



## Southwest Delaware County Municipal Authority

### NEWS FROM SWDCMA

The Board of Directors and the staff at the Southwest Delaware County Municipal Authority (SWDCMA) have been working diligently to accomplish a number of projects that will ultimately benefit you, our customers.

The largest task by far has been the decision to transition treatment service to Delcora. This decision was made after a study was done to determine whether the existing SWDCMA treatment facility should be upgraded to meet the requirements of our regulating agencies, or if it would be a more fiscally sound decision to convey our flow for treatment service at Delcora.

So, after more than a year of negotiations, the Southwest Delaware County Municipal Authority's Board of Directors unanimously approved a Global Agreement between Middletown Township Sewer Authority, Southwest Delaware County Municipal Authority and Aston Township at the February 2013 meeting. The approval of this global agreement moves the plan to convey our waste water flows to Delcora for treatment closer to completion. By entering into the Global Agreement with Middletown Township Sewer Authority and deciding to transition our waste water flows to Delcora for treatment by the end of 2014, we will be able to provide our customers the lowest possible cost of waste water service, both short term and into the future. However, while every effort is being made to control rates, the financial benefit of this transition will not be realized immediately, as we must first retire our long-term debt.

Starting in 2013 and continuing through 2014, construction of the new pumping station is taking place on the grounds of SWDCMA. By the end of 2014, wastewater flows will be transferred to Delcora for treatment. In anticipation of this transition, we would like to take this opportunity to provide information to our customers which will help control additional unnecessary treatment costs when this transition is completed. All flow from SWDCMA will be metered and the treatment cost from Delcora for this flow will be billed to SWDCMA. This treatment cost will include the treatment of I & I.

Inflow and infiltration (I & I) is the clean water that enters the collection system, mixes with the sewage in the sanitary sewer and is then treated at the waste water treatment plant. The greatest cost saving measure that our customers can provide is the removal of inflow and infiltration (I & I) from our sanitary sewer collection system.

- Inflow is storm water that enters into sanitary sewer systems at points of direct connection to the systems. Various sources contribute to the inflow, including footing/foundation drains, roof drains or leaders, downspouts, drains from window wells, outdoor basement stairwells, drains from driveways, groundwater/basement sump pumps, and even streams. These sources are typically improperly or illegally connected to sanitary sewer systems, via either direct connections or discharge into sinks or tubs that are directly connected to the sewer system. An improper connection lets water from sources other than sanitary fixtures and drains to enter the sanitary sewer system. That water should be entering the storm water sewer system or allowed to soak into the ground without entering the sanitary sewer system.
- Infiltration is groundwater that enters sanitary sewer systems through cracks and/or leaks in the sanitary sewer pipes, including sewer laterals.

Since your treatment rates will be based in part on the total gallons treated when we transition to Delcora, it is crucial that we work now to remove I & I from our collection system. Some of the ways in which we can accomplish this are:

1 – Disconnect Sump Pumps and Rain Gutter Downspouts from Sanitary Sewer: the discharge from sump pumps and downspouts should not enter the sanitary sewer system as these connections are illegal, per the Aston Township Plumbing Code. If your sump pump or downspouts currently discharge into the sanitary sewer system, you should locate and remove these connections so that they are re-routed to the nearest storm water drain.

2 – Repair Damaged/Buried Sewer Vents/Cleanouts: damaged or buried sewer vents/cleanouts are sources of rainwater entering the sanitary sewer and can also be hazardous to pedestrians and pets. If your sewer vent/cleanout is damaged or buried, you should locate and replace with the proper above-grade style vent cap, available at your local hardware store.

3 – Lateral Maintenance: your sewer lateral is the pipe that runs from your home to the sewer main in the street. The maintenance of the lateral is the responsibility of the homeowner. Throughout time, laterals can develop cracks and loose pipe joints which allow rainwater into the sewer system. In addition, tree roots can enter through these cracks and grow inside the lateral resulting in sluggish drainage performance, blockages and backups. If you experience any of these situations, please contact SWDCMA before calling a plumber. Our technicians are available 24/7 and will respond to determine if the problem is in your lateral or in our main. If the problem is in your lateral and results in you contacting a plumber to clear roots, please contact SWDCMA after the lateral has been cleaned so that we can be sure the cleared blockage doesn't travel through our main resulting in a blockage further down in our system.

Another large task that was undertaken by the Authority Board of Directors and staff is the collection of delinquent accounts. In late 2009, the Authority began using a collection agency to assist with the process of collecting its most severe delinquent accounts. In late 2010, the Authority implemented Delinquent and Final Notices that have been sent for each quarterly billing cycle. In late 2011, the Authority began working with the servicing water companies to disconnect delinquent accounts that failed to respond to all previous attempts to enter into an agreed upon payment arrangement for their unpaid balances. To date, the delinquent account balances have been reduced by over \$1 million dollars; however, we continue to carry nearly \$2 million dollars in past due account balances.

If you are unable to pay your account in full by the due date shown on your quarterly statement, please contact our office to enter into a payment plan. It is most beneficial to you to be proactive and contact our office prior to receiving collection or disconnection notices, as each of these actions incurs additional costs and fees to your account.

For your convenience, the Authority accepts payments at our office, in the mail or through our website, [www.swdelcoma.org](http://www.swdelcoma.org). For a small convenience fee, online payments can be made using:

- Debit Card
- Credit Card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express and Discover)
- E-Check (Checks-by-Web)

In addition, there are a number of ongoing projects that the Authority continues to work with the cooperation of the Aston Township Commissioners, all of which will be beneficial to our ratepayers.

We will continue to provide updates to our customers as this transition progresses. We appreciate your support and are available to answer your questions at:

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