

# THE Waterline



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MPWD • SPRING 2014

## LETTER FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

# Happy New Year!

In 2014, MPWD celebrates its 85th anniversary, a major milestone in our long history of delivering quality water and personalized customer service. Much of 2013 centered on improving our connections with you through a more informative newsletter, *Consumer Confidence Report*, and community conservation events. We intend to continue these efforts in 2014 and will also revamp our website to be more user friendly.

During 2013, we made tremendous progress in other key areas. Most notable were:

- Finished design of replacement Buckland Avenue water storage tanks to improve seismic stability; construction to begin mid-March
- Initiated computerized modeling of entire MPWD water system for faster problem detection and capital project identification
- Successfully completed annual system inspection by California Department of Public Health
- Initiated more cost effective meter reading via new Segway personal transporter
- Completed successful annual financial audit
- Improved financial controls and reduced operating expenses
- Enhanced automated communications at water storage tanks and pump stations
- Met target goal for automated water meter replacements

We will continue to make improvements in the year ahead and openly communicate our efforts to you. Your honest feedback is greatly appreciated. We strongly urge you to reduce your water usage by 10% in response to the continuing drought conditions. On page four of the newsletter, we have outlined 10 easy ways to save 10%. This is an opportunity to involve your entire family in finding ways to save more water. We will keep in touch on this important issue and encourage you to share your ideas and successes.

May 2014 bring you peace and happiness...and rainfall for us all!

Sincerely,

Tammy Rudock  
MPWD General Manager



## ABOUT MPWD

### MID-PENINSULA WATER DISTRICT

*A Green Business*

3 Dairy Lane  
Belmont, CA 94002  
650-591-8941  
www.midpeninsulawater.org

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Louis J. Vella  
*President*

Betty L. Linvill  
*Vice President*

Matthew P. Zucca  
*Director*

Al Stuebing  
*Director*

Dave Warden  
*Director*

The Board of Directors meets every fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at 3 Dairy Lane, Belmont.

## OFFICERS

Tammy Rudock  
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*District Secretary*

Joan L. Cassman  
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*District Engineer*

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

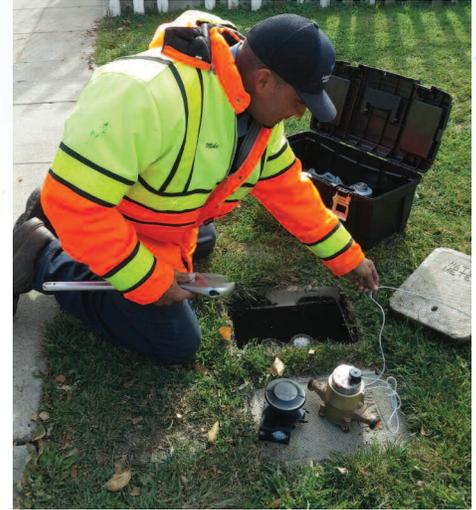
New Water Meters Come Online • Buckland Tank Project on the Move • Employee Spotlight: Chris Michaelis Student Calendar Winners • Help Stop Water Theft • Water Conservation Tips • From the Field

## New Meters Catch Leaks Faster



MPWD Engineering Tech,  
Brent Chester.

For the past two years, MPWD has been replacing its old water meters with new automated meters that alert staff to potential water leaks on a daily basis. This is a major help to customers in conserving water and saving money on their water bills. “A daily leak report is automatically emailed from MPWD’s website to its Customer Service personnel and actions are taken immediately to contact customers about a possible leak,” notes MPWD Engineering Tech **Brent Chester**. He also adds that transmissions from the new meters will NOT affect garage door openers because they operate on a completely different frequency. Approximately 2,000 meters were in place at the end of 2013. ■



