



NEWS & NOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE MWRA ADVISORY BOARD
JUNE 2008

MWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE 4.45% RATE HIKE

At their June 25 meeting, the MWRA Board of Directors approved a 4.45% increase in rate revenue requirements for FY09. On average, this includes a 7.1% increase for wholesale water rates and a 3.2% increase for wholesale sewer rates. Each community's FY09 assessment can be accessed on the MWRA website:

<http://www.mwra.com/annual/rates/fy09final.pdf>

FY09 assessments reflect \$15 million in state-wide Debt Service Assistance. Currently, the Legislative Conference Committee members are debating between a Senate appropriation of \$10 million and a House appropriation of \$20 million. The amount of Debt Service Assistance in the final state budget will impact the FY09 assessments.

Debt Service Assistance is a state-wide program and helps many communities around the Commonwealth, both in and outside of the MWRA service area.

ADVISORY BOARD JOINS COALITION

The MWRA Advisory Board unanimously voted to join the Massachusetts Coalition of Water Resources Stewardship at the June meeting. This action comes after a recent meeting with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Robert Varney where the Advisory Board conveyed frustration with unfunded environmental mandates. The Coalition is a group of cities, towns and sewer authorities who share a common concern about how environmental regulatory agencies write and enforce National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The Coalition's goal is to restore the partnership that once existed between state and federal regulators and the regulated community. In a precautionary move, the Advisory Board engaged legal counsel in the event that the NPDES permit contains requirements that attempt to allow EPA to overstep its role over MWRA and, most importantly, communities. The last NPDES permit was issued seven years ago and the Advisory Board was forced to appeal the permit, successfully modifying many of the egregious conditions. Joseph Favaloro, Executive Director of the Advisory Board, said, "It is always our goal to attempt to work with EPA as a partner; however, if that fails, we are ready to take all necessary action to protect our cities, towns and ratepayers from an overreaching EPA."

MWRA HONORS STUDENTS IN CONTEST

The MWRA hosted the 27th Annual Poster & Writing Contest last month. The theme of the contest was Tap vs. Bottled Water and students wrote essays and created posters espousing the benefits of using public water from the tap. The contest is a part of MWRA's School Education Program and helps students make the connection between the natural environment and their faucet and drains. The winners were honored in a ceremony on Deer Island with their families, teachers, local officials and State Legislators in attendance. Attendees at the Award Ceremony participated in a blind taste test where MWRA water and bottled water were both sampled; of the 140 people who participated in the blind taste test, 105 either preferred the MWRA tap water or had no preference between tap and bottled water.

Joseph Favaloro, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, was the guest speaker at the Awards Ceremony. He challenged the audience to practice what the blind taste test demonstrated: "The next time you go out to dinner and the server asks if you would like Perrier or Evian, tell them Quabbin water please!"



Winners from Wakefield and Melrose attend the Award Ceremony on Deer Island last month. Front: Kyle Geaney, Matt Doherty, Christian Layton, Connor Mancini, **Back:** Steve Estes-Smargiassi, Representative Katherine Clark, Judy Alexander, Maggie Riordan, Claire Winter, Bryna Favis, and Claire Twist.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

JULY 16: MWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 10 AM - CHARLESTOWN
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY BOARD
DO NOT MEET IN JULY OR AUGUST

SAVE THE DATE!

THE ADVISORY BOARD FIELD TRIP WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 21, 2008!

If you have any questions regarding topics raised in this newsletter or any other MWRA issue, please contact:
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