

CURRENTS

PENNVEST AWARDS PWSA \$65M LOW-INTEREST LOAN

Funds Will Support Water Main and Lead Service Line Replacements



PWSA contractor replacing a water main on Smallman Street

In January, The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) approved a low interest loan of more than \$65 million to PWSA to finance an ambitious water main replacement program and continue our highly successful efforts to remove lead service lines. The loan is the single largest drinking water funding offer in PENNVEST's thirty-one-year history.

The PENNVEST loan will support the first phase of our

small diameter water main replacement program, which will total more than \$326 million upon completion. Phase 1 will include the replacement of just under 80,000 feet of aging water distribution mains, along with the publicly owned portions of more than 2000 water service lines. This includes approximately 850 lead public service lines. Where the private portion of the service line is also lead, it will be replaced as well.

By proactively replacing aging water mains throughout

our system, we can improve reliability and reduce the frequency and severity of service disruptions, while also continuing to aggressively replace lead service lines.

At 1 percent interest over a term of 20 years, we estimate that this loan will save our rate payers \$20 million when compared to other types of borrowing. Pursuing financing options like PENNVEST is part of our commitment to being smart financial stewards, limiting the cost burden for our customers as we implement much-needed infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement projects.

This is our second PENNVEST award in recent years, a sign of growing confidence in our ability to deliver critical projects. In 2018, we received a \$35,441,231 loan and a \$13,687,173 grant from PENNVEST to fund lead service line replacements across our water service area. This funding allowed us to replace over 3,000 lead lines in 2019 and is projected to allow us to replace an additional 1,600 in the first half of 2020.

The small diameter main replacement program is part of our ambitious 2030 plan for system renewal. Learn more about the plan at pgh2o2030.com.

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COMING UP:

2020 Board Meetings

March 27
April 24
May 22
June 26
July 24
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.

Spring Hill Civic League

March 2
Spring Hill Elementary; 6:00 pm

Representative Gainey Town Hall on Lead

March 11
Hosanna House; 5:30 pm

Representative Jake Wheatley Golden Luncheon

April 2
River's Casino; 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

RAW TALK

By Executive Director Robert A. Weimar



Building on Our Progress: We all benefit from consistent investment in our water infrastructure

Last year, the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority completed its first-ever rate filling with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC). The new rates provided an additional \$21 million per year to spend on infrastructure improvements throughout our water system.

We are using this funding to aggressively replace lead service lines, improve our drinking water treatment, renew aging sewer lines, and design stormwater projects to reduce pollution and sewer overflows. Last year was our most productive year. We invested over \$100 million on capital improvements and are poised to invest over \$200 million in 2020.

Over the next few years we will continue to modernize our water system so current and future generations of customers can count on Pittsburgh's water supply. With this investment comes the need for additional revenue, the majority of which comes from the rates our customers pay.

In March, we will submit a multi-year rate plan to raise an additional \$43.4 million in 2021 and \$12.6 million in 2022. Included in this amount is a request for a Distribution System Improvement Charge (DSIC) assigned at 10 percent of the fixed monthly charges. The DSIC provides utilities with the ability to place a small surcharge on a customer's monthly bill. The funding goes towards PUC-approved upgrades like water and sewer main replacements.

What does this mean for ratepayers? Currently the typical residential customer using 3,000 gallons of water pays \$72.49 per month. If our request is approved by the PUC for next year, this would increase to \$86.31 or by \$13.82 per month.

Our rate proposal also includes an expansion of our Bill Discount Program. If approved by the PUC, income-eligible households will receive a 100 percent reduction in monthly fixed 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. Learn more about the existing programs and see if you qualify at pgh2o.com/CAP.

This past year, we made tremendous progress on critical water projects. We have replaced 3,200 public lead lines, added new treatment methods to reduce exposure to lead in water, addressed more than four miles of aging sewer lines, and started construction on several stormwater projects.

And our investment will continue throughout 2020. We will initiate several projects to improve security and backup power systems at the Aspinwall Water Treatment Plant and will begin preliminary design of an emergency bypass line for the Clearwell. We will also construct new large volume water mains, continue the Community Lead Response Program, and build new stormwater infrastructure.

