

CURRENTS

Harvesting Wind Power in the Delivery of Water Services

PWSA commits to clean energy and a more sustainable, resilient water future

► It takes vast amounts of energy to pump, treat, filter, and move water to each of the communities that rely on us for their water services. As just one example, the production of clean drinking water for the more than 500,000 consumers we serve can take up to three days from the point where water is drawn from the Allegheny River to the point where it reaches your tap.

In support of our mission and commitment to clean energy and a more sustainable future, PWSA is pleased to announce a commitment to the purchase of wind power and the use of clean energy to support the production and operations of our water services.

Specifically, the PWSA board approved an amendment to a 2021 agreement with current electricity supplier Direct Energy and NRG as part of a region-wide energy cost and consumption reduction program with the Western PA Energy

Consortium (WPEC). Under this amendment, WPEC has committed to purchasing 61,320 MWhs of wind power annually, accounting for approximately 40% of the group’s total load. PWSA holds the largest share at 30% of the total, underlining our strong commitment to sustainable energy practices.

By committing to this portion of wind-generated power, PWSA will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of removing 3,000 gasoline-powered cars off of the road each year.

This amendment underscores PWSA’s mission to protect the environment and aligns with the goals outlined in the City of Pittsburgh’s Climate Action Plan, including achieving full carbon-neutrality by 2050 and procuring 100% renewable electricity for all purchased energy by 2030.

This agreement further safeguards the region’s energy needs and our financial health by providing a long-term hedge against rising energy prices.

Committed to fostering sustainable practices, PWSA



has been an active participant in WPEC’s clean energy initiatives since 2008. To advance its renewable energy goals, WPEC, in collaboration with PWSA, initiated this amendment to the original Direct Energy Agreement. The main goal is to align the contract term end date from 2026 to 2029 to meet the requirements of the Wind Energy supplier that is part of our regional electricity grid.

The WPEC combines energy and clean energy purchases in bulk for its members, including the City of Pittsburgh, PWSA, the Sports and Exhibition Authority (SEA), the Urban

Redevelopment Authority (URA), and prominent nonprofits like the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. Collaboratively, these entities work towards a greener and more energy-efficient community.

PWSA remains committed to its role as a responsible steward of the environment and will continue to collaborate with WPEC and other partners to make significant strides in reducing carbon emissions and fostering a greener future for generations to come.

For more information, please read our recent [press release](#). ♦



Chief Executive Officer Briefing by Will Pickering

March of Dimes recognition reflects PWSA's progress

► I'm honored to have been selected by the March of Dimes as the recipient of their **2023 Industry Leader of the Year** award. This honor recognizes the progress we've made in fulfilling our mission to protect public health and the environment through the delivery of safe and reliable water services.

While this is billed as an individual award, it's really a reflection of the hard work of everyone here at PWSA. The March of Dimes and PWSA are a natural match. After all, our mission means that we're keeping in mind the mothers and babies in our region as we improve drinking water quality and rebuild our water

system for future generations of Pittsburghers.

Without the talented team of PWSA employees I work alongside, this award would not have been possible. Each day I'm grateful for their stewardship of an essential public resource, dedication to the Pittsburgh community, and commitment to the delivery of safe, high-quality water services.

Together we've accomplished so much – national recognitions for improving drinking water quality through lead service line replacements, historically low lead levels, the rehabilitation of critical water and sewer infrastructure, the implementation of assistance

programs to ensure all customers can access safe and reliable water services – and this award is just a small recognition of all that hard work.

I'm incredibly proud of our organization and ongoing transformation. We're committed to ensuring high-quality water for the mother drawing a bath in Homewood and the parent filling their formula bottle in

Squirrel Hill. Our customers can have every confidence that the path we're on today will ensure the quality of their water services for years to come. ♦



You know what they say: it takes a village. PWSA employees and Board members join me at the March of Dimes ceremony to share in this celebration.

TEAM PGH20

Employee Spotlight: Brilliant Yard & Howard Street Support Staff

► *Helping to support our employees at two of our remote field sites are **Donna Martrano (Administrative Assistant, Brilliant Yard)** and **Donna Scullon (Administrative Assistant, Howard Street)**.*

Tell us more about your role.

- **Donna Martrano:** It's certainly not your average position – I wear many hats and no one day ever feels the same! I'm primarily responsible for assisting Brilliant Yard management and staff with day-to-day operations, processing invoices, scheduling hydrant flow tests, and managing permits in partnership with the city.
- **Donna Scullon:** I help to keep Howard Street employees

working and happy. A good example of this is the daily report I send out to PWSA, which details where our crews are working that day. I like to add funny or interesting photos so people read it. They seem to really like the ones of animals or a coworker's pet. In addition, I also help to schedule water meter replacements and other similar work.

Why do you like working here?

- **DM:** In my 20 years with PWSA, I've worked in several different departments and have seen first-hand the progress we've made. It's extraordinary what's being accomplished! I must admit that my most rewarding

position is my current one. The managers and employees are wonderful, and it's a joy and a pleasure to come to work.

