



We're More Than Water

January 2006

BCDES receives national recognition for best practices

BCDES is committed to providing Butler County residents with water and wastewater services in a professional and cost-effective manner. The department strives to continually demonstrate leadership that advances both environmental stewardship and the public's health. As a result of these efforts, BCDES was awarded several national awards in 2005.

Platinum Award- The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) presented BCDES with its highest award: the Platinum Award for Sustained Competitiveness Achievement in October, 2005. The Platinum Award commends utilities that show an ongoing commitment to maintaining and expanding competitiveness initiatives over a continuous three-year period. The award recognizes excellence in utility management and successful implementation of programs that address the range of management challenges facing public water and wastewater utilities in today's competitive environment.

Clean Water Act Recognition Award- The US Environmental Protection Agency presented BCDES with this award in November, 2005 at the Water Environment Federation Technical Exposition & Conference. The USEPA award recognizes municipalities and industries for demonstrating outstanding technological achievements or innovative processes and pollution abatement programs. BCDES received the honorable mention award as a result of our efforts to improve our biosolids program and commitment to continuous environmental improvement of biosolids management.

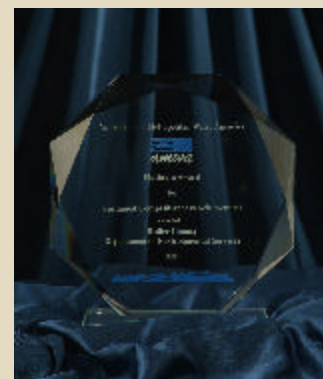
Public Works Department of the Year Section Award- The award recognizes a superior portion of an entity's public works - such as fleet, street, maintenance, parks and grounds, or, as in the case of BCDES, a water and wastewater utility. BCDES was featured in the December issue of Public Works magazine and will be featured in its upcoming publication, "How to Build a Public Works Department." To read the article featuring BCDES, go to www.butlercountyohio.org/des.

National Biosolids Partnership: Certification of Biosolids Environmental Management System- The National Biosolids Partnership is a cooperative effort dedicated to improving the quality of biosolids management programs nationwide and promoting public acceptance of biosolids reuse. Certification recognizes utilities that meet or exceed a stringent set of national standards designed to promote safe and environmentally sound biosolids and wastewater treatment. BCDES was the sixth utility in the nation to receive NBP certification.

BCDES is setting the standard for the public works industry and is well on its way to being the best utility not only in the state of Ohio, but in the nation.



Director Susan E. Vance



Platinum Award 2005

"The department was recognized for controlling costs, providing high quality water and sewer service, and exhibiting exceptional stewardship through public outreach programs."

— Director Susan E. Vance

BCDES offers free radon testing kits

Butler County received 200 free radon testing kits from the National Association of Counties (NACo) to distribute during the month of January, which is National Radon Action Month. Kits are being distributed to increase awareness about the harmful effects of radon and to motivate residents to take action to protect their families' health.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer death in the U.S. Radon is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths annually; about 2,900 of these are people who have never smoked according to the USEPA.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas produced by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water. This tasteless, odorless gas enters a building from its foundation and travels upward. Radon can enter the foundation through cracks or holes in concrete floors, walls, construction joints, sump pumps or loose-fitting pipes.

In addition to the 200 kits provided by NACo, BCDES will purchase an additional 200 kits. While supplies last, Butler County residents can obtain a free kit at any of the following participating agencies: BCDES, the Department of Health, Department of Job and Family Services, the Department of Development and the Neighborhood Housing Services of Hamilton, Inc.

Once residents have tested their homes for radon, the kits will be sent for analysis to Air Check, Inc. located in Fletcher, North Carolina. The analysis will be provided free of charge.

To obtain a radon fact sheet, please visit BCDES's web site at www.butlercountyohio.org/des or call (513) 887-3066. For more information on radon, please contact the Department of Health at (513) 863-1770.

Interrupted service — are you prepared?

Ensuring customers are prepared in the event water service is temporarily disrupted is a top priority for BCDES.

Occasionally, water service may be interrupted due to water main breaks within the water distribution system. Water main breaks are very infrequent and typically last only a few hours. However, the following recommendations will help you plan for an extended period of time without water.

BCDES recommends that you keep a three day supply of water. Allow (or store) at least one gallon for each person in your household for each day. For example, a family of four should store 12 gallons of water. Individuals with special needs, such as nursing mothers, young children, and family members with illnesses, may require additional water.

Storing water is necessary for emergencies, but like all food items, it has a limited shelf life. Tap water that is stored in capped, plastic containers has a six month shelf life. However, if you boil water for 1-3 minutes you can extend the shelf life to one year.

Non-residential customers such as restaurants, schools, nursing homes, and other industries, should have a variety of emergency supplies available, such as bottled water, canned beverages, and plastic or paper serving dishes. It is also a good idea to have your supplier's name and phone number easily accessible to all employees should an emergency arise.

