



NEWS RELEASE

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City MWSD recognized as ‘Utility of the Future’ by water consortium

Water & Sewer Department embraces change and empowers workforce in water reuse

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. — The City of Murfreesboro Water & Sewer Department (MWSD) has been designated as a Utility of the Future.

A partnership of water sector organizations—the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) and WaterReuse—with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — recently announced a new Utility of the Future (UOTF) Today Recognition Program. The program celebrates the progress and exceptional performance of our nation’s wastewater utilities while supporting the widespread adoption of the innovative UOTF business model.

The consortium noted that Murfreesboro, Tennessee’s Water & Sewer Department was one of only two utilities in the Kentucky-Tennessee region honored with this prestigious accolade. MWSD’s Organizational Culture was recognized for the intentional establishment of organizational excellence that inspires and embraces positive change and empowers the workforce to imagine, create, test, and implement innovative approaches from every day work to extreme challenges.

It enforces a culture of managing and recovering valuable resources, rather than one of the disposal of “waste.” It promotes leadership that establishes a long-term vision for the organization and embodies communication that creates employee understanding, makes knowledge more productive, and harnesses the power of employee engagement.

MWSD’s Director, Darren Gore, has promoted the culture of a team, announced the program. He asserts at MWSD, “There is no need to claim ownership of ideas. Teams evaluate all ideas, select the best one, and commit to it. This process leads to the greatest likelihood of success, team victories to enjoy, and no wasted time seeking to assign blame if a project does not succeed.”

MWSD applied for the award based on its accomplishments in Water Reuse and Watershed Stewardship. Murfreesboro's Reuse System is the largest and most sophisticated system in Tennessee. It enables the city to maintain expansive and beautiful landscapes, enhance the environment, and deliver a valuable resource at a rate that is double the national average.

According to the program, MWSD's focus on Watershed Stewardship has produced dramatic water quality improvement through multiple stormwater management initiatives, elimination of illicit discharges, and process and operational improvements at the Sinking Creek Treatment Plant. Hydrologic and biological assessments of the West Fork Stones River have shown significant improvements in stream health resulting in the removal of segments of the river from the State's 303d impaired streams list.

In 2015, Murfreesboro's Sinking Creek Treatment Plant received the Beneficial Reuse of Effluent Water Award from the Kentucky-Tennessee Water Environment Association. Each year KY TN WEA recognizes one treatment plant from Tennessee and one from Kentucky that have demonstrated outstanding reuse of effluent water from the WWTP. Examples of Murfreesboro's Sinking Creek Treatment Plant's beneficial reuse water include irrigation of Old Fort Golf Course, VA Golf Course, Shoppes at Murfreesboro, Shoppes at Gateway Corner, Oaks Shopping Center, The Avenues, Siegel High School, Siegel Soccer Parks, and the Rutherford Chamber of Commerce.

"Water Reuse and Watershed Stewardship are areas in which we have enjoyed tangible rewards from the professional and courageous efforts of many who have served before us and carried on by existing staff," said Steve Tate, MWSD's Effective Utility Management (EUM) Coordinator. "We have measured improvements to our community surface water streams and are beneficially reusing a precious resource. The UOTF Today award is a nice recognition of these accomplishments."

The UOTF concept was first introduced in 2013 to guide utilities of all sizes toward smarter, more efficient operations and a progression to full resource recovery with enhanced productivity, sustainability, and resiliency. Since then many utilities have successfully implemented new and creative programs to address local wastewater technical and community challenges.

A list of the UOTF Today 2016 Recipients is attached along with the MWSD application.

For City News online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photos attached: MWSD recognized as Utility of the Future.

1. Patrick Dwyer, Plant Supervisor, and Jenny Strobel, Plant Operator, hold flag recognizing MWSD as Water Resources Utility of the Future Today.jpg.
2. *Reuse Water.jpg*
3. *UOTF Today 2016 Recipients.pdf*.
4. *UOTF Today Application June 2016.pdf*.