



**New England
Water Works Association**

A Section of the
American Water Works Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
NAMED OUTSTANDING UTILITY OF THE YEAR**

Springfield, Mass. - Springfield Water and Sewer Commission was named 2008 Utility of the Year by the New England Water Works Association (NEWWA), the region's largest and oldest not-for-profit organization of water works professionals. The award was presented to the Springfield Water and Sewer Commissioners and Mayor Domenic J. Sarno by NEWWA President Patrick J. Connelly. The Commissioners are: William E. Leonard, Chairman; Carmen E. Serrano-Gerena; and Daniel Rodriguez.

"This award recognizes a utility for making significant improvements to its water system and for providing outstanding customer service, staff training, and/or operations to further protect the public health of the customers it serves," stated Connelly.

The Commission was recognized in the large systems category, which includes utilities that serve more than 25,000 service connections. The Commission serves more than 43,000 service connections and a population of more than 250,000 in Springfield, Ludlow, Agawam, East Longmeadow, and Longmeadow.

Deirdre Cabral, Drinking Water Section Chief, William Prendergast, and Daniel Laprade, Western Region, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, nominated the Commission for significant contributions to emergency preparedness for its customers and nearby public water systems, while continuing to undertake major system-wide improvements. Cited as some of the Commission's accomplishments included the following:

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- The Commission was the first public water system to join the new Mass WARN, a water/wastewater agency response network that allows systems in Massachusetts to share resources and receive rapid mutual aid and assistance from other systems in MA to restore damaged services.
- The Commission has detailed and updated all emergency response plans, installed video surveillance in the watershed and other critical areas, and staff has received Incident Command System training.
- The Commission has restructured its outreach and public notification practices and uses the “Connect CTY” program, which is similar to a reverse 911 program to send messages to customers.
- The Commission recently completed a \$1.44 million project to repair the 78-year-old diversion tunnel valves at the Cobble Mountain Reservoir and received national and state ACEC Engineering Excellence Awards as well as Project of the Year by the Association of State Dam Safety Officials.
- Coupled with this project was a \$2.1 million redundant pipeline installation to ensure flow to the treatment plant. Both projects were essential to ensure reliable means of water delivery to the water treatment plant.
- The Commission designed and constructed two specialized self-contained chlorination/de-chlorination mobile trailers to address potential microbiological problems in the distribution system.
- Commission facilities were evaluated during a series of caustic handling and use inspections and the Commission was the sole public water supply in Western MA to meet the latest standards, without any required actions, among 28 inspected.
- The Commission established a Water Quality Group, which is responsible for a new water main unidirectional flushing program, valve and hydrant maintenance, and a water main swabbing program.
- To remain proactive in water supply and distribution system operations, the Commission has partnered with UMass Amherst to conduct watershed studies; installed water control devices in response to problems with beavers in the watershed; and hired a corrosion control specialist to study the distribution system.
- The Commission currently employs 41 licensed treatment and distribution operators and hosts a number of training sessions for surrounding communities.

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Based in Holliston, MA, the New England Water Works Association (NEWWA) works to improve public drinking water supplies, protect public health and safety, and promote the professional development and education of about 3,000 members in the water works profession. NEWWA is a section of the American Water Works Association, the world's largest organization of water professionals.

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