- **DS:** It's very interesting to be involved in the water and sewer division since it's so important and necessary for all our homes and for our collective public health. I find that I learn something new all the time too.

If you could meet any historical figure, who would that be?

- **DM:** It'd be fun to meet employees and the leader of the City of Pittsburgh Water Department from way back. I'd love to speak with them about the tremendous accomplishments we've



Pictured: Donna Martrano

made around water quality and infrastructure investment over the years.

- **DS:** Going to Catholic grade school and high school, I was always fascinated by the saints. I'd love to go back in time to Biblical days and be in the company of Jesus and the Saints. ♦

Connecting Customer Service & Machine Learning

► Timely, accurate communication is expected by all our customers. To further improve that customer experience, we're pleased to announce the implementation of a new machine learning technology solution for customers that submit an email to info@pgh2o.com.

Y Meadows' advanced software model reduces customer wait time, ensures consistent responses to routine questions, and improves internal efficiencies.

The software model is now handling nearly 50% of incoming inquiries, freeing up customer service personnel to proactively reach out to customers on a variety of topics. Previously, each email

received by customer service was manually opened and routed to responsive personnel. While many messages require a customized response or more research, an equal amount can easily be answered via a scripted response.

The model reads and identifies the nature of the customer's request and, if it falls into pre-selected message categories, will respond to the email and forward it to the correct party for review and investigation.

Y Meadows has programmed the system to handle requests such as tenant applications for service, change of address requests, email attachments from customers, and refund applications. It also routes emails directly to Dispatch



in response to questions or reports about service interruptions. This assures customers receive a faster response, and if they need to contact Dispatch directly, they receive an auto-generated email with the correct telephone number.

Emergency Dispatch is available 24/7. To report a water, sewer, or stormwater emergency, please call **412-255-2423**, and choose **Option #1**. For more information, please see our [press release](#). ♦

PGH2O IN THE COMMUNITY

Calling All Young Scientists!



► PWSA has two exciting, water- and science-based events planned this fall for kids and their families!

Meet Your Watershed: Explore our hands-on EnviroScape model and learn about water pollution, our rivers, watersheds, sewer systems, and stormwater. Kids and their families are invited to experiment with this 3D depiction of a watershed – complete with miniature



houses, streams, a river, and a water treatment facility – to see first-hand the origins and effects of water pollution.

A representative from our PGH2O Cares team will be available to provide information on available financial assistance programs for those having trouble paying their bills.

Two dates are available: **October 5 at Woods Run Library** and **November 15 at Hazelwood Library** (both from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.).

Visit our [Events & Meetings](#) website for more information. If you have any questions, please contact [Holly Bomba](#), Education & Outreach Coordinator. ♦



Help Keep Leaves & Grass Out of Storm Drains

Leaves and grass clippings can clog our storm drains and sewer pipes, blocking the flow of water and worsening flooding during heavy rains. Please take the following precautions to help protect and maintain our water and sewer infrastructure this fall.

- Don't rake or blow leaves or grass clippings into the street.
- Don't dump yard waste or trash near or into storm drains.
- Place your leaves in a bag for curbside yard debris collection or compost them at home.
- If you have a mulching lawnmower, use it to recycle leaves and their nutrients into your lawn.
- Fertilize lawns in the fall to prevent nutrients washing away during spring rains. Use slow-release and organic fertilizers, which are less likely to wash away.

If you see a clogged or broken storm drain, please call Dispatch at 412-255-2423 (Press 1). For more information, please visit our [Storm Drains](#) website.

Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their PGH2O bill. These programs are managed by our **PGH2O Cares team**, a group of education and outreach professionals dedicated to working directly with our most vulnerable customers to bolster enrollment in our Customer Assistance Programs and identify ways to reduce water usage.



For more information about our programs, including the **Winter Shut Off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Flexible Payment Plans, Hardship Grant, and Lead Line Reimbursements**, please visit our [Customer Assistance Program](#) page or contact the PGH2O Cares team at 412-255-2457 or cares@pgh2o.com.

Additional Assistance Programs

Additional assistance programs are offered separately from PWSA's Customer Assistance Programs.

The **Pennsylvania Housing Assistance Fund (PAHAF)** provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners to help cover water and wastewater charges. Please visit their [website](#) or call 888-987-2423 for more information and to apply. **Please note: PAHAF has temporarily paused accepting new applications. Please check their website periodically for more information.**

The **Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) Clean Water Assistance Fund** is available to eligible residential customers. It is administered by Dollar Energy Fund. To learn more and apply for assistance, visit the [Clean Water Assistance Fund](#) page.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

If you can, consider donating to our [Hardship Grant Program \(www.pgh2o.com/give\)](#).

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our [online billing and payment portal \(www.pgh2o.com/ebilling\)](#) ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

Track Water Use

Visit our [Customer Advantage Portal](#) to track water use in real time and receive alerts when there's a spike in water use.

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.

TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO:

Call PWSA Customer Service:
412.255.2423 (Press 5)

Visit our [Update Contact Information portal](#).

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