## Buckland Tank Project Progresses

Plans to replace two water storage tanks on Buckland Avenue in San Carlos are 100% complete. Local utilities relocated a utility pole and power lines away from the tank site. The MPWD project team met with neighbors in the area to obtain input on the project. Construction is due to start mid-March, and will take approximately six months to finish. When complete, residents will have two seismically resistant tanks to provide drinking water and fire protection. The more than 50-year-old tanks were not earthquake resistant and potentially could leave customers in the area without water service or fire protection following an earthquake. ■



## ONLINE PAYMENTS NOW SIMPLER

In the past, customers were required to contact MPWD customer service to establish an online billing account. Now customers can go directly to the MPWD website and set up their own account, which saves check writing, postage stamps, and eliminates late payments. Go to [www.midpeninsulawater.org](http://www.midpeninsulawater.org).



## Belburn Gets New Water Main

In its ongoing efforts to provide customers with a reliable water delivery system, MPWD is replacing 1,600 linear feet of water main on Belburn Drive in Belmont. The old main was constructed in the 1940s, is not seismically stable, and has suffered multiple leaks through the years. It will be replaced with a larger-diameter seismically resistant system that will allow more water for fire protection. The plans are complete and the project will go to bid this spring with a December 2014 estimated completion date. ■



## School Field Trips

Each Spring MPWD hosts field trips for local third through fifth graders in its service area. Held at its facility in Belmont, students receive a demonstration of the district’s water infrastructure and how it works. During the workshop, they review materials on water conservation and view a movie. Stations are set up around the facility and MPWD system operators show them how water valves work, and how much water they use for brushing teeth, washing hands, and other daily water uses. ■

## Help Stop Water Theft

MPWD owns 773 fire hydrants throughout its service area. These are used to provide fire protection for our customers. It has come to our attention that some contractors may be drawing unmetered water from hydrants without permission from MPWD. Unauthorized use of a hydrant can cause service outages and dirty water. There is a permit process all contractors must adhere to and taking water without a permit is theft. If you or someone in your family sees any suspicious activity related to water removal near a fire hydrant, please report it, day or night, to MPWD at 650-591-8941 or send an email to [mpwd@midpeninsulawater.org](mailto:mpwd@midpeninsulawater.org). ■



## SEISMIC SAFETY DRIVES NEW STANDARDS

MPWD has embarked on a project to bring its current 15-year old standards and specifications up to current industry technological standards. These documents establish the standards that guide the selection of water infrastructure methods and construction materials with seismic safety being key. Estimated project completion is Spring 2014 and all future plans and construction will be based on them. ■

## Student Calendar Winners

MPWD is involved in several water conservation education programs in conjunction with local schools. The goal is to educate children on where their water comes from and how important a resource it is. Each year, MPWD conducts an annual calendar contest allowing third through fifth graders in its service area to draw anything they wish related to water conservation. An awards ceremony was held at the MPWD's January 23rd Board meeting where the runner-up students were recognized and awarded prizes. Mrs. Corteway, a Belmont Oaks Academy teacher, was honored for the highest number of student art submissions. The 2014 calendar was presented to all participants. The campaign slogan this year is "If we all save a little, we can all save a lot." ■



From left Jeanette Kalabolas (Conservation Coordinator), Matthew Burgos & Tripp Garrish (Grand Prize Co-Winners), Louis Vella (Board of Director).

## Chris Michaelis Celebrates Platinum

Maintenance worker **Chris Michaelis** recently celebrated his 20th year working for the Mid-Peninsula Water District (MPWD). When he first joined the team back in 1993, his primary job was replacing small sections of water main. Today, despite knowing almost everything there is to know about MPWD's water system, he still strives to improve his skills and meet the daily field challenges head-on.

After two decades, there have been many changes, but the one thing that hasn't changed is his commitment to customer service. "We tend to cater to our customers more than most utilities," says the husband and father of three. "Many of our water mains are on or near customer homes and businesses so we try to limit the impact of our activities."

