

# COLLABORATION

## Metro Communities Continue Working Together on the Establishment a Regional Water Production Collaborative

**W**est Des Moines Water Works continues to work with a dozen other metro utilities and communities on creating a comprehensive collaborative regional model for water production. The effort involves the following:

<b>Altoona</b>	<b>Ankeny</b>
<b>Bondurant</b>	<b>Clive</b>
<b>Des Moines Water Works</b>	<b>Grimes</b>
<b>Johnston</b>	<b>Norwalk</b>
<b>Polk City</b>	<b>Urbandale Water Utility</b>
<b>Waukee</b>	<b>Xenia Rural Water</b>

“A dozen entities coming together for common purposes doesn’t happen every day,” says Christina Murphy, general manager of WDMWW. “This group of potentially 13 founding entities are making substantive progress toward the establishment of a regional water production entity that will ensure the availability of quality water to independent utilities and water departments across the metro.”

This effort is neither new nor unusual. Water utilities across the country are finding ways to work together on the most pressing water issues facing communities.

Earlier this year, the communities and utilities listed above agreed to work on cooperative arrange-

ments, known as Chapter 28E/F agreements that would establish Central Iowa Water Works to be owned by the founding members. The first draft of the document was circulated Feb. 22, 2022, for comments from the founding group. In addition to general comments, WDMWW and the Urbandale Water Utility have joined together to conduct a comprehensive legal review with outside counsel. The legal “redline” of the draft is now being circulated for additional comments, changes and actions.

“A wide-ranging legal review is essential to moving forward, and while it takes time, it also protects the interests of everyone in the metro area who buys, drinks and uses water,” said Scott Brennan, chairman of the WDMWW Board of Trustees. “We told our ratepayers from the very beginning that this process would be painstakingly thorough, and we will not vote until it’s completed.”

Over the next several months, Central Iowa Water Works will be on the agenda of the regularly scheduled WDMWW board meetings and additional open meetings will be scheduled to keep the public informed.

*“Water Collaboration” continued on Page 2*



# DID YOU KNOW



## Fairly Hydrated

August is synonymous with the Iowa State Fair.

About 1.17 million attend the Fair during the hottest days of summer. Depending on how hot it gets, Fair go'ers drink about 3½ cups of water per hour, and the average stay per person is 7½ hours.

This translates into 30.7 million cups of water (and other liquid) being consumed at the 11-day State Fair.



Sources:  
Harvard Health Publishing  
Mindy Williamson, Marketing  
Iowa State Fair

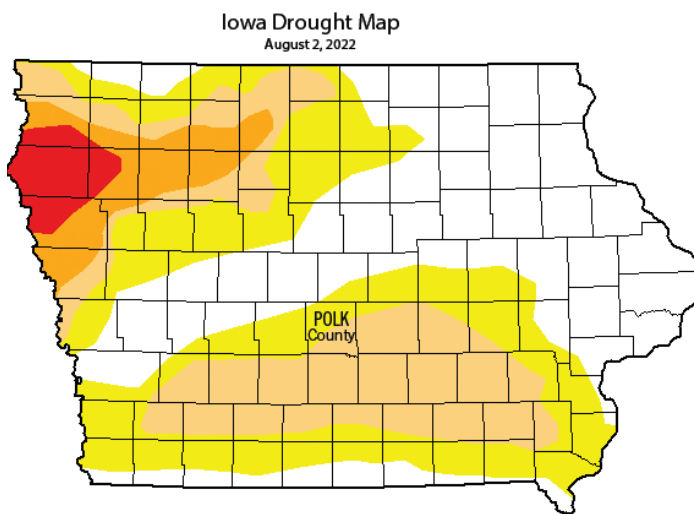
## August Triple Digits Turn Up Drought Conditions in 2022

Over the past decade, drought conditions have increasingly become a fact of life in Central Iowa. But from November of 2021 through the first half of 2022 Polk County including West Des Moines received a respite from drought conditions, and it hasn't even been normally dry since April thanks to spring rains.

