

Drinking Water Utilities Honored For Management Excellence

San Francisco, Calif. – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) honored 14 public drinking water systems with its top utility management awards on October 15 in ceremonies at its 2018 Executive Management Conference in San Francisco. Eight systems received the Sustainable Water Utility Management Award, three received the Platinum Award for Utility Excellence and three were presented the Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance.

The Sustainable Water Utility Management Award recognizes water utilities that have made a commitment to management that achieves a balance of innovative and successful efforts in areas of economic, social and environmental endeavors. The Platinum and Gold Awards recognize outstanding achievement in implementing the nationally recognized Attributes of Effective Utility Management.

The 2018 AMWA Sustainable Water Utility Management Award winners are:

- Boston Water and Sewer Commission
- Chicago Department of Water Management
- Denver Water
- East Bay Municipal Utility District (California)
- Las Vegas Valley Water District
- Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
- Scottsdale Water
- Tucson Water

Winners of the 2018 AMWA Platinum Award for Utility Excellence are:

- Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
- Fort Collins Utilities
- Knoxville Utilities Board

AMWA's 2018 Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance was presented to:

- City of Ann Arbor Water Utility
- Greenville Utilities Commission (North Carolina)
- Cleveland Water

“AMWA’s 2018 award winners are industry-leading water systems with innovative managers and dedicated workforces who create sustainable utilities marked by high quality, affordable water, responsive customer service and attention to resource management and environmental protection,” said AMWA President Mac Underwood, General Manager, Birmingham Water Works. “The accomplishments of these exceptionally well-run public utilities should be a source of pride for the communities they serve.”

Sustainable Water Utility Management Award Winners

Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) has committed resources to improving operations, maintaining fiscal responsibility

and increasing public awareness to improve water quality and protect the environment. BWSC is a committed environmental steward, aiming to utilize its infrastructure to its maximum efficiency. The utility is continually dedicating resources to efforts such as improving operations and services to its ratepayers, as well as controlling pollution to keep Boston's harbor, beaches and rivers clean. As a self-funding agency, BWSC fights aggressively to maintain equitable and affordable rates. The utility also has developed and implemented green infrastructure and low impact development throughout numerous construction projects such as a \$1.5 million collaboration with the Boston Public Schools.

The **Chicago Department of Water Management** (DWM) approach to sustainability involves ongoing improvement projects, proactive financial management, commitment to the environment and ongoing efforts to interact and stay involved with the utility's community. An aggressive revitalization program is underway to improve its infrastructure, including replacement of water and sewer mains as well as improvements to its two water purification plants and 12 pumping stations. These projects endeavor to incorporate green initiatives as well as modernize equipment to streamline utility efficiency. DWM also led a successful initiative to install residential water meters to help promote awareness for water usage and water conservation.

At **Denver Water**, promoting sustainable water use and environmental stewardship has been a top priority since its inception 100 years ago. The utility is incorporating sustainability into everything it does, from energy and transportation to water and materials, land use, people, and infrastructure and assets. Responsible, sustainable financial practices keep rates low, ensuring customers have some of the most affordable water in the region. Denver Water is incorporating green building practices into all of its new construction, including its new 35-acre main campus. Steps are being taken toward becoming an energy-neutral organization by 2020, and the utility continues to build on its award-winning campaign to help customers use water efficiently in its dry climate.

East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) practices integrated water resources planning, asset management, water conservation and recycling, renewable energy, natural resource management and climate change response. Water supply planning to a 2040 horizon includes regional conjunctive use, increased conservation, recycling and potential potable reuse, and aggressive drought actions. Infrastructure renewal focuses on resilience to sea level rise, seismic events, increased urbanization and prolonged drought. Its financial management has sustained strong bond ratings, while pioneering green bond issues and ESG (environmental, social and governance) standards in retirement system investments. To sustain the community EBMUD has expanded customer rate assistance, local contracting and local job opportunities.

The **Las Vegas Valley Water District** (LVVWD) capital improvement plan, asset management and reserve policies provide long-term financial security and support planning for infrastructure and water resources. Construction of the Lake Mead Intake No. 3 and a low lake level pumping station, along with water banking, intentionally created surplus and return flow credits, help LVVWD offset potential supply shortages associated with drought and climate change. The utility prides itself in community involvement through citizens advisory committees, conservation programs, education through outreach and marketing, and providing valued learning experiences at its Springs Preserve, a 180-acre cultural institution designed to commemorate Las Vegas' dynamic history and to provide a vision for a sustainable future.

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) provides wholesale water and wastewater service to the Boston metropolitan area. Its rates not only reflect the true cost of water, they also provide for maintenance of past investments and allow for modernization and improvement of the water system. Demand management and leak detection have eliminated waste and avoided the need to develop new supply sources. Large, well-protected supply reservoirs are regional resources for stressed water systems during times of drought. The Authority follows a regional model for energy efficiency and green power production: solar, hydro and wind. Climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives include tracking greenhouse gas emissions, flood proofing and resilience measures programmed into all rehabilitation programs.