BCDES is committed to minimizing water main breaks. For more information regarding what to do in the event of a service disruption, please contact (513) 887-3066.

BCDES holds annual customer focus groups

In an effort to better understand the needs and satisfaction levels of our customers, BCDES holds focus groups annually. On Oct. 5, 17 randomly selected customers attended one of two focus group sessions at our Lesourdesville Training Center.

Burke, Inc., a research consultant, facilitated the groups asking customers to make recommendations and suggestions about a number of services and communication materials including: Web site usability, the customer newsletter, capital improvement update letters, and other water, wastewater and solid waste issues.

As part of the customers' recommendations, BCDES is currently working on redesigning our Web site. The site will feature a new design, easy-to-use online bill payment, more homepage options, easier navigation and other features. The new site is scheduled for completion by April, 2006.

BCDES expands environmental education program in area schools

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BCDES is committed to environmental stewardship and educating children about environmental resources. In 2005, more than 10,000 Butler County students benefited from BCDES's environmental education program, which teaches children about water resources, Ohio's prehistoric past, waste reduction and recycling.

In 2006, BCDES will expand its water resources program to offer more courses on the importance of clean, safe drinking water. Currently, the department offers the following courses on water: "Glitterbug;" teaching proper hand washing, "Fred the Fish;" how polluted water affects fish and all living things, "Waste Not, Want Not;" use and conservation of water, "Oil Spill;" hands-on experimentation with oil spill clean-up, and "The Incredible Journey;" the wild and crazy travels of a molecule.

If you are interested in helping build upon the environmental interest your child may have, there are several books you might want to consider getting. The American Water Works Association (AWWA) recommends the following books which teach children about water and how they can be keepers of the world's water: "The Water Cycle" by Verna Aardemia, "The Water's Journey" by Eleanore Schmid, "Water Dance" by Thomas Locker, "Down Comes the Rain" by Franklyn M. Branley, "A Drop Around the World" by Barbara Shaw McKinney and "The Drop in My Drink" by Meredith Hooper.

Having an appreciation for our natural resources is beneficial not only as a child, but throughout a person's life. BCDES is committed to helping individuals improve upon their environmental understanding. To learn more about environmental issues, please visit the following Web sites: www.epa.state.oh.us/kids/, www.epa.gov/kids/, www.awwa.org/advocacy/learn/ and www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/index.html. For more information on scheduling a program at your child's school, please contact Environmental Educator Sue Stephenson at (513) 887-3972.



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Do you have a leak?

If you have a water leak in your service line or inside your house, a portion of your bill can be adjusted by following two easy steps.

Step 1: Have the leak repaired as quickly as possible. Repairing the leak saves you money, because as the homeowner, you are responsible for the leaking water.

Step 2: Call Customer Care at 887-3066 and tell a representative when you discovered a leak and when the repair was made. If you have an invoice from a plumber or hardware store, the representative will ask you to fax or mail a copy to us for our records.

Once BCDES has been notified that your water leak has been repaired, two types of credits may be applied towards your bill.

Sewer Credits- If the leak does not create more sewage for BCDES to treat, a credit will be applied towards your sewer bill. Outside leaks or leaks that do not go down the drain, would fall into this category. Sewer charges for this period will be reduced to a level that represents normal, non-summer use. Leaky toilets or other leaks that discharge water to the sewer system would not result in a credit on your sewer bill.

Water Credits- BCDES has a conservation model, meaning the more water you use, the higher your rate will be. While the conservation rate serves to equitably allocate costs among customers during normal usage, the rate can be adjusted if a customer has identified and addressed a leak. Customer Care will remove the "peaking" charges from your bill during this period. The water charges will be based on the total water delivered through your meter, but will be billed only at the base rate.

For more information, please contact Customer Care at (513) 887-3066.

Think inside the box - recycle!

Did you know that more than 69 percent of material in Ohio's landfills is recyclable? That's right! Much of what we throw away probably has another life in your recycling bin.

BCDES wants to remind you that you can probably recycle even more while making money for your community. Beginning in 2006, we will provide communities with an incentive for the total amount of material that is recycled by their residents, with priority given to communities that have contracted for curbside recycling. This means that your community can earn valuable funding based on one simple action: Putting those recyclables in your recycling bin. Another reason to recycle is that recycling pays dividends to your community.

Here's a list of what goes in your recycling bin:

Mixed Paper - Newspaper, colored paper, junk mail (including those envelopes with the plastic window) catalogues and phone books

Tin/Steel Cans

Aluminum Cans & Plastic Beverage Bottles

Glass - brown, clear, green - virtually all glass

Cardboard - broken down into 5" x 5"

Paperboard - such as cereal boxes, cake mix boxes, etc.

Plastic Milk Containers

Plastic No. 1 and No. 2 Containers - many are found at fast food restaurants, or salad bars.

Recycling is a great way to give back to your community and the environment. So... "**Think Inside the Box**" and start recycling today for a better tomorrow!

Think *inside* the box

Recycle



HOW TO CONTACT US



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