



Aqua Pennsylvania Celebrates \$20 Million of Improvements to Its Largest Water Treatment Facility

BRYN MAWR, Pa., Oct 01, 2010 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. (Aqua) Chairman Nicholas DeBenedictis hosted local and state officials at the site of the company's largest water treatment facility-- Pickering serving customers in Delaware, Chester and Montgomery counties--to unveil nearly \$20 million of improvements recently made to the facility located in Schuylkill Township, Chester County.

"The level of investment we've made to upgrade this plant for the future demonstrates our commitment to public health, water quality and sustainability," said DeBenedictis. "Aqua is in the business of providing public drinking water and the investments we're making today will help to ensure that we can sustain the delivery of quality water and reliable service for decades to come."

Over the past two years, Aqua has invested approximately \$8 million for two new water intakes for the three source waters that feed the plant (the Pickering and Perkiomen creeks and the Schuylkill River); \$9 million for a new residuals handling facility to manage the waste that is left behind after the water is treated and prepared for delivery to customers' taps; \$1 million for a new floodwall to meet the 100-year storm standards; and \$500,000 to renovate an antiquated pump building into a new warehouse, shop, and receiving area.

The projects celebrated today are a crucial part of the company's annual capital program for southeastern Pennsylvania in which Aqua has invested an average of about \$150 million annually over the last five years. The company recently completed a 5-year, \$33 million capital improvement program at its Crum Creek water treatment plant in Delaware County and is about to undertake \$16 million of improvements at its Neshaminy water treatment plant in Bucks County in 2011.

DeBenedictis said, "The \$20 million of work we're here to see today is actually just the most recent phase of the more comprehensive \$62 million capital undertaking that began at this treatment facility in 2003."

In addition to the direct benefit of having upgraded treatment facilities, Aqua's capital investment at the Pickering facility--along with work the company recently completed at its Crum Creek water treatment plant in Delaware County and its Neshaminy water treatment plant in Bucks County--generated approximately 135 full-time equivalent jobs.

"The work we are doing is consistent with the types of improvements the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says are necessary to maintain a strong infrastructure and protect public health," said DeBenedictis referring to the EPA Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, which estimates a 20-year capital investment need of \$334.8 billion for public water systems, including costs for repairs and replacement of transmission pipes, storage and treatment equipment, and other projects required to protect public health and to ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

DeBenedictis also cited The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) report titled ***Failing Infrastructure Cannot Support A Healthy Economy***, which graded the nation's drinking water and wastewater systems a D- and estimated an annual shortfall of at least \$11 billion to replace aging facilities that are near the end of their useful life and to comply with existing and future federal water regulations.

Details of the recently completed projects are outlined below:

- **Two new intakes**--one for both the Schuylkill River and the Pickering Creek, and the other for the Perkiomen Creek-- filter large debris from the water prior to entering the treatment facility. Each of the new intakes will provide more efficient pumping capacity, using less energy than the old systems.
- **Residuals Project** - The use of belt filter presses has decreased the volume of residual material requiring disposal by reducing the amount of water in the waste material, which is dried in a lagoon before being hauled to a company-owned quarry. Three new belt filter presses literally press the waste material and squeeze water from the residual waste. It's the equivalent of increasing the capacity of the sludge lagoons because with less water in the residuals, there is additional capacity for solids. Previously, Pickering was hauling just 12 percent solids coming out of the waste lagoons. Since using the belt filter presses, they have about 26 percent solids coming out of the lagoons.
- **Floodwall** - Phase I involved constructing a reinforcement wall behind the existing wall. The new wall was built in 50-foot

long sections to avoid a failure should a flood have occurred during construction. Phase II involves raising the wall an additional 18 inches to meet the revised 100-year storm elevation.

- **Storeroom, Shop** - The building that was previously home to the West plant's high service pumps has been rehabilitated and now has a loading dock, storeroom to house necessary inventory, a shop with multiple work stations, and adequate space for the plant's utility staff to work and store equipment plus a dedicated lunchroom.

Aqua Pennsylvania serves approximately 1.4 million residents in 30 counties throughout Pennsylvania, including about 1 million in southeastern Pennsylvania.

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SOURCE: Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc.

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