

NEW LEADER

Christina Murphy Assumes the Helm as New GM

The Board of Trustees of West Des Moines Water Works recently welcomed **Christina Murphy** as the utility's new general manager.

"As we conducted a national search, we looked for a candidate with significant knowledge and experience in engineering, planning, project management, resource development and utility operations," said **Brian Rickert**, chair of the Board of Trustees. "Christina checked all of those boxes and more."

In addition to an impressive resume of experience, Murphy, 39, is a licensed P.E. (Professional Engineer), the highest standard for achievement and competency in the engineering profession.

ATTRACTED TO WEST DES MOINES VIBRANCY

"My attraction to this position is two-fold: First, West Des Moines is a vibrant and growing city," Murphy opined. "Second, the Water Works finds itself at a compelling crossroads: In the face of

rising water demand across the metro, WDMWW is uniquely positioned to develop new water sources, while identifying opportunities for collaboration with its regional neighbors to ensure and secure capacity for the future."

PREPARED FOR THE CHALLENGE

Murphy's experience as assistant director for the City of Ames Water & Pollution Control Department was great preparation for leading the Water Works as it embarks on strategic initiatives for supply and key water infrastructure projects.

While in Ames, she implemented the Capital Improvements Plan for a state-of-the-art 15-million-gallon-per-day (MGD) water treatment plant. In addition to updating the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the city, she led the development and integration of a new well field and the installation of two miles of new raw water pipelines. She also proffered study projects on nutrient reduction and bio-solid residuals.

"Water drives growth and prosperity, and the decisions we make today are vital to ensuring that we have the resources and infrastructure to serve our customers 50 years from now," Rickert explained. "Christina with her vast knowledge of water and utility management is ready to hit the ground running."

A native of St. Charles, Missouri, Murphy earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in biological engineering from the University of Missouri at Columbia. She also worked for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and assisted in the recovery of Hurricane Katrina by assessing damage to the drainage systems and preparing cost estimates for emergency repairs.

Murphy's extensive experience also includes a stint as a lecturer at Purdue University as well as working in private practice as senior engineer.



Christina Murphy

DID
YOU
KNOW
?

Next time you clean your fish aquarium, consider throwing the used water in your garden. The fish waste and decayed food particles contain bacteria and trace nutrients that act as a natural fertilizer for plants and vegetables.

Source: David Galloway

NEW DIGS

WDM Water Works Breaks Ground on New Building

The ground is broken, the site is staked and construction is ready to go as soon as the spring rains subside on West Des Moines Water Works' new home. Located adjacent to the A.C. Ward Municipal Water Treatment Plant, the new single-story, 6,500-square-foot office building is expected to be completed in early 2020.

create a utility campus that encompasses water treatment and distribution operations, business functions and professional and staff offices."

The Water Works had occupied a 4,850-square-foot condo suite in City Hall for more than 15 years. About a year ago, the City requested that Water Works vacate its space in City Hall. The

staff and trustees negotiated with the City to sell its quarters and move to new permanent space as soon as possible.

In the meantime, WDMWW business operations and staff moved to A.C. Ward, commandeering the boardroom and other spaces for makeshift offices.

"We believe this is the best long-term solution for our ratepayers and staff. We gain certain synergies that we didn't have when half our staff was a 10-minute car ride away," said Brian Rickert, chair of the WDMWW Board of Trustees.

Until the new building is finished, WDMWW Trustee meetings will continue to be held at Fire Station No. 17 at 1401 Railroad Ave.

Water Works awarded the construction contract to Edge Commercial LLC, which bid \$1.8 million for the project.



WDMWW's new 6,500-square-foot administrative building features a customer service counter, a boardroom, conference rooms, offices and storage.

"The Board of Trustees charged us to conduct a thorough study of possible options, including leasing or buying existing space and constructing new," explained Bill Mabuice, WDMWW engineering project manager. "By choosing this site, which the Water Works already owns, we



The new Water Works building is being constructed at the site of a former storage building that was razed in March. Site work started in late April and was temporarily delayed by heavy May rains.

Heavy Rains and Flooding Have NOT Affected Drinking Water Quality in West Des Moines or the Metro Area

Hheavy rains this spring have dredged up memories of the floods of 1993. West Des Moines received 18 inches in the first five months of this year with 9.5 inches falling in May.

