

H₂O *i*LINE

September/October 2010

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WATER YOU CAN TRUST FOR **LIFE**

DMWW is Listening to the Voice of the Customer

Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) recently distributed the Voice of the Customer written survey and the results are in! The 2010 survey was sent in May to a random sample of 3,000 of DMWW's approximately 68,000 residential customers. In total, 758 customers responded, 712 by paper and 46 or 6.1% via a Web site, a 25.3% response rate. This year's key findings include:

- Customers continue to be highly satisfied with DMWW. DMWW scores 4.49 (in 2006: 4.39) in overall satisfaction, on a 5 point scale where 5=very satisfied and 1=very dissatisfied. In addition, in comparison with other City service providers, DMWW continues to score in a virtual tie for first place, with Des Moines Fire.
- The two most important issues to DMWW customers remain water quality and uninterrupted water service, with virtually identical scores. DMWW Parks is the third most important (in 2006: 7th) and billing statement is fourth (in 2006: 3rd).
- Satisfaction with in-home customer service and water quality have risen strongly. This is a very positive outcome. These two items were earmarked for improvement in the 2006 survey because of their importance and lower than average satisfaction scores that year. Water quality has increased across the board, with water taste increasing significantly.
- In terms of price/value relationship, DMWW remains perceived as a better value than electricity service, and primary telephone service. DMWW's perceived value has improved (4.25, 2006=4.16 on a 5 point scale where 5=well worth what it costs and 1=not worth it).
- Among ten other sources, DMWW remains the most trusted source for water quality and safety information. Scores (5=very reliable, 1=very unreliable): DMWW (4.48) maintains a strong lead over the second place source, doctors and other health care professionals (3.84).
- Functionality of DMWW's Web site is an area highlighted for improvement. DMWW will assess customer's expectations of the Web site and identify enhancements needed to improve online customer service experiences.

DMWW values every single survey response and uses the results and recommendations to guide the utility to achieve increased customer satisfaction, water quality and safety to ultimately delivering **Water you Can Trust for Life**.

Fire Hydrant Safety 101



Fire hydrants are important to the safety of a community in the event that a fire breaks out near your home or business. Des Moines Water Works is responsible for maintenance of the fire hydrants that fire fighters use to protect our community. Help the local fire department and DMWW by following these simple tips to keep fire hydrants working properly and accessible when they are needed:

- Keep cars, bikes, toys and other objects away from fire hydrants at all times.
- During winter months, shovel snow away from fire hydrants.
- Mow and trim grass or weeds around fire hydrants near your property.
- Do not plant flowers or shrubs around fire hydrants.

Unauthorized use of a hydrant can cause significant damage to the distribution system, the hydrant and your home or business plumbing. Additionally, it may cause damage to our water supply. Any unauthorized use of a fire hydrant may result in a \$1,500 fine and misdemeanor charges.

If you notice a damaged fire hydrant or accidentally damage one, please call Des Moines Water Works at (515) 283-8700. Your call is important to fire protection.

Des Moines
Water Works
Water You Can Trust for Life

 Printed on recycled paper.

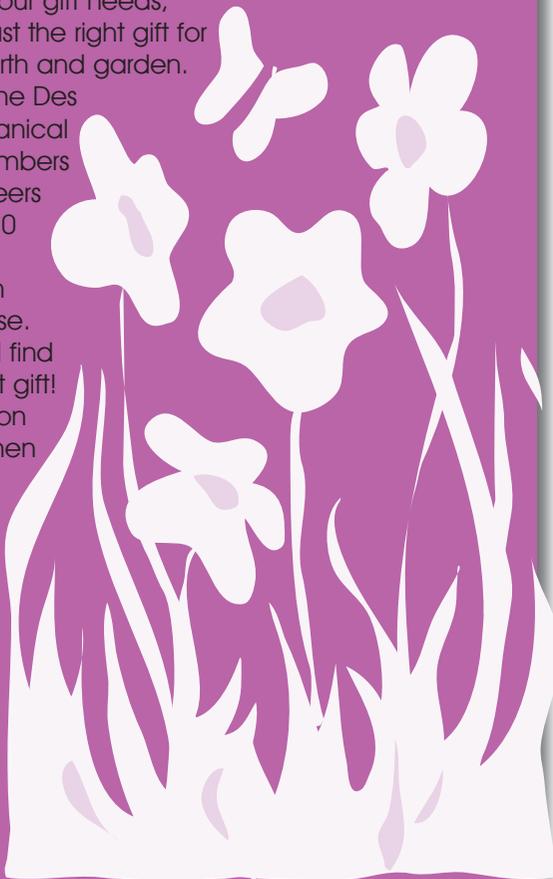
For more information, visit www.dmww.com