Scottsdale Water operates one of the most sophisticated indirect potable reuse facilities in the world and has been an industry leader in the realm since its advance water treatment facility began operation in 1998. The utility recharges an average of 1.7 billion gallons of purified recycled water into the aquifer annually, helping ensure long-term water supplies and the integrity of the aquifer. Due to these aggressive recharge efforts, Scottsdale was the first city in Arizona to achieve "safe yield" – pumping less groundwater out of the aquifer than recharging back in – which the state mandated must be achieved by the year 2025. Scottsdale has achieved safe yield every year since 2006.

Tucson Water operations maintain and enhance the sustainability of the community and environment, using an integrated approach to ensure safe, reliable and sufficient water supplies for residential, economic and environmental uses, encouraging conservation and

maximum efficiency for all uses, while maintaining a fair and affordable rate structure. Because of strategic planning, continuous improvement, key investments and a focused water efficiency and conservation program, the utility possesses verifiable water resources that will support the community for the next 100 years. Tucson Water maintains solid credit ratings and financial reserves, which facilitate access to low-cost financing and is committed to establishing financial sustainability and rates that cover the full cost of service and are fair and equitable.

Platinum Award for Utility Excellence Winners

The **Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority's** 100-year water resource plan emphasizes conservation and wise management of the regional underground aquifer while exploring innovative supply alternatives to improve the Water Authority's ability to deal effectively with contingencies such as drought. The utility's asset management plan allows it to keep up with increasing infrastructure needs to meet regulatory and operational requirements, as well as expected levels of customer service. Even as it asks customers for additional resources to reinvest in the water and sewer system, the Water Authority pursues ways to keep operating costs as low as possible by increasing energy efficiency, reducing injury hours and expanding the use of technology.

Fort Collins Utilities' service levels enjoy strong community support and satisfaction as measured through customer satisfaction surveys. The professionalism, engagement and concern of its employees allow for sound operational and financial decisions to be made and effectively implemented. Through the utility's long-term operational and financial planning, the community enjoys safe, reliable, high-quality, affordable drinking water, a cornerstone of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Mature asset management program, strategic financial planning, ongoing employee development and continual process improvement strategies ensure that the community will continue to be served well in the future. This is evidenced by the municipal organization, including the utility services, being named a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award 2017 recipient.

The **Knoxville Utilities Board's** (KUB) Century II infrastructure management program ensures sustainable lifecycle replacement and maintenance programs with steady investment, incremental rate increases and equitable sharing of the costs for service between today's customers and future generations. Its state of the art water quality laboratory performs approximately 100,000 tests annually – many more than required by regulations. KUB workforce programs include leadership development, operator qualification, knowledge management and diversity initiatives. Sustainability initiatives include biosolids beneficial reuse, energy efficiency upgrades of plants and facilities and an alternative fuel fleet. Utility employees support local non-profit organizations through its VolTime program and help youth develop career skills with the TeenWork Program.

Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance Winners

The **City of Ann Arbor Water Utility** is committed to delivering exceptional service to its customers, to strategic decision-making and to investment in its staff. Ann Arbor was one of the first utilities in the state of Michigan to implement a conservation-based inclining block rate structure, a forward-thinking approach to rate development that enabled it to apply its sustainability goals to how it charges for its services. The utility was also the first in the state to use ozone as its primary disinfectant. By innovating and partnering with institutions like local universities, Ann Arbor is continually looking for new ways to cost effectively provide outstanding service to its customers.

Cleveland Water monitors and protects the health of its Lake Erie source water by optimizing its four interconnected water treatment plants. The utility has aggressively tackled the issue of water loss by leveraging expanded capital investment, new technologies and data analysis. Investments in upgraded automated meter reading technology have improved service levels and allow more effective communication with customers regarding their water use. Cleveland Water has also invested in technology and training to improve customer service, resulting in measurable improvements to service delivery across its meter operations, billing services, call center and collections operations. Through a combination of smart planning and hard work, the utility has held rates constant for three years.

Greenville Utilities Commission's (GUC) mission is to enhance the quality of life for those it serves by safely providing reliable utility solutions at the lowest reasonable cost, with exceptional customer service in an environmentally responsible manner. Strategic plan goals include employee workforce development, financial stability, water supply sustainability, exceptional customer service, water quality and environmental leadership, and infrastructure investment and management. The staff at GUC's water treatment plant met

the goals to earn the Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) Award from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality for the past three years. The AWOP requirements are more stringent than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's existing regulations, helping GUC achieve higher levels of water quality.

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Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies

1620 I Street, NW, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20006

Tel: 202.331.2820 | Fax: 202.785.1845

info@amwa.net | [privacy policy](#)