That hiatus ended when August came to town with its triple digit temps and grueling heat index.

Iowa State Climatologist Justin Glisan predicted that hotter temperatures and the lack of rain would conspire to trigger abnormally dry (yellow) and possibly drought conditions. The map below shows that West Des Moines is either abnormally dry or moderate drought (pale orange.)

Glisan added that while rainfall this year surpasses 2021, the accumulated precipitation is at least 5 inches below normal. So far in 2022, daily water usage remains well below the WDMWW record of 15.83 million gallons per day.



### USE WATER WISELY

"We have plenty of water available for watering and recreation," said Christina Murphy, general manager. "Still, it's prudent and good practice to continue to adhere to the 'Use Water Wisely' recommendations introduced across the metro area in 2020."

Using water wisely includes watering and irrigating every other day and avoiding waste such as watering impervious surfaces—sidewalks, driveways and streets. When possible water before 9 a.m. or after 5 p.m.

## Negotiations Continue on Establishing Water Production Utility

*"Water Collaboration" continued from page 1*

The driving force behind Central Iowa Water Works is the shared need across metro communities for quality drinking water and additional source water development to accommodate growth. The members will buy all of their water from Central Iowa Water Works, while continuing to operate their individual water utilities independently. This includes customer service, managing infrastructure and setting community water rates. In addition, WDMWW will contract with Central Iowa Water Works to operate the A.C. Ward Municipal Plant.

"We are not going to run out of water tomorrow, but every community involved in this process needs more water in the future than what we have access to today," Murphy explains. "We believe that working collaboratively on treatment and wholesale pricing allows us to bring new source water online more efficiently, especially when compared with each entity going it alone."

WDM Water Works has approximately 19 million gallons per day of capacity between treated (10 mgd) and contracted purchased water ((9 mgd)

from Des Moines. While average daily use varies with the seasons, peak usage typically occurs in June, July and August. The utility's record daily usage is 15.83 mgd in July 2012.

"West Des Moines has the good fortune of being one of the fastest growing communities in Iowa. Safe, reliable drinking water is key to that economic pace and serving the health needs of our community," assures Murphy.

### NEXT STEPS

- The "red-lined" legal review of the 28E/F was distributed to founding organizations.
- Changes will be discussed and negotiated.
- Once the parties agree, a final draft will be prepared.
- The individual entities will individually determine whether to move forward.
- The board-governed utilities will hold formal votes of their respective boards of trustees.
- If the vast majority agree, Central Iowa Water Works will be established.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

**W**ater towers play an essential role in the delivery of water from the plant to homes and businesses throughout West Des Moines. Though most important water infrastructure (mains, pipes, wells) lies buried beneath the surface, water towers stand 150 feet tall or more, acting as major landmarks in the communities they serve.

WDMWW owns six water towers with storage capacities ranging from 500,000 gallons for the tower on 17th Street to 2.5 million gallons at the 98th Street structure. The latter is just shy of four Olympic-size swimming pools.

These fascinating structures involve feats of physics and engineering to hoist a 400,000 pound bowl 150 feet in the air and fill it with 2 million gallons of water. Yet, they easily slip into the background of their surroundings. Have you ever noticed, for example, the tower by Home Depot on University?

In 2022, this 2-million-gallon tower received a face-lift, removing old paint and using a special

coating process by Tnemec Company. The new coating, which was used inside the bowl as well as the exterior, will last about 20 years, twice the life of conventional paint. The same coatings will be used on the new tower's steel bowl.



*The newest WDMWW tower on Southeast Adams Street is still in process, and construction is slightly ahead of schedule with the 2-million-gallon bowl to be complete in December 2022. The tower will serve Pressure District 4.*



## DID YOU KNOW



### Nothing New

The metro has a history of collaborating on water issues. WDMWW frequently works with other utilities and cities to deliver water services and infrastructure that support growth, business development and recreation. This includes sharing the 98th Street water tower with Clive and Waukee as well as the joint booster station that also serves Norwalk and Cumming.