We are on the right path and must maintain the momentum that is needed to meet our customers' expectations. It includes retrofitting and replacing a significant portion of our water distribution system that delivers drinking water to customers as well as replacing all lead service lines.

We are taking every reasonable step to provide our customers with safe and reliable services at the lowest possible rates. You can be assured that with PUC oversight there is greater transparency and accountability throughout the process. As a publicly owned utility we never lose sight that this your water. We are proud to serve Pittsburgh with the water services it expects and deserves. For more information about our rate proposal, please visit pgh2o.com/ourwaterfuture.

"We are on the right path and must maintain the momentum that is needed to meet our customers' expectations."

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

Dispatch Dedication

Due to water main breaks, sewer backups, and other service related issues, our dispatch department is open 24/7 in order to assist our customers in the unfortunate case of an emergency. We are very lucky to have a team of dispatchers that often sacrifice their weekends and holidays in order to process and help resolve each report they receive. Dispatcher Shannon Deasy was recently complimented by a customer who wrote that Shannon was “very caring” in helping her and that “PWSA personnel in the office and the field are always so professional!” Thank you to Shannon and the rest of our dispatchers for your dedicated public service!



Pgh2o Cools Down for Warmth

Raising funds to build awareness for our Hardship Cash Assistance Program

At the end of January, we participated in Dollar Energy Fund’s sixth annual *Cool Down for Warmth* two-day fundraising event to build awareness for the many families in Pittsburgh who will go without heat during the cold winter months, while attempting to raise money for utility assistance grants.

Team Pgh2o, which consisted of four employees from our Compliance Department, helped to raise the final dollars of our \$2,500 goal by cooling down in the giant icehouse built in the heart of Market Square in downtown Pittsburgh.

We surpassed our goal by raising a total of \$3,269! All funds will go directly to our Hardship Cash Assistance Program, which provides cash grants up to \$300 per year for customers at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Thank you to all of our generous donors that helped us reach well-beyond our goal, supporting invaluable utility aid for the families that need it most this winter!



Team Pgh2o in the icehouse (Pictured from left to right: Compliance Analysts Reggie Brown and Sarah Viszneki, PUC Compliance Manager Brittany Schacht, and Public Affairs Associate Hali Hetz).

Local Students Imagine the Future of Water

The Ellis School wins first place at the 21st Pittsburgh Regional Future City Competition



The Ellis Middle School's Future City Team photographed in Washington DC with their fictitious city

Ellis Middle School's Future City Team was posed with an engineering challenge – “Choose a threat to your city's water supply and design a resilient system to maintain a reliable supply of clean water.” Their solution focused on fighting the threat of microplastics in water. The scale model of their fictitious city features decentralized modular water treatment plants that use electrocoagulation and vortex settlers to remove impurities from water.

After winning the regional competition, they advanced to the Future City Engineering Competition National Finals in Washington, DC where they received a special award for Most Innovative Design of Infrastructure Systems

We are proud of the Future City Team's achievements and are excited to see that our next generation is imagining innovative engineering solutions to protect our water supply. Congratulations to the Ellis School and the team of mature, driven girls that envisioned this dynamic solution.

Please help us curate the best newsletter we can by taking a brief survey regarding *Currents*!

Simply scan this QR code, or go to surveymonkey.com/r/PTJ5NGZ/



PGH₂O



PWSA IN THE COMMUNITY

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

Manchester Citizens Corporation
January 30

Manchester Citizens Corporation;

Hill District Consensus Group
February 4
Hill House

Brighton Heights/Marshall-Shadeland
February 12
BJ's Event Center

Lawn and Ophelia Stormwater Project Meeting
February 12
Oakcliffe Community Organization

Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
February 18
Bloomfield-Garfield Activity Center

To schedule a presentation in your community, Visit
pgh2o.com/request-us-event

December 2019 Lead Compliance Test Results Released

Results come under EPA action level of 15 parts per billion

In late January, results were released from our most recent compliance testing for lead required by state and federal regulations. Samples were collected by customers from worst-case scenario homes that were verified to have lead service lines or plumbing. These and other tests indicate that the addition of orthophosphate in April 2019 continues to be effective in reducing lead levels.