A Place to Grow and So Much More!

Fall Bulb Mart. Come early and often, shop for hardy perennial spring bulbs and peonies – over 60,000 to choose from! Plant any time until the ground freezes. Many of the bulbs are deer- and critter-resistant, some, such as daffodils and alliums, are virtually deer-proof. For a complete listing of all bulbs and peonies available at the sale, go to www.botanicalcenter.com and click BULB MART. September 30, 4:00-7:00 p.m., October 1-2, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and October 3, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. The Bulb Mart will be in greenhouses 4 and 5.

Holiday Parties at Des Moines Botanical & Environmental Center. Now is the perfect time to plan for your family or company holiday party. With its lush landscape and beautiful flowers, the Des Moines Botanical & Environmental Center is one of the most exotic backdrops for any event. Reserve any one of our accommodating facilities and throw a celebration everyone will remember for years to come! For more information, contact an event coordinator at (515) 323-6290.

Shop for the Holidays at Garden Gate Gift Shop. The Garden Gate Gift Shop carries a great selection of books, garden accessories and unique gifts. Whatever your gift needs, you'll find just the right gift for home, hearth and garden. Friends of the Des Moines Botanical Center members and volunteers receive a 10 percent discount on merchandise. Stop in and find that perfect gift! No admission required when visiting the Gift Shop.



Common Household PROBLEMS SOLVED

Seeing Pink in Your Sink

Ever noticed that pinkish hue that begins to appear after a few days around the shower, tub, or toilet bowl basin? That pink residue you see is caused by the bacterium *Serratia marcescens*. This is an extremely common organism found in soil, food, animals, air ... almost anywhere! It thrives on moist surfaces and is commonly seen in showers, toilets, pet dishes, sinks, or any other damp surface. The bacteria needs almost nothing to survive. They produce a characteristic pink pigment that is very visible to the human eye, however, some people report the color to be red or orange. The bacteria get to these surfaces via the air. What you see is especially common in dusty environments, where the bacteria can travel attached to dust particles.

These organisms cannot survive in chlorinated water. So, if your water is treated in some way that removes chlorine, you are more apt to see this phenomenon. Or, as is the case of a pet dish or a shower stall, the chlorine dissipates over time and the bacteria are able to colonize the surface. This species does not cause water-borne disease and until recently was thought to be completely harmless. Recent studies have shown, however, that it can cause bladder and wound infections and pneumonia in very few people.

Best bet: wipe these damp surfaces regularly with a bleach or anti-bacterial cleaner.

Dishwasher Film

From time to time, your dishes may not come out of the dishwasher as clean as you like. They may have that annoying filmy look. What's the problem? Two factors contribute: improper amounts of detergent, and insufficient water temperature. A good rule of thumb is to use one teaspoon of detergent for every grain of hardness in the water. For DMWW water, that means using seven teaspoons in the summer, eight in the winter. If the temperature setting on your water heater is too low, your dishes may not rinse well. Dishwashers work best with a water temperature of 140°F. Also, let your kitchen sink run hot just before starting the dishwasher cycle. If this still doesn't help, try putting a ¼ cup of vinegar into the dishwasher just as the rinse cycle starts.

Des Moines
Water Works
Water You Can Trust for Life

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