

AFFORDABLE PROJECTS

By Steve Freeman

Hello readers. With spring finally upon us I would like to give a few examples of projects that systems can do to keep busy without breaking your budget bank. All small rural water systems have low tight budgets and usually limited manpower. Hopefully, this will give you some affordable ideas when you're not busy mowing, doing vehicle maintenance, tending to your wastewater plant or the many other responsibilities you all have.

- First, I'll start with beating a familiar drum. Locate, inspect, and clean out your curb and valve boxes. As I have mentioned in previous articles, these are good listening points for leak detection and needed for planned or emergency shutdowns. If possible, take pictures, get a GPS location, and identify their locations.
- Take a few minutes and visit the New York Warn website. www.nywarn.org. NYWARN is a free to join organization that helps to provide inter-municipal assistance in the event of disasters and can assist with disaster relief funding. It's well worth looking into and joining.
- Look over your inventory of supply parts, valves, hydrants, brass goods, repair parts and so-on. Compare what you have, to what's on your inventory list and update as needed. Try to keep at least a few emergency repair parts in stock. I know they are expensive, but so is an extended water outage and a lengthy trip to the supply house.
- Start or update your Emergency Response Plans (ERP), Vulnerability Assessment (VA) and your Standard Operation Procedure Plan (SOP). The New York State Department of Health has released new ERP and VA templates that every system must update to. These documents are available on our website www.nyruralwater.org under the resources/download tab. NYRWA can assist systems with completing the documents, just give us a call.
- Get out and paint some fire hydrants. A good friend of mine, a heavy equipment mechanic, once told me, "Paint won't make it operate any better", referring to machinery of course, but when I drive into a town and see freshly painted hydrants, it shows a sense of pride and commitment the operation specialist has for the system and community. I will be writing a future article on this topic, look for it.
- Lead Service Line Inventory. OH, did I just say bad words? Regardless, this is an EPA requirement and New York water systems have until October of 2024 to complete. This is not an affordable task, but at least get started on identifying the customer side of the service line. Use any method possible to your advantage to gain access to a home. Meter replacement, customer complaints/issues, get to the basement, identify the material, snap a picture on your phone of the line coming through the wall and keep a journal. This is a complicated topic and will be discussed more in the future. Here is a helpful link. <https://bit.ly/3I1lisj>

- Cross Connection Control Plan or Backflow Device Plan. Every water system must have this in place. In short, this is a plan to prevent any backflow or back siphonage from a customer's service line to the water main, possibly causing contamination. We can help, just give a call. Here is another useful link for your review. <https://on.ny.gov/3JIBJvY>
- Flush those hydrants. Twice a year is best, but once a year is better than none. This is needed in all water systems for reasons discussed in a previous article. Do your best to get it done.
- Sample Plan. By now you should have received your annual water sampling requirements from your local health department office. Review and put together a sampling schedule. Contact your lab and make sure you get the correct sample bottles for the tests required. Make sure the samples are collected and submitted properly by the required dates to avoid any violations from the health department.

Hopefully, this list will provide you with a reminder of important tasks to complete. If you would like assistance with any of the above tasks or something different, please feel free to reach out to myself or any of our talented field personnel. I look forward to seeing everyone at our 44th Annual Technical Training Workshop & Exhibition being held at the Lake Placid Conference Center May 22 - 24, 2023 in Lake Placid, NY. Small tasks are as important as large ones to continue to provide Quality on Tap! 💧💧💧

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