

## WDMWW Launches New Website: User-Friendly, Device-Versatile

Over the past five years, West Des Moines Water Works customers have increasingly relied on the utility's website for water news, bill viewing, bill paying and other information. But many of these website visits emanate from devices other than desktop computers. Mobile phones and tablets, such as iPads, are quickly supplanting the use of desktops and laptops, and WDMWW's site was not designed to accommodate the rise in mobile traffic.

To meet changing customer preferences, WDMWW launched a new website in May with a fresh, colorful design, improved navigation and updated technology and features.

"Our new site uses responsive design, which automatically adapts to whatever device the customer is using and makes it easier to access and complete transactions from phones and portable devices as well as desktop computers," says Diana Wilson, general manager of the Water Works. "Our research shows us that more people want to handle their accounts on the web, and they want the site to be easy to use from a smartphone, tablet or iPad."

The site streamlines billing and payments with features that customers regularly want and use including:

- E-Check Payments (Free!)
- AUTO-PAY (Free!)
- Online Bill Delivery
- Bill Review and Payment History
- Water Usage History
- Credit Card Payment
- Flex Pay

Secure login and other security measures protect customer information.

"It's never been easier to sign up for paperless billing and payments," notes Josh Heggen, business relations manager. "We hope the new design and easy-to-use login convinces more customers to go paperless."

The new design and layout also provides businesses and developers straightforward access to construction specifications, backflow prevention requirements and procedures for connecting to water mains.

Check out the many features of the new website at [www.wdmww.com](http://www.wdmww.com).

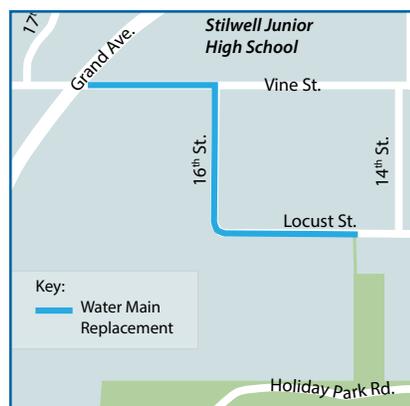


## 2015 Construction Projects Improve Water Delivery, Capacity

Three decades ago, the board of trustees of West Des Moines Water Works decided to allocate funds annually to update aging water distribution mains. Since that time more than 27 miles of water mains have been replaced to the benefit of WDMWW customers.

The 2015 projects are well underway with the replacement completed in one residential area.

"This year's projects achieve several objectives that benefit customers," says William Mabu, engineering project



The 2015 Water Main Replacement Project includes the area marked in blue. The new pipe replaces sections that have experienced breaks in the past.

manager. "In Pheasant Ridge, for example, a two-inch water main that was once part of a rural water subdivision has been replaced with an eight-inch main."

The main replacement in Pheasant Ridge includes the addition of several public fire hydrants, which will increase fire protection in the neighborhood.

In addition, WDMWW identified an area near Stillwill Junior High School for water main

"Water Mains" continued on Page

# DID YOU KNOW



The most important source for identifying problems with water mains, meters, taps, fire hydrants and other components is YOU, the customer. Please contact the Water Works if you notice changes in water pressure, see water running down the street, experience standing water in your yard or notice an unexpected change in your water bill.

## Who Owns What? Who Is Responsible When That Breaks?

Clarification on ownership and responsibility are the most frequently asked questions received by Water Works customer service associates.

Most people know that West Des Moines Water Works bears responsibility for the water mains transporting the water to homes and businesses. What most are surprised to learn is that those responsibilities largely end at the customer's connection to the water main.

"Individual property owners are responsible for all the plumbing on their property as well as service pipes and valves including the connection to the water main," explains Diana Wilson, general manager. "This responsibility starts at the water main tap and includes everything up to and throughout the house or building. The only exceptions are the water meter and reading device. Those are owned by the Water Works."

The following outlines the components of the water distribution system and who is responsible for repairs.

### Water Mains

More than 240 miles of underground water mains carry water from the treatment plant to customers throughout the city of West Des Moines. Mains are usually located underground in the public right-of-way at or near the street. Water Works maintains and repairs all public mains in the public right-of-way.

### Water Meters

To obtain water service, a property must have a water meter and a remote meter reading device. The meter keeps track of each location's water usage and the monitoring device sends readings of that usage to Water Works headquarters.

"Property owners must protect their water meter from damage," Wilson says. "But most repairs to water meters and the respective reading devices are the responsibility of the Water Works."

### Fire Hydrants

The network of 2,000-plus fire hydrants across the city provides essential protection in the

event of fire. Repairs and maintenance of utility-owned fire hydrants are the responsibility of the Water Works. Private hydrants are the responsibility of the property owner.

### The Service Pipe

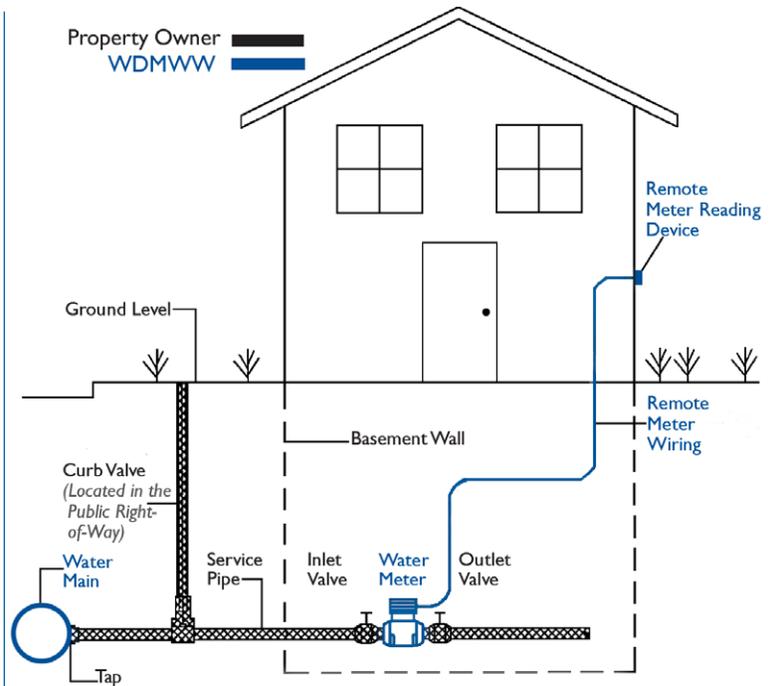
The service pipe carries water from the main to the dwelling. This is the responsibility of the property owner.

### The Tap

The tap connects the service pipe into the water main at or near the street. It is the responsibility of the property owner to repair the tap when necessary.

### Curb Valve/Stop Box (inlet or outlet valves)

The curb valve – also known as the stop box – is the valve that allows water into the service pipe from the water main. Individual property owners maintain responsibility for repairs to this valve as well as the inlet and outlet valves on either side of the water meter.



## Water Main Replacements in 2015 Enhance Safety, Water Pressure

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replacement. A 10-inch main, which experienced three breaks in the past year, is being replaced with a 12-inch main, consistent with the pipes on either end.

"The upgraded main will eliminate the bottleneck and reduce the propensity for breakage," Mabuce adds. "The pipe work is nearly complete. The restoration of the site should be done around the time school starts."



Crews are installing water mains, such as the ones pictured above, as part of the WDMWW's 2015 distribution and development projects.

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