We received one hundred sixty eight (168) samples during the sampling period from July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. The results were analyzed by a third-party laboratory and calculated to determine whether 10 percent of the total samples exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lead action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The 90th percentile results from the latest round of testing were 10.0 ppb, which is below the action level. According to EPA, there is no safe level of lead. The 90th percentile results from the last round of testing released in June of 2019 were 17.52 ppb, which is above the action level.

The 90th percentile is not an average of the presence of lead across our water system, but rather a calculation to determine if 10 percent of the worst-case-scenario sites that were sampled exceeded the lead action level. We will conduct another round of compliance testing with samples collected during the sampling period from January 1 to June 30, 2020. Hundreds of water quality tests are taken every month from points throughout the water distribution system to ensure the water is meeting all state and federal regulatory standards. Our dedicated team of water quality experts closely monitor the system every day to

December Compliance Test Result Details

Ninety six percent (96%) of the 168 samples analyzed in this most recent testing round were below the EPA's 15 ppb lead action level, an eight percent improvement from the June 2019 testing round.

Number of Samples	Lead Concentration (parts per billion)
116	< 5.0 ppb
34	5.0 – 9.9 ppb
12	10.0 – 14.9 ppb
4	15.0 – 19.9 ppb
1	20.0 – 49.9 ppb
1	> 50 ppb

ensure safe and reliable service.

In April 2019, PWSA began adding orthophosphate to reduce lead levels in drinking water while continuing to replace thousands of lead service lines. Orthophosphate is a food-grade additive that forms a protective layer inside of lead service lines, creating a barrier between the lead pipes and the water flowing through them. It is approved by EPA and used in water systems across the world. Our water quality team conducts extensive monitoring throughout the water distribution system to track orthophosphate's effectiveness and ensure consistent water quality during this treatment upgrade. This stringent monitoring program meets and exceeds state and federal requirements.

“These latest lower lead testing results signals that PWSA is passing another major milestone.”

PWSA Board Chair Paul Leger



Media and Press Releases

MEDIA COVERAGE

Public water works:
How public utilities are advancing solutions to today's water challenges, *Corporate Accountability*

PWSA ups income eligibility
for free lead water line replacement, *TribLive*

PWSA gets \$65 million loan
for water main replacement, *Post-Gazette*

Pittsburgh's drinking water
passes 'major milestone' as
lead levels fall below federal
threshold, *PublicSource*

A Pittsburgh-Area Test Case
In Working Across Political
Boundaries To Address
Flooding, *Allegheny Front*

PRESS RELEASES

PWSA Increases Limit for
Income-Qualified Free
Lead Line Replacements,
February 10

PENNVEST Awards PWSA
\$65M Low-Interest Loan,
January 29

Employee Spotlight

Meet Senior Customer Service Coordinator Tishla Jones and her son Dario Jr. - two successful, goal-driven individuals with a knack for solving problems.



PWSA Senior Customer Service Coordinator Tishla Jones and her son Dario Jr.

PWSA's Senior Customer Service Coordinator Tishla Jones supervises a staff of 13 representatives in order to maintain a standard of prompt, efficient, and courteous customer service. "I handle multiple tasks in a fast-paced environment and interact professionally with a diverse group of customers and staff," said Tishla. On a daily basis, you can find her monitoring phone queues, assisting representatives with complex calls, and providing training to her staff as the department processes a considerable volume of inquiries concerning water quality and service, fees, and account balances, right to know requests, and more.

Tishla began her career in customer service when she was 18 years old working in the credit card division of a department store. While seeking a new opportunity at age 23, she was curious enough to drop in to our old administration building at 441 Smithfield Street, where she applied to the position of Customer Service Representative I. Having climbed the PWSA ladder ever since, Tishla is now

approaching her 16th year with the Authority.

