

**DES MOINES WATER WORKS**  
Board of Water Works Trustees



2201 George Flagg Parkway | Des Moines, Iowa 50321-1190 | (515) 283-8700 | www.dmww.com

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 10, 2018  
TO: William Stowe, CEO and General Manager  
FROM: Ted Corrigan, COO  
SUBJECT: Contracted Main Break Repairs

On Friday December 29, 2017 DMWW contracted with Elder Corporation to repair two broken water mains in the Des Moines system. DMWW typically experiences 300 water main breaks each year. Normally, all of the breaks are repaired by Water Works' own crews. Unusual circumstances on Thursday evening and Friday of the week in question made it necessary for us to contract two repairs.

Late in the day on Thursday December 28<sup>th</sup> there were two water main breaks including a particularly difficult break on the 12-inch main in Fleur Drive. DMWW crews responded to both breaks working through the night and into the next morning. There was also a fire hydrant replacement scheduled for the overnight hours that night. It was scheduled as night work because of the large number of customers who would be out of water during the replacement. This overnight work resulted in only one crew being available to work during normal working hours on Friday.

Three more main breaks were reported before noon on Friday. With our only crew finishing up on Fleur Drive, three new main breaks before noon, and bitterly cold temperatures forecast for the holiday weekend, we decided to see if we could get assistance from a contractor so we would not go into the weekend behind on repairs.

Union Leadership was advised of the situation and was not opposed to the contracted repairs. Elder Corporation and two other local contractors were contacted. Elder was the only contractor who was able to assemble a crew on short notice. It was agreed they would complete the work based on their published hourly rates for labor and equipment. DMWW would provide all materials and a staff person to help coordinate shutdown of the water mains. Two main breaks repairs were completed by Elder Corporation in an approximately 12-hour work day. As of the time of this writing we have yet to be invoiced for the work.

The last time contractors were hired to repair broken water mains was in January/February of 2014. Two different contractors repaired between 5 and 10 main breaks in total during that time.