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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

NewsRelease

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Drinking Water Week Underscores the Value of Water Infrastructure

(DENVER, CO) – As Drinking Water Week continues, the American Water Works Association joins communities across North America in recognizing the value of critical water infrastructure and the growing need to repair and replace aging pipes.

Much of our drinking water infrastructure was constructed between 80 and 100 years ago. As a result, thousands of miles of underground water and sewer lines are reaching the end of their functional lifespan and are in need of replacement. An AWWA study found the cost of replacing and repairing aging pipes will top \$250 billion over the next 20 years.

“North America’s infrastructure has reached a turning point, and while the cost of repairing and replacing the aging pipes is immense, the cost of inaction could be immeasurable,” said Gary Zimmerman, AWWA executive director. “Drinking Water Week is the perfect time to bring the issue of buried water infrastructure above ground and remember the value of the water it delivers.”

In addition to the effects of an aging system, there are new demands placed on infrastructure as population areas grow and expand into arid climates, new regulations to improve public health are implemented, and the post 9/11 era dictates a greater level of protection for our water facilities and distribution networks.

“We are all stewards of the magnificent drinking water system built largely by past generations and passed on to us,” said Zimmerman. “And it is now our responsibility to ensure a safe and reliable water supply for future generations to enjoy.”

About Drinking Water Week

A safe, reliable water supply is critical to the success of any community. It creates jobs, attracts industry and investment, and provides for the health and welfare of citizens in ways ranging from disease prevention to fire suppression. We often take water supply for granted until it is threatened, either by drought, water main breaks, or some other event. For more than 30 years, the American Water Works Association and its members have celebrated Drinking Water Week – a unique opportunity for both water professionals and the communities they serve to join together to recognize the vital role water plays in our daily lives.

Established in 1881, AWWA is the oldest and largest nonprofit, scientific and educational organization dedicated to safe water in North America. AWWA has more than 60,000 members worldwide and its 4,600 utility members serve 80 percent of the U.S. population.

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AWWA is the authoritative resource for knowledge, information, and advocacy to improve the quality and supply of water in North America and beyond. AWWA is the largest organization of water professionals in the world. AWWA advances public health, safety and welfare by uniting the efforts of the full spectrum of the entire water community. Through our collective strength we become better stewards of water for the greatest good of the people and the environment.