The recently  
announced EPA  
health advisory  
levels for PFAS  
are a fraction  
of what current  
testing methods  
can detect.

## WDMWW Joins 70+ Utilities in Multi-State Litigation

### *New EPA rules tighten advisories on PFAS contamination*

The Board of Trustees of West Des Moines Water Works has voted unanimously to contract with legal counsel to join a multi-district litigation on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in drinking water. More than 70 other water utilities have joined the action with the objective of receiving settlements for remediating and mitigating PFAS substances in drinking water.

“We are working diligently to ensure that our finished water continues to be safe and compliant,” said Christina Murphy, general manager of WDMWW. “The EPA’s recently announced health advisories with much lower detectable thresholds mean that even a trace amount of PFAS is too much when it comes to protecting our drinking water. We anticipate that addressing PFAS will be challenging, protracted and costly. The trustees believe we need to avail ourselves of any and all resources that will help address the effects to our drinking water infrastructure, including legal action.”

WDMWW signed a legal services agreement with the firms Driscoll Firm LLC; Kennedy & Madonna, LLP; SL Environmental Law Group PC; Douglas & London, PC; Levin, Papantonio, Rafferty, Proctor, Buchanan, O’Brien, Barr, Mougey, PA; Taft Stettinius & Hollister, LLP; and Kelley Drye & Warren, LLP. This attorney group specializes in this area and has achieved settlements in several jurisdictions. The firms are working on a contingency basis, so the Water Works pays no out-of-pocket fees.

The PFAS category contains several hundred compounds, four of which now carry an EPA health advisory: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA); perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS); hexafluoropropylene oxide (HFPO or also known as GenX); and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS).

In June 2022 Environmental Protection Agency released new interim **Health Advisories** (HAs) that are much more strict than previous guidelines

addressing PFAS. The EPA states that the new advisory levels “indicate that some negative health effects may occur with concentrations of PFOA or PFOS in water that are near zero.” As a result, EPA significantly lowered the PFAS levels that trigger HAs from 70 ppt to 0.004 ppt for PFOS; and from 70 ppt to 0.02 ppt for PFOA.

PFAS emanate from manmade chemicals used in a variety of manufacturing applications and products including carpet, waterproofed clothing, cookware coatings such as Teflon, fire-fighting foam and food packaging, to name a few. Moreover, these substances are persistent, meaning they do not degrade or break down naturally in the environment. PFAS testing has only recently become more precise with the ability to detect levels of 1.9 ppt.

In WDMWW finished water produced at the A.C. Ward Municipal Water Treatment Plant, the presence of PFOA and PFOS were detected at 2.9 ppt (parts per trillion) and 2.4 ppt, respectively, in late 2021—well below the original health advisory level of 70 ppt. One particular WDMWW shallow well reported higher numbers than the others, and WDMWW has limited its use. Most recent testing has shown no detectable amounts of these compounds, although it is important to note that current detection limits are limited to 1.9 ppt.

According to EPA ([epa.gov/pfas/epa-actions-address-pfas](https://www.epa.gov/pfas/epa-actions-address-pfas)), much more needs to be learned about PFAS, and the agency is working to address critical issues:

- **Effective detection and measurement of PFAS in the air, water, soil, and fish and wildlife**
- **The frequency of PFAS exposure to humans**
- **The level of harm PFAS can and is causing humans and the environment**
- **Safe methods for the removal of PFAS from source water**
- **The disposal and management of PFAS**

PFAS Compound	Previous EPA Health Advisory (in parts per trillion)	WDMWW Finished Water (most recent test)	Interim EPA Health Advisory (in parts per trillion)
PFOA	70 ppt (with PFOS)	Non-detectable*	.0004 ppt
PFOS	70 ppt (with PFOA)	Non-detectable*	.02 ppt
Gen X	NA	Non-detectable*	.02 ppt
PFBS	NA	Non-detectable	2,000 ppt

\* Existing testing methods cannot detect lower than 1.9 ppt