

## There Is No “New” Water

Maryana Spyropoulos, President of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (“**MWRD**”), pointed this out to a sold out “Lunch & Learn with the League” fundraiser sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Cook County on August 8, 2017. All the water we have is simply part of the cycle of absorption, discharge, evaporation, and precipitation. So it makes sense, President Spyropoulos explained, that we treat the water we have carefully.

Some facts about the MWRD:

- The district encompasses 92% of the land in Cook County
- It is governed by a 9-member Board elected district-wide for staggered 6-year terms
- Its 2017 budget is **\$1.14 Billion**
- Its **mission** is to
  - Protect the health and safety of the public within the district
  - Protect the quality of the water supply source (Lake Michigan)
  - Improve the quality of water in water sources in the district
  - Protect businesses and homes from flood damage, and
  - Manage water as a vital resource for the district
- Local communities own and manage the sewer systems, as well as the pipes delivering water to homes and businesses
- The MWRD takes control at the receptors from the sewer systems, where the flow is delivered to 7 filtration plants owned by the MWRD
- The MWRD now responsible for dealing with storm water and has built and is still building the Deep Tunnel System to reduce flooding
- The Deep Tunnel System is composed of huge pipes and 3 reservoirs
  - Des Plaines
  - Thorton
  - McCook (in process)
- There are ways we can help deal with excessive runoff during storms:
  - Reduce water use to a minimum (don't take showers during storms!)
  - Use porous pavement
  - Use rain barrels
  - Plant rain gardens and utilize water absorbing plants
  - Convert pavement to green space and have green roofs
- You can **recycle unused prescription drugs** at MWRD facilities, including the main office at 100 E. Erie, Chicago. To find other locations throughout the County, go to [www.CookCountyMEDS.org](http://www.CookCountyMEDS.org). Do NOT flush down the toilet!
- For more information, check out the MWRD web site: [www.MWRD.org](http://www.MWRD.org) You can watch videos of past meetings of the Board, as well as live stream meetings.

You can also **read reports of MWRD meetings** on the **web site of the Cook County League**: [www.lwvcookcounty.org](http://www.lwvcookcounty.org) under “What We Do/Eyewitness.”

**Want to get involved with following the issues and workings of the MWRD? Contact the Cook County League at [info@lwvcookcounty.org](mailto:info@lwvcookcounty.org) or call 312-939-5935.**

-- Priscilla Mims