

# H<sub>2</sub>O *i*LINE

November/December 2010

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WATER YOU CAN TRUST FOR **LIFE**

## Maintaining *Our* Investments

In the past few years, Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) has worked hard to keep yearly rate increases low and is again being challenged in 2010 as budget needs for 2011 are being developed. Instead of taking on debt to invest in improvements, a water rate increase is being considered to help bring revenues in line with costs.

In order to provide a sufficient and reliable water supply for our customers, the utility has invested significant amounts in water pipes, pumps and treatment plants, and it is critical to keep up with that investment by properly maintaining those facilities. DMWW's revenue has not kept pace with costs since 2003. DMWW pays all of its operating expenses but is not collecting sufficient revenue to pay for the needed infrastructure improvements. The Board of Trustees recognizes DMWW cannot continue this trend without saddling future rate payers and generations with a large tab because of the failure now to set rates and charges to cover the true cost of the utility's operations.

The rate increase can also be attributed to wetter-than-average summers over the past three to four years, which has led to decreased demand and relatively flat water sales. In addition, chemical prices are expected to increase approximately five percent in 2011. Complex pollution issues in the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers, such as routinely elevated levels of fecal bacteria, often complicate the treatment process. Various stretches of the two rivers are on Iowa's impaired waters list because of problems with bacteria, algae and nitrates, among numerous biological impairments. Water Works staff continues to emphasize the need for aggressive improvements in the sprawling watersheds that feed into the rivers.

Rates for the typical residential Des Moines customer will increase from \$2.70 per thousand gallons to \$2.97 per thousand gallons next year to help bring revenues in line with costs. Additionally, the water availability charge will increase by \$1.00. This will result in water bills that are about \$2.00 more per month for a two-person household. Monthly increases will range between \$2.00 and \$3.00 for the average four-person household. Currently, the water portion of the bill for an average two-person household is about \$15.00 a month and roughly \$25.00 for a four-person home.

The last rate increase was April 1, 2009. The availability charge, the fixed amount of the water bill intended to cover Water Works fixed costs per customer whether or not any water is used, was increased by \$2.00 per month in April 2010.

In spite of these financial and source water challenges, DMWW continues to produce high quality water for our customers. One example of our exemplary water quality is the recognition received in April 2008 by Forbes.com who ranked Des Moines as being the best city in America for clean drinking water. DMWW is committed to spending our limited resources wisely and continually evaluates our programs to be as efficient as possible while delivering **Water you Can Trust for Life.**

### Holiday Hours

**Des Moines Water Works' general office** will be closed the following dates: November 25-26, December 24, 27 and 31.

As always, emergency phone calls are answered 24 hours a day. If you experience an emergency, please call (515) 283-8700.

**Des Moines Botanical Center** will be closed the following dates: November 25, December 25 and January 1, 2011.



For more information, visit [www.dmww.com](http://www.dmww.com)

**Des Moines**  
**Water Works**

Water You Can Trust for Life

 Printed on recycled paper.

## Warm Up at the Botanical Center

**"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" Gardens**  
November through December • 10:00 am-5:00 pm

The holiday gardens will be inspired by Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* for the final installment of "Story Time in the Gardens" theme. Whimsical gardens welcome visitors with brightly painted poinsettias, topiaries and a variety of unusual plants. Enjoy the winding path through Santa's house. Designed by Horticulturist, Jessica Barnett and artistic painting by Event Coordinator, Pam Kline.

**Holiday Bulb Mart**  
November 5-6 • 10:00 am-5:00 pm

Shop for amaryllis, paper white narcissus, festival hyacinths and other bulbs to grow in the house for winter blooms. You'll also find a selection of the newest and best hardy lily bulbs, best planted in the fall up to the time the ground freezes.

**Veteran's Day**  
November 11 • 10:00 am-5:00 pm

Veterans and their families can enjoy free admission to the Des Moines Botanical Center in honor of Veteran's Day!

**Toddler Time**  
November 30 & December 28 • 10:00 am

Enjoy a story with a garden theme, music and movement. Accompanied by an adult caregiver, children ages 1-3 are invited to dance, sing, and play, as they enjoy the company of children their own age. No pre-registration required. Children 1-3 are \$1.00, regular admission rates apply for other children and adults.

**Snackin' with the Clauses (and the Grinch!)**  
December 12 & 19 • 1:00-4:00 pm

Come spend the afternoon with Santa & Mrs. Claus! Enjoy live holiday music in the Dome and bring your camera to capture your children's smiles as they give Santa their wish list. Then be sure to spend some time with Mrs. Claus - she'll be telling stories and sharing a snack with all the good little girls and boys at 1:00 and 2:30. Even the Grinch will be moping around in hopes to spoil the Holiday fun! Don't miss your chance to watch the classic movie *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. There will also be a craft activity and a scavenger hunt in the Dome. Regular admission.

**Hats Off to a New Year**  
December 28-30 • 10:00 am-3:00 pm

Bring the kids to the tropical warmth of the Dome for a special day of crafts, games, activities and prizes at our "Hats Off to a New Year" event. Regular admission.

## Increased Water Pressure for Airport Neighborhood

In Des Moines Water Works' distribution system, there are a number of areas south and east of the Des Moines International Airport that have lower water pressure. The purchase and installation of a booster pump station south of the airport has been determined to be the best way to improve the water pressure for our customers in these areas. The new booster station has an anticipated start-up and operation date of mid-November. The new booster station will increase water pressure in the areas south and east of the airport area by 10 pounds per square inch (psi).

## Let's Be Friends

Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) recently debuted in the social media environment. DMWW's social media endeavor is in alignment with our 2010-2014 Strategic Plan. DMWW realized the way the world communicates has changed, and we want to be where our customers are. If that means participating in blogging, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, we're ready to be there.

On the blog, you'll be hearing from many employees from every corner of our organization - from the treatment plants to the Botanical Center to Water Works Park, DMWW will bring the best insights from the experts. What does DMWW hope to accomplish?

- Share pertinent and timely information
- Increase public awareness of the value of water
- Promote stewardship of natural resources
- Promote Botanical Center and Water Works Parks events
- Inform the public of involvement and initiatives with various associations
- Attract qualified applicants
- Interact with the community, residential and business customers, industry and government partners

We hope you'll subscribe to our blog, follow us on Twitter, "like" us on Facebook and join the conversation!

Website	<a href="http://www.dmww.com">www.dmww.com</a>
Blog	<a href="http://www.dsmh2o.com">www.dsmh2o.com</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/DesMoinesWaterWorks">facebook.com/DesMoinesWaterWorks</a>
Twitter	@DSMH2O

**Des Moines**  
**Water Works**  
Water You Can Trust for Life

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