

Northshore Prepares for the Worst

By Commissioner Trudy Rolla



When President Bush signed the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act into law in 2002, water utilities entered into a new realm of emergency preparedness and response activities. This Act mandated new security requirements for all community water systems serving more than 3,300 people. Water utilities must:

- ◆ conduct a vulnerability assessment of their systems and facilities;
- ◆ certify to US EPA that the vulnerability assessment was completed by a date specified in the law;
- ◆ submit a paper copy of the assessment to US EPA;
- ◆ prepare or revise emergency response plans based on the results of the vulnerability assessment; and
- ◆ certify to US EPA that the emergency response plan has been developed or revised by six months after submission of the vulnerability assessment.

Under the Bioterrorism Act, both the vulnerability assessment and emergency response plan must focus on terrorist attacks or other *intentional* acts intended to disrupt the ability to deliver safe and reliable drinking water or otherwise present a significant health concern. This is different from the natural disaster response plan that Northshore recently updated. In conducting vulnerability assessments, utilities must examine and consider the risks and identify countermeasures for terrorist attacks or other malevolent acts involving components of the water system.

A team of Northshore employees and two commissioners conducted the vulnerability assessment last year. The group focused on the following tasks:

- ◆ characterizing the water system, including its mission and objectives;

- ◆ identifying and prioritizing adverse consequences to avoid;
- ◆ determining critical assets that might be subject to malevolent acts that could result in undesired consequences;
- ◆ assessing the likelihood of such malevolent acts by assigning probability to them;
- ◆ evaluating countermeasures; and
- ◆ analyzing current risks and developing a prioritized plan for risk reduction.

Northshore completed the vulnerability assessment and submitted it to US EPA at the end of 2003. Now we are revising the emergency response plan based on the results of the vulnerability assessment. We intend to certify to US EPA that we have completed the plan by June 30, 2004.

What else are we doing? We are working to instill a strong culture of security throughout every aspect of our operations. Everyone from the field crews, to front office staff, to meter readers, to the general manager is aware that security is an important part of the job.

What can you do? We rely on you to help us keep the water system secure. You can call Northshore or local law enforcement if you see non-utility vehicles or suspicious persons at the storage tanks or other utility locations. You can report unauthorized use of fire hydrants. You can store a three-day supply of drinking water in your home for use in the event of a disaster.

Northshore is proud to have completed this project to help ensure the continued reliability of the water system. The assessment showed that while we have a secure water system, some critical points need security reinforcement. We look forward to implementing the recommended security upgrades to our water system. Because of the security issues, information about this project is not subject to public disclosure. ■



Double Your Savings! Purchase a new high efficiency clothes washer from April 15 - July 15 and receive up to \$200 in rebates. High efficiency clothes washers lower your water and energy bills and they are gentler on fabrics than traditional washers. Visit www.savingwater.org for more information. ■

Meter Access

Please remember to keep those meter boxes clear and unobstructed! Have you checked your shrubs or groundcover lately? Do they need a trim? Your water meter must have at least a 2-foot radius around and 6 feet above; free of vegetation, debris, and otherwise shall not be made inaccessible.



If a footpath is necessary to access the meter, it needs to be at least 2-feet wide with a 6 foot clearance above, and be free of vegetation and debris.

If a meter is inaccessible due to debris, overgrown vegetation, parked vehicle located over the meter box or any other restriction, the property owner shall be assessed a special access charge in the amount of \$25.00 for each instance that the meter is determined to be inaccessible for attempted meter reading or repair. Please



remember that we read your meter every other month and want to keep

our meter readers safe and unscathed during the performance of their duties. ■

See What's Online!

Your account information can be accessed on line at www.nud.net. Have you updated your phone number with us lately? You will need to have provided an "Owner" phone number to the District in order to access the following information on-line. If you are a tenant, please check with the property owner to obtain the "Owner's" phone number.

To access your account from our website, simply go to **Customer Info** and select **Account Look-Up**. Enter your account number and the "Owner" phone number.

The following information is a sample of what you will see:

Account Status: Current Account

Site Address: 6830 NE 185th St

Parcel Number: 1337300090

Last Bill Date: 1/30/2004

Last Bill Amount: \$72.59

New Charges: \$0.00

New Payments and Credits: \$0.00

Current Balance: \$63.25

This account is eligible to receive a discount of \$3.16

If the last bill is paid before: 02/29/2004 ■



Northshore Utility District Board of Commissioners

Don Ellis
President

Trudy Rolla
Secretary

Bruce Gardiner
Commissioner

Margaret Wiggins
Commissioner

Kinnon Williams
Commissioner

Board of
Commissioner
Meetings
are held
first and third
Mondays
6 p.m.
at the
District Office

Prepare for Summer!

Remember last summer? Dry and hot! Now is the time to prepare your lawn and garden for the summer ahead. Healthy, strong plants have deeper roots and require less watering, which means lower water bills! Here are some preventive measures to help your lawn make it through summer:

- ◆ water *deeply* in evening or early morning (but not so much that the water runs off).
- ◆ mow often using a *sharp* blade (sharpen two or three times per season) and try not to remove more than one third of the grass blade height, leaving the clippings on the lawn as fertilizer.
- ◆ de-thatch, aerate, and avoid using herbicides and pesticides.



Once temperatures reach their highest levels for a week or more, raise the height of your mower blade, reduce traffic on the lawn and restrict watering to areas that are most important to you. Accept that the un-watered portion of your lawn will be brown until the fall rains begin.

If you are planning on putting in a new lawn, reseeding or over-seeding, spring and early fall is the time to do it. Although early fall is the best time of the year to plant grass seed, many people plant grass seed in the spring. The main disadvantage of spring seeding is that many weed seeds will sprout right along with the grass seeds. ■



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