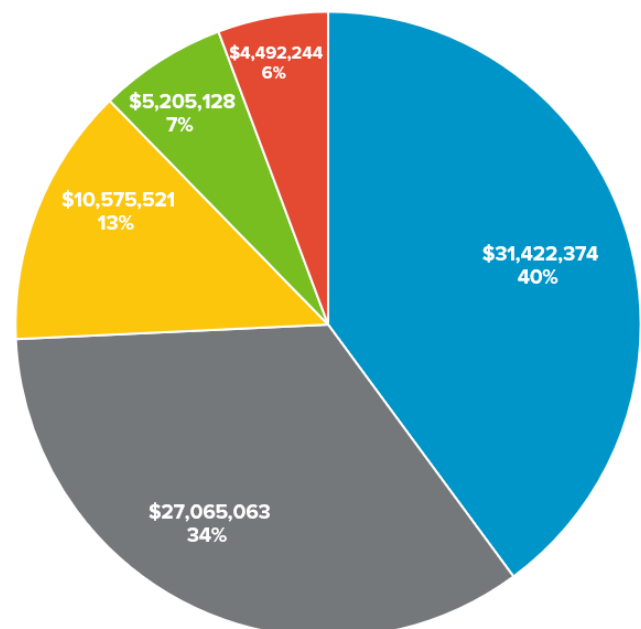
Central Oakland and the Bluff (areas shaded in blue) are among the four new work areas for free lead line replacement. To see more planned work, go to [lead.pgh2o.com](http://lead.pgh2o.com)

## 2019 Capital Spending

Amounts reflect total expenditures from January 1 - November 15, 2019

- Water
- Lead
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Other

**TOTAL: \$ 78,760,330**







# WATER WISE

## Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG)

Thanksgiving turkey leftovers are a holiday staple, however, the messy FOGs that are produced by cooking a turkey and other foods can create real problems in our sewer system.

In fact, FOG found in food scraps, cooking oil, shortening, lard, butter and margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, sour cream, etc. is a leading cause of sewer backups into basements. When these items are poured down kitchen drains, they build up inside sewer pipes, which eventually restricts the flow in the pipe. This buildup and flow restriction causes untreated wastewater to back up into buildings, resulting in high costs for cleanup and repairs.

If FOG build up gets bad enough, sewage can even overflow into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains, resulting in contaminated waterways. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public-health hazard.

**The following are some easy ways to keep FOG out of the public sewer system:**

- Refrain from pouring grease down sink drains.
- Scrape all excess food and grease from plates and other utensils into the trash.
- Clean up oil and grease with paper towels and discard them.
- Pour the leftover grease into a sealable container and dispose of it once it's filled.

### PROPER GREASE DISPOSAL

1. COOL IT



2. CAN IT



3. TRASH IT



## Protect your Pipes!

Unfortunately, due to harsh winter temperatures, your pipes may freeze or even break due to the tremendous amount of pressure this weather places on your plumbing system.

**The following are simple steps to prevent frozen or broken pipes in your home or business:**

- **Check frequently to make sure pipes are not frozen by opening and turning on taps in your home.** Allow water to drip slightly from your faucets if your pipes tend to freeze.
- **Insulate pipes, faucets, and water meters in cold areas of your home.** If you have pipes in the attic, an unheated garage, or crawl space under the house, wrap pipes before temperatures drop.
- **Seal off access doors, air vents, and cracks.** Winter air that enters a home through any opening can quickly freeze exposed water pipes.
- **Before temperatures drop, remove, drain, and store outside garden hoses.** Close the internal valves that control the water supply to the outside hose spigot. Then, open the outside hose spigot to allow any remaining water to drain.
- **If leaving your home for an extended period, consider closing your main water shut-off valve and draining the system by opening all faucets and flushing the toilets.** To shut off individual fixtures, check for valves under sinks and behind toilets. You can also call us at 412.255.2423 to have us shut water service at the curb in order to avoid a minimum monthly charge.



## Customer Assistance Program

Our Customer Assistance Program is designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified 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 Free Private Lead Line Replacements, please visit [pgh2o.com/CAP](http://pgh2o.com/CAP) or call Dollar Energy Fund at 866.762.2348.



## Do We Have Your Number?

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

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.*

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Margaret Lanier  
*Vice Chairperson*

Jim Turner  
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Deb Gross  
*Assistant Secretary*

Chatón Turner  
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Michael Domach  
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Barry King  
*Director of Engineering & Construction*

Jennifer Presutti  
*Director of Finance*

Kelly Morgano  
*Human Resources Manager*

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