As we head into fall and the City’s construction season wraps up, we thought it would be the perfect time to give you a progress report on Missoula Water’s successes under public ownership.

Since the City purchased Mountain Water in 2017, we have been reinvesting in our water system—from replacing worn out water pumps to replacing leaking mains from the 1910s—we’re putting all funds that previously would have gone to corporate profits back into our system.

We are taking advantage of advances in water meter and leak indication technology to streamline the way we take meter readings and how we identify areas of the system that are leaking. We are now able to provide services that weren’t possible before, such as our Water Line Loan Program for homeowners who need to replace their water line. Soon utility customers will receive one consolidated utility bill so that they can make just one monthly payment for their water, storm water, and wastewater charges.

All of us at Missoula Water look forward to continuing the great work we’ve started.

Your feedback is always appreciated, so feel free to reach out to me at bowmand@ci.missoula.mt.us.

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**Missoula Water—Successes under Public Ownership**

Since the City purchased the water utility in 2017, Missoula Water has been working diligently on the following:

**System Improvements**
- Replaced 19,301 lineal feet (about 3.66 miles) of water main, much of which dated back to 1914;
- Installed 6,628 lineal feet (about 1.26 miles) of water main extensions to under-served areas to improve fire protection;
- Installed 39 fire hydrants;
- Saved 1.3 million gallons per day of water leaking from system due to main leaks;
- Began using hydrant listening devices to identify leaking water mains;
- Worked with public and private partners to remove the Rattlesnake Dam, which was a potential safety hazard and maintenance burden to Missoula Water;
- Initiated the Water Line Loan Program for customers to receive low-interest loans for home water line repairs;
- Began replacing water meters with new ones that automatically report usage without staff driving through neighborhoods to collect that data; and
- Created the Water Facilities Master Plan to identify and prioritize water main leaks and plan for their repair.

**Collaboration**

We’re turning what previously would’ve been pavement patches over trenches over water main work into street repair and replacement projects. We work with other City departments to map out both short- and long-range plans for upcoming projects. We determine where our planned projects align with those of the City’s Street Maintenance Division, Wastewater and Storm Water utilities, Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Parks and Recreation Department, and others. We then work together on project timing and funding. This collaborative effort benefits citizens by:
- Making multiple infrastructure improvements with one larger project instead of multiple smaller ones,
- Digging up and repairing streets once means fewer traffic disruptions and delays and saves money, and
- Getting the most value out of each dollar spent by sharing costs, and we generally get better unit prices for construction and materials for larger projects.

**Challenges**

Although we’ve made great progress in improving the water system, we still have many challenges in meeting our goals of continuing to provide citizens with the quality drinking water they need while expanding our system to meet the demands of our growing city. We’ve been able to keep rates flat, but we still have to keep up with inflation and increases in materials costs as we continue to address the backlog of deferred maintenance. We also need to explore ways to fund the system expansion required for new developments.

If you have questions about any of our projects or other initiatives, please visit our website at [http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1983/Missoula-Water](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1983/Missoula-Water).

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**Combined Utility Billing Begins February 2021**

Beginning with your February 2021 bill, you will receive one convenient combined utility bill for all utility charges. It will include your monthly water, wastewater, and storm water charges. You will no longer receive a separate wastewater bill every six months (every three months for commercial customers). Some of the benefits to our utility customers include:
- One year of wastewater charges split into 12 monthly payments;
- Only one monthly bill to pay for all utility charges;
- Payment options available that were not possible for wastewater payments (direct debit, paperless billing); and
- Utility bill available to view online for water, wastewater, and storm water charges.

For more information on utility billing and payment options, visit [https://utilitybilling.ci.missoula.mt.us/](https://utilitybilling.ci.missoula.mt.us/). See [http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1256/Utilities](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1256/Utilities) for more information on combined billing.
Garden City Compost Accepting Leaves at No Charge

Don’t want to wait for City leaf pickup in your neighborhood? Bring your LEAF ONLY loads to us for FREE drop off!

NOTE: Loads mixed with tree trimmings or any other yard debris will be charged our regular drop off fees. Please, no garbage or pet waste.

Watch for details in December about how to recycle your Christmas trees with us!

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Saturday, until December 1
7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday – Friday, December 1 to March 1
Location: 1125 Clark Fork Lane, off Mullan Road
Phone: 406-552-6619
See our web page for more details at http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2089/Garden-City-Compost

The Storm Water Utility’s Upper Gharrett Project is coming to a successful conclusion. This project was initiated due to the high volume of both natural spring water and storm water running through the Upper Gharrett drainage, which created hazardous levels of excessive erosion throughout the drainage.

The project includes a storm water feature new to the City of Missoula called a StormGate. The StormGate is a bypass design situated at the top of the drainage that allows sediment to settle out while maintaining moderate overland flow AND redirecting excess storm water through the piped system below. This design protects surrounding private property and City infrastructure from flood-related damage, reduces the likelihood of future erosion, and maintains the habitat of the natural drainage.

The Storm Water Utility strives to provide more solutions like this project to increase safety, retain habitat, and improve our beautiful city’s water quality.

Street Maintenance Crews to Begin Leaf Collection in November

The City’s Street Maintenance crews will begin their regular leaf pick up in November and will continue until December 15. The schedule and instructions to residents are available at http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/504/Leaf-Collection. Please be aware that the schedule may change due to snow and other weather conditions.

Upper Gharrett Storm Water Project

Water Line Loan Program

Missoula Water is offering low-interest loans to water customers who need to repair or replace their service lines or internal plumbing, install a meter and meter pit, or connect to the municipal water system. For more information, visit Missoula Water’s website at www.ci.missoula.mt/1983/Missoula-Water or email us at wllp@ci.missoula.mt.us.

Contact Us

Please note that many Public Works divisions are operating with reduced staffing and many other employees are working remotely to comply COVID-19 directives. We are still here to serve you and are available Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Check our website for updates at http://ci.missoula.mt.us/403/Public-Works.

Garden City Compost—552-6619
Missoula City Cemetery—552-6070
Storm Water—552-6744
Street Maintenance—552-6360
Public Works Department Administration
Jeremy Keene, Public Works Director—552-6769
Dennis Bowman, Deputy Public Works Director—Utilities: 552-6700
Brian Hensel, Deputy Public Works Director—Streets: 552-6360

City Street Maintenance crews scoop up leaves and take them to Garden City Compost where they will be used to make compost.

Gharrett Drainage following StormGate installation.

A section of the StormGate structure.

Watch for details in December about how to recycle your Christmas trees with us!