



CHESTER WATER AUTHORITY

P. O. Box 467, Chester, PA 19016

June 8, 2016

Chester Water Authority Marks 150th Anniversary

CHESTER, PA – The Chester Water Authority (CWA) -- a municipal authority that provides water service to more than 200,000 residents and businesses in southern Chester County, western Delaware County, and the City of Chester -- is celebrating its 150th Anniversary this month. The CWA marked the occasion with a celebratory event attended by more than 200 staff, retirees, current and former board members, and community leaders last week.

In April of 1866, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed a law that empowered the City of Chester to construct a waterworks – if the majority of residents approved it in a special election. A few short weeks later, in June of 1866 -- 150 years ago this month – a special election was held and the voters of the South Ward approved the measure.

“Over the course of the past 150 years, the Authority has grown from an organization serving 67 customers in the south ward of the City of Chester to a high quality public water provider serving more than 43,000 customers and a population of more than 200,000 people,” said Cindy Leitzell, Chair of the Chester Water Authority’s Board of Directors and a resident of Delaware County. “As a municipal authority, we don’t have stockholders, we have customers who we provide high quality water at very low rates. Rather than worry about dividends, we invest in our infrastructure, capital improvements, and educational efforts to reduce pollutant runoffs in the watershed.”

“The dedication and vision of our former staff, current employees, and past leaders have shaped this organization for the better over the last 150 years,” said Paul Andriole, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors and a resident of Chester County. “We have a great team of people who are committed to their jobs and our customers. I am proud to be part of this organization.”

The organization began operations as the South Ward Water Works. Over the years, it also operated under the names of the New Chester Water Company and the Chester Water Service Company before being renamed the Chester Water Authority in 1965. Last year, the authority provided more than 29 million gallons of water to its customers per day. It operates 672 miles of water mains and its storage facilities have the capacity to hold 106 million gallons of treated water.

A major milestone for the organization occurred in 1945 when the Chester Water Authority, in response to concerns about the quality of the water drawn from the Delaware River, identified a new source of water: the Octoraro Creek, approximately 40 miles away. Over the course of the

next 6 years, the CWA constructed a dam, reservoir, spillway, water filtration plant and pumping station on the Octoraro Creek in Pine Grove, Chester County and a 39-mile water transmission line. In a May 4, 1948 editorial, the Chester Times declared that the project “the greatest happening of the City’s contemporary history.”

Today, the Octoraro Reservoir serves as the primary source of water for the CWA and its customers. The reservoir encompasses 620 acres and has more than 10 miles of shoreline. The CWA’s Octoraro Water Treatment Plant is one of the highest performing water treatment facilities in the country. It is one of just 16 water treatment facilities in the country to earn the prestigious Phase IV, Excellence in Water Treatment Award from the Partnership for Safe Water.

The Chester Water Authority allows the public to fish and boat on the Octoraro Reservoir, which is often called Octoraro Lake by local residents. Over the years it has developed a reputation as one of the top bass lakes in the region. The CWA maintains a Fishing Headquarters -- Jim’s Live Bait and Tackle – that hosts annual bass and catfish tournaments. The Octoraro Lake is also widely regarded as an excellent location for bird watchers and has been designated in Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Audubon Society.

For more background on the history of the Chester Water Authority, please visit <http://www.chesterwater.com/about.html>. The Authority has also developed a graphic timeline of major milestones that have occurred in the organization’s 150-year history that is available upon request.

About the Chester Water Authority:

The Chester Water Authority is a regional municipal water authority that provides service to more than 200,000 residents and business owners in western Delaware County, southern Chester County and the city of Chester. As a municipal authority, the CWA is able to provide water at customer rates that are lower than those of private utility companies. The CWA takes pride in the fact that it directs a high percentage of funds into its infrastructure for capital projects and proactive maintenance. That investment in water treatment and distribution infrastructure enables the CWA to deliver quality, service, and value to the community. For more information, please visit www.chesterwater.com.

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