



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD's Thornton Composite Reservoir bestowed with national recognition

***Award to be presented at the Public Works Expo in Minneapolis on Aug. 29***

Engineers, contractors and miners preparing the Thornton Composite Reservoir might want to return to their designs and allow room for a trophy cabinet. It was a rare item left out when creating the world's largest combined sewer reservoir, large enough to hold 7.9 billion gallons of water, eliminate pollution from local waterways and save the area from flooding. For the fourth time in a little over a month, the creators of the behemoth engineering marvel have been honored with a prestigious award.



*Accepting the American Public Works Association Chicago Metro Chapter's 2016 Project Excellence Award in March were (L-R): Mark White (B/V Engineering), Timothy Bea (F.H. Paschen), Bipinbhai Patel (MWRD), Duane Peterson (Walsh Construction), Adel Awad (MWRD), Erik Schneider (Walsh Construction), Jennifer Hughes (APWA Chicago Metro Chapter President), Brian Fidoruk (Walsh Construction) and Brian Warwczak (MWRD). The same team will be honored in August with the national APWA.*

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) Thornton Composite Reservoir in South Holland and Thornton, IL has been named as one of the American Public Works Association's (APWA) Public Works Projects of the Year for 2016. This award comes on the heels of the MWRD being awarded the APWA Chicago Metro Chapter's 2016 Project Excellence Award and the Award for Environment Projects of more than \$75 million.

"This is another exciting honor, and it is a credit to our engineers, consultants and contractors who saw a barren land of limestone and through hard work and ingenuity turned it into the largest of its kind reservoir in the world," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We now have the ability to save local communities in the South Side of Chicago and south suburbs from flooding and protect our

vital waterways from pollution."

The MWRD is sharing this award with two equally outstanding co-primary contactors (F.H. Paschen/Cabo Construction Corporation, Joint Venture and Walsh/II in One, Joint Venture) and two equally excellent co-primary consultants (Black and Veatch Corporation Inc. and MWH Americas Inc.). The achievement will be recognized at the APWA annual Awards Recognition Ceremony held in conjunction

with the 2016 PWX Convention in Minneapolis, Minn., scheduled for Aug. 29, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

"Your selection puts you in a very elite group of winners and APWA is proud to have those on this project epitomize the public works profession and our association," wrote Rhonda Wilhite, of the APWA, in her letter notifying the MWRD of its award.

The \$429 million reservoir is part of the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) connected to the MWRD's extensive network of deep tunnels. It benefits 556,000 people in 14 communities throughout the South Side of Chicago and south suburbs. It protects 182,000 structures, such as homes, businesses and other facilities, and improves water quality in the Calumet Rivers and Calumet-Sag Channel by collecting combined sewer overflows (CSO) before entering waterways. The new reservoir's capacity (7.9 billion gallons) holds these overflows before pumping the water *(continued)*

back via the 30-foot tunnel to the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant to be treated.

Major construction features of the project included: a double-row vertical grout curtain around the two-mile perimeter of the reservoir; a 112-ft tall roller-compacted concrete dam; a 1,300-ft long, 30-ft diameter connecting tunnel from the reservoir to the existing Calumet Deep Tunnel; a 1,100-ft long, 20-ft diameter connecting tunnel from the reservoir to Thorn Creek.

The reservoir already made an impact in its first months of service by taking on its first water beginning on Nov. 26, 2015. By the time the rain stopped the following day, the reservoir was filled to a depth of 17 feet and held approximately 400 million gallons of water. There were no CSOs in the reservoir's service area during the rain event, pointing directly to the effectiveness of the reservoir.

For their efforts in constructing the Thornton Composite Reservoir, the MWRD and miner Hanson Material Service (HMS) were also recognized for outstanding and innovative reclamation techniques at the annual Aggregate Miner Safety Conference/Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers (IAAP) Annual Convention in March in Springfield.



*Completed in 2015, Thornton Composite Reservoir has a storage capacity of 7.9 BG and is the largest combined sewer reservoir in the world. The reservoir, with a surface area of approximately 83 acres, serves a 90-square-mile area in Cook County. The reservoir provides an estimated \$40 million per year in flood control benefits to 556,000 people in 14 communities, including the South Side of Chicago and 13 suburban communities.*

As large and unprecedented as Thornton is, however, it will no longer be recognized as the largest in the world come 2029. By then, the MWRD will have completed the McCook Reservoir in the southwest suburbs along the Stevenson Expressway between the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal and Des Plaines River. When completed, the reservoir will hold 10 billion gallons.

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## Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwr.org](http://www.mwr.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*