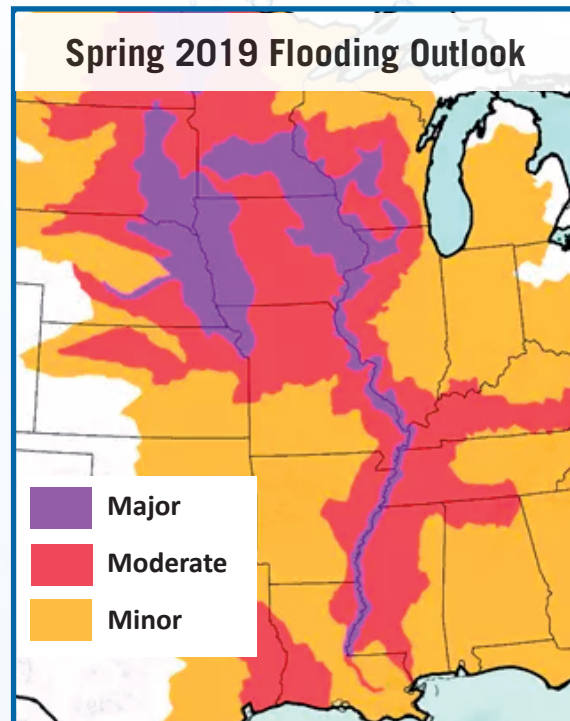
In spite of widespread damage, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources says that the floods on Iowa's eastern and western borders have not affected municipal water treatment plants, drinking water quality or availability in Central Iowa.

"Fortunately, this is very different from 1993. Our wells have come under no threat whatsoever," said **Mitch Pinkerton**, water production manager for West Des Moines Water Works. "It's business as usual other than the fact that the rains have curtailed our water sales. People don't buy what Mother Nature gives them for free."

It was a very different story 25 years ago, when staff and volunteers worked through the night filling and stacking sandbags to protect the A.C. Ward Municipal Treatment Plant from encroaching flood waters. The effort saved the plant, but Water Works did lose its administrative offices in Valley Junction.

Then as now, West Des Moines Water Works treats source water from a combination of deep and shallow wells. In contrast to surface water (river and streams), these underground sources are far less vulnerable to excessive precipitation and flooding. That's why in 1993 WDMWW remained operational throughout the flood crisis.

The map below, compiled by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, shows that in the spring of 2019, Central Iowa has faced moderate flood risk. Meanwhile, the east and west coasts of the state have experienced major flooding exacerbated by snow melt and rains to the north. The Missouri and Mississippi rivers have broken through levees, precipitating destruction of property, major road closings, flooded cropland and loss of life. In early June, the National Weather Service warned of continued flooding on the Mississippi affectionately known as the Big Muddy.



DID
YOU
KNOW



The 100-year flood waters storming down the Missouri and Mississippi rivers threaten property as well as life and limb. According to the IDNR, drowning still represents a bigger risk to human life during a flood than drinking tainted water.

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PEOPLE NEWS

Heggen Receives 'Patriot Award' from Dept. of Defense

Gilbert Puente has two careers: one as meter technician at West Des Moines Water Works and the other as a Petty Officer First Class in the United States Navy Reserve.

Realizing that he couldn't do the latter without the help, flexibility and support of his WDMWW supervisor, Puente wanted to say thank you. He detailed his appreciation by nominating **Josh Heggen**, business manager of West Des Moines Water Works, for the **Patriot Award**.

The Patriot Award is given by the Department of Defense through Iowa Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). It recognizes the extra efforts individual supervisors do to provide support to "citizen warriors," including such measures as flexible scheduling, granting leaves of absence, continued salaries and benefits and help with families.

"My supervisor, Josh [Heggen], has been amazingly supportive of my military career," noted

Puente, who has worked for the Water Works for four years. "I realize that not everyone has this level of encouragement from their bosses for their military exercises. Josh is great about it, and I couldn't do what I do without his support."

Heggen interjected that Puente's military leave entails trips to "some interesting places, even though we're not always sure where he is when he leaves on training."

Mark Hennessey, Iowa ESGR State Chair, noted that "... Supportive supervisors are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the U.S. National Guard and Reserve units."

"This award says everything about our employees," said Brian Rickert, chair of the WDMWW Board of Trustees. "Josh represents the Water Works with the utmost integrity when he goes the extra mile to support employees such as Gilbert who are willing to put their lives on the line to protect our community and our nation."



Iowa Chair of ESGR, Mark Hennessey; Gilbert Puente, WDMWW; Josh Heggen, WDMWW; Lisa Whitmarsh Peterson, ESGR Employer Support and LCDR Shawna Feldman (Puente's commander) honored Heggen at the April 2019 Board of Trustees meeting.



Mullenbach Tapped as New Finance Manager for WDMWW

Pat Mullenbach joined the Water Works in April as Treasurer and Finance Manager. She replaced the now retired Paula Meyer.

Mullenbach brings an extensive background in finance and accounting, most recently serving as the chief financial officer for Goodwill

Industries of Central Iowa. She also worked for the State of Iowa as CFO for the Department of Administrative Services.

She holds a degree in accounting from Simpson College as well as a master's degree in business leadership from William Penn University.

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