In addition to being the "go-to guy" when a water main breaks and for other operations tasks, he is currently involved in changing MPWD's old meters to more accurate automated meters. The new meters allow for much faster leak detection translating into cost savings for customers.

When Michaelis isn't busy improving water system efficiency and reliability, he spends his time with family hunting, fishing, and riding horses. He also volunteers his time training police dogs at the South City Police Department. Congratulations, Chris. Here's to another twenty years! ■

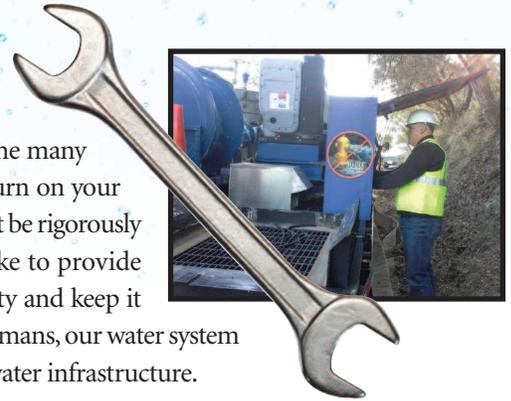


## FROM THE FIELD

Our main job is to ensure that whenever you turn on your water faucet to accomplish the many tasks you perform each day, you receive quality water on demand. While it's simple to turn on your faucet, the complex infrastructure that is required to get it to you is anything but. And it must be rigorously maintained by the MPWD operations staff, rain or shine. In each newsletter we'd like to provide information on the regular maintenance projects required to maintain your water quality and keep it flowing 24/7. In this newsletter we are featuring our valve exercise program. Yes, just like humans, our water system valves need to be exercised to stay in top-top shape and are an integral part of MPWD's water infrastructure.

There are approximately 1,200 valves throughout MPWD's 100-mile water pipeline system. In an emergency, valves are used to shut down water mains, making it extremely important that they are kept in good working order. By maintaining the valves properly, fewer customers will be affected by a broken water main.

Every two years, each valve needs to be "exercised" by opening and closing it for a period of time. This prevents valves from getting stuck and not performing properly during an emergency. MPWD operators exercise the valves using hydraulic equipment. While the equipment operates the valve, the operator records data on its location and condition as well as collecting other valuable information on the water system. MPWD maintains its valves on a regular basis rather than waiting every two years to exercise all 1,200 of them. Valve exercising is just one of the many ways MPWD protects you and your family's water supply. ■



## Conservation Corner



### Increased Lawn Rebates

In July, MPWD improved its "Lawn Be Gone" rebate program for customers who change out their lawns for a water efficient landscape. Rebate amounts went from 50 cents to 75 cents per square foot of converted lawn. Maximum rebates increased from \$500 to \$1,000 per household and backyard conversions are now allowed. The options for drought resistant plants, flowers and trees are numerous and beautiful. If you want to reduce your water bill, this is an excellent method of doing so. For more information, call Conservation Coordinator **Jeanette Kalabolos** at 650-591-8941 or email her at [jeanettek@midpeninsulawater.org](mailto:jeanettek@midpeninsulawater.org).

### 10 Ways to Save 10%

1. Turn off the faucet when you are brushing your teeth or doing the dishes.
2. Take shorter showers with high-efficiency showerheads.
3. Operate washers with full loads.
4. Use a broom to clean sidewalks and pavement instead of a hose.
5. Replace your turf with drought-resistant and native plants.
6. Water during the cool part of the day.
7. Detect and fix plumbing leaks.
8. Install aerators on bathroom/ kitchen sinks.
9. Replace your old toilet.
10. Replace your clothes washer with a high-efficiency model.

Customers will be receiving more details shortly and information will be posted to the MPWD website at [midpeninsulawater.org](http://midpeninsulawater.org).

### DID YOU KNOW?

To date, precipitation in our regional watershed is only 25% of normal – the worst in recorded history. Let's work together to conserve more water now!