

Compiled by WWD Editorial Assistant Chelsea Corbin



STEVE TAGERT

race to replace

Proactive water main replacement program in Pennsylvania limits breaks from winter weather

Communities across the country faced extreme cold and above-average precipitation this winter, and the weather took its toll on water infrastructure. WWD Editorial Assistant Chelsea Corbin recently spoke with Steve Tagert, president of Aqua Pennsylvania, about the pressures placed on water mains and how his utility overcame them.

Chelsea Corbin: What conditions are particularly stressful for water mains?

Steve Tagert: The cold water temperature and the quick change in temperature are particularly stressful. When the water changes temperature 5° or 10° very quickly, it creates added stress on the pipe. The frost in the earth puts pressure on the pipe as well. As frost drives deeper into the ground—and this year we are seeing frost levels in northeast Pennsylvania 4 ft deep—it can freeze some shallower lines. Also, that frost is very heavy and puts added stress onto the pipe.

Corbin: What can utilities do to prevent water main breaks?

Tagert: The best thing to do is to be proactive in your main replacement program. Utilities were not replacing pipe for years and years, and they have kind of caught up to it.

Right now we are replacing about 2% of our system a year, about 140 miles of pipe—a pretty aggressive program. But when you think about it, if you replace 1% of your pipe a year, in 100 years you will have replaced all the pipe, but the pipe you started with is 100 years old already.

We have had 300 main breaks in southeast Pennsylvania between Jan. 1 and March 1. Had we not done such an aggressive program over the past 10 or 15 years, we probably would have had 600 or more breaks for that short period of time.

Corbin: How do you structure your main repair program?

Tagert: We have data that go back to the 1950s and '60s for all of our main breaks in a GIS program. Every year as we start our budgets and start looking at our plans for main replacements, we take a number of things into

consideration: We look at the main breaks and the frequency of the breaks, the damage that the main breaks cause, and the customers who are affected. We also look at undersized pipe and increasing fire flow in the community. We look at water quality issues. One of the biggest things we look at is highway reconstruction and highway paving by either the municipality or the state; if they are going to repave a highway, we want to get in there ahead of that repaving and replace our water mains. We can save a little bit of money, and then we do not have to go in and tear up a new road to replace a break that occurs just after the last steamroller leaves the job.

We also try to work with the other utilities, particularly the local gas companies or sewer authorities, and try to cooperate with the replacements they are making. If they are replacing pipe and we think we need to replace pipe there, too, we try to do it at once. That affects the customers all at once—then the road is done and everyone is happy when we all leave and they do not see us again for a long time after that.

Corbin: Do you have any recommendations based on your experience with water main replacement?

Tagert: A recommendation that works well for us is to be very open with the customers. When we do a project, every customer gets a letter explaining what they will see take place. They will see what the dollar value of the project is and they also will get a schedule. The customers understand that it's about a two-month project, off and on at different times. They understand that the paving in the beginning is a temporary paving and we're coming back and replacing that. The townships all get a letter. In Pennsylvania, we give each state representative and local legislative person a letter describing the project, too, so if they get questions about the project from their constituents, they know what it's all about. Being proactive and making our customers aware of it certainly helps them understand. **WWD**

Steve Tagert is president of Aqua Pennsylvania. Tagert can be reached at setagert@aquaamerica.com.

For more information, write in 1112 on this issue's reader service form on page 49.

News Briefs compiled by WWD Associate Editor Amy McIntosh

IFAT 2014 to Present Specialized Content



The events program at IFAT 2014, held May 5 to 9 in Munich, will feature panel discussions, seminars and exhibitor presentations, as well as country and theme specials. Country specials provide an opportunity to examine selected world markets and a chance to review challenges and solutions. Theme specials will focus on topics such as sustainable water management and high recovery rates.

Water Community Celebrates Women's History Month



The American Water Works Assn. (AWWA) and the water community celebrated Women's History Month in March. AWWA and its members celebrated with events and activities at public and private water and wastewater utilities, highlighting the role women have played in the history of the community.

FY2015 Budget Request Cuts Water Funding



The Obama administration's FY2015 budget request proposes \$500 million in cuts to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs, funding them at \$1.018 billion and \$757 million, respectively.

NSF Launches StaySafer Program



NSF Intl. launched the StaySafer program, which helps hotels, resorts and other hospitality settings prevent food and water contamination. The program combines inspection and testing for water systems and food service operations, giving the industry a credible means to demonstrate the safety of its food and water.

Settlement to Upgrade 18 Mississippi Wastewater Facilities



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Justice and Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality announced a proposed settlement with Total Environmental Solutions Inc. and Utility Services LLC to address violations of the Clean Water Act, including effluent violations and unauthorized overflows of untreated raw sewage. The companies have agreed to assess and implement improvements to 18 wastewater treatment facilities and systems in Mississippi.

Smart Water Metering Market to Expand



According to the report "Analysis of the Global Smart Water Metering Market" from Frost & Sullivan, the market for smart water metering is expected to expand due to development in the North American and European markets. The report found that the market earned revenues of \$3.48 billion in 2013 and estimated this will reach \$5.18 billion in 2017.

Envirogen, Inotec Enter Technology Agreement



Envirogen Technologies and Inotec have entered a joint technology development agreement to advance the performance of bioreactors in groundwater, mining water and wastewater treatment applications. The initial focus will be on reducing the amount of substrate required to successfully operate anoxic bioreactors as well as on minimizing the amount of solids generated during operation.

GEO to Build PAC Facility in Texas



GEO Specialty Chemicals will expand its water treatment chemicals division in Deer Park, Texas, on the site of an existing GEO facility. The new facility will produce polyaluminum chloride (PAC) products. The facility will be completed in late 2014.

Aqua-Aerobic Systems Marks 45 Years of Service



Aqua-Aerobic Systems is celebrating 45 years of providing products and customer service to the wastewater treatment industry. Since 1969, the company has developed aeration and mixing, biological processes, filtration, membranes, and process control products to meet water and wastewater treatment objectives for customers worldwide.

TIGG Awarded Contracts for N.Y. Projects



TIGG Corp. won two separate competitively bid municipal contracts on Long Island, N.Y., to provide drinking water purification equipment. The two contracts are worth a combined \$500,000.

Industry News

- Patrick K. Decker was named president and CEO of Xylem Inc.
- Melissa L. Meeker was named executive director of the WaterReuse Assn.
- Linda G. Sullivan was named senior vice president and CFO of American Water. **WWD**

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