



From the Tap...

Fairfax Water Turns 50 This Year!

This is the fourth and final installment of the story of Fairfax Water's 50-year history.

Part Four: 1997–2007

This period begins with an application to the State of Maryland for a building permit to construct an off-shore intake on the Potomac River. A key tenet of water treatment is to start with the best source-water possible. Over the years, Fairfax Water studied the water in the Potomac River and found that water closer to the center of the river contains less sediment most of time. In an agreement dating back to 1785, Maryland has jurisdiction over the Potomac River to the low-water mark on the Virginia shoreline. So, Fairfax Water needed to obtain a building permit from Maryland to build a new intake. After Mary-

land denied Fairfax Water's permit, the Commonwealth of Virginia became involved in the case, citing the need to protect the right of Virginia to access such a vital resource. The case ultimately was heard before the United States Supreme Court (Original 129, Virginia v. Maryland) in the spring of 2003. In December 2003 the Court handed down a ruling in favor of Virginia, and Fairfax Water ultimately built the off-shore intake. Having two intakes on the Potomac does not mean Fairfax Water can draw twice as much water from the river. Having two intakes means that Fairfax Water can now operate its in-

takes to the best advantage of its customers.

The New Millennium began with several significant events in Fairfax Water's history. In 2