One of Tishla's most significant accomplishments is helping to lower our contact center's abandonment rate (ABR), which is the percentage of inbound phone calls made to our contact center that are abandoned by the customer before speaking to a representative, from a monthly average of between 14 and 17 percent to 3 percent or lower. Recently, her team has maintained an ABR between 2.2 and 2.7 percent with a low of 1.4 percent occurring in July 2019. In addition, she has implemented an accolade recognition system to boost call center morale and an incentive program that has allowed the representatives to work together to meet each other's daily goals for call volume. "I give all thanks to a strong team who believes in my goals and strives to work with me to obtain a stellar outcome," Tishla said.

Outside of the office Tishla spends time with her four young children including her oldest, ten-year-old Dario Jr. Last year, Dario Jr. had the opportunity to tour our Aspinwall Water Treatment Plant to conduct research for his school science

fair project, where he concluded that he could make his own water filter using common materials in an emergency situation when a water treatment plant isn't available. Since then, Dario Jr. has continued his pursuit of a career in the sciences by being accepted to the National Youth Leadership Forum Pathways to STEM program. Regarding his passion for the sciences, Dario Jr. wrote "I don't know why I just love exploring but it just intrigues me to learn and explore more about this beautiful world." Although he wishes to be a detective when he grows up, we consider him a lifelong honorary member of Team PWSA. We are very grateful for Tishla's public service and are thrilled to have played a small part in Dario Jr.'s journey.



A homemade water filter crafted by Dario Jr. for his science fair project.



Acting Senior Group Manager of Production George Watson explains to Dario Jr. the crucial process of measuring turbidity, aka cloudiness of water.

Councilperson Erika Strassburger Appointed to Board of Directors



This month, we are pleased to welcome Erika Strassburger as our newly appointed board member. Erika is a Member of Pittsburgh City Council, representing the city's Oakland, Point Breeze, Shadyside, and Squirrel Hill neighborhoods. Prior to her time in local government, she worked for nearly a decade in environmental advocacy. Erika graduated with honors from Bucknell University with a degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in International Relations. She and her husband live in Squirrel Hill with their son, Evan.

New Hires

Robert Herring

Project Manager

Sonja Svihla

Project Manager

Anthony Gallina

Associate Project Manager

Zachary Rinker

Associate Project Manager

Neil Manganaro

Document Management Specialist

Alicia Britton

Document Management Associate

Aza Jackson

Lead Program Customer Assistance

Chontel Wilkes

Lead Program Customer Assistance

Chris Mohnney

Laborer

Emily Huff

Plant Operator

WELCOME ABOARD!

Job Postings

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

Senior Health and Safety Manager, Administration

HR Assistant Human Resources/Administration

Project Manager, Engineering & Construction

Inspector III, Stormwater, Engineering & Construction

Associate Project Manager, Engineering & Construction

Plant Operator, Water Quality & Production

Electrician, Water Quality & Production

Project Manager, Water Quality & Production

Superintendent of Sewers, Field Operations

Steamfitter, Field Operations

Plumber, Field Operations

Network Systems Administrator, Information Technology

Help Desk Technician II, Information Technology

IT Security Analyst, Information Technology

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

Visit pgh2o.com/about-us/careers to learn more.

Saw Mill Run Stream Restoration

Natural and engineered solutions work together to stabilize the stream

In January, we started constructing two stream stabilization projects in Saw Mill Run. These projects are part of the Saw Mill Run Integrated Watershed Management Plan and will help to manage stormwater, reduce erosion, and improve water quality.

Stabilizing the stream uses a combination of solutions that replicate nature and modern engineering techniques. Starting at the base and working along its banks, we can fortify the stream from the bottom up. These improvements will help to protect against future erosion, reduce the amount of sediment from entering the stream, and slow down the velocity of the water during intense storms.

Along the base of the streambank, we have installed a row of stones parallel to the stream. The stones will disperse the energy of the water and protect the streambank from eroding during high flow events.

It is further reinforced with soil stabilization materials applied to the sides of the streambank. These materials, soil matting and a geo-mesh cover, are secured with soil anchors drilled into the side of the bank. The anchors will help to bolster the edge of the stream and will protect the area from further erosion.

This spring, vegetation will be planted. As it adapts and grows, it's roots will help to improve the stability of the streambank and provide additional environmental benefits. We are also restoring existing storm sewer infrastructure by placing a rocky base, or rip rap, at outfalls located throughout the stream.



Heavy equipment is needed to drill the soil anchors into the banks of Saw Mill Run.

Development activity, changing weather patterns, and aging stormwater infrastructure have all contributed to the condition of Saw Mill Run. The integration of green and gray infrastructure provides a more cost-effective way to meet stormwater management and water quality goals within the watershed.

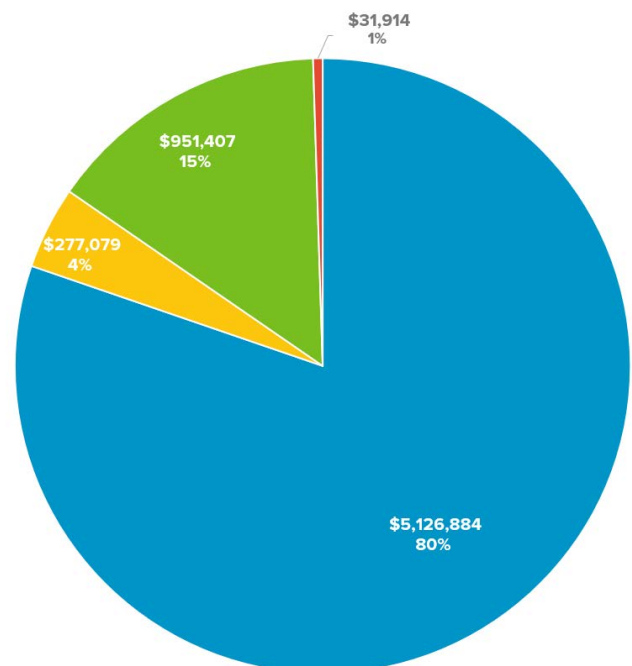
Work is taking place at two locations along Saw Mill Run including the intersection near Saw Mill Run Boulevard and Nobles Lane and Saw Mill Run Boulevard and Maytide Street behind the Accamando Center. We anticipate completing construction this spring.

2020 Capital Spending

Amounts reflect total expenditures from January 1 - February 21, 2020

- Water
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Other

TOTAL: \$6,387,284



Melting Snow: It's Stormwater Too!

Melting snow has the potential to cause problems as a form of stormwater runoff.



In fact, since the ground in the winter is frozen at the surface most of the time, melting snow is more difficult for soil to absorb. This presents a unique flooding challenge that is not associated with light or even moderate rainfall. Also, the presence of environmentally harmful chemicals in de-icing salt makes winter runoff a significant risk to the health of our waterways.

Give these following tips a try this winter in order to maintain your property and help the environment:

- **Clear out snow from the area surrounding your downspouts.** This will allow melting snow from your roof to flow instead of collecting at your foundation, which can help prevent basement flooding.
- **Check to see if your storm drains near your property are covered by snow.** Avoid piling snow on storm drains, either by shovel or plow, and clear snow from them if they are covered.
- **Pile your shoveled or plowed snow in an area where it is most likely to be absorbed by the ground.** For example, piling snow in relatively flat areas and areas that don't typically pond during rains makes it less likely for melting snow to become runoff.



Cleaning Your Faucet Aerator

When's the last time you've cleaned or replaced your faucet aerators? The aerator is located at the end of your water faucet and adds air to your water to reduce splash and the amount of water that flows out of the faucet. They catch some of the silt, minerals, and other debris that flow through your tap water, which can cause a build-up and affect your water quality over time.

Most aerators simply unscrew from the faucet and can then be rinsed off, soaked in white vinegar, scrubbed with a brush, and replaced.





Customer Assistance Program

Our Customer Assistance Programs are 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 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? It is important to 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 (Press 5)

Or visit our website: pgh2o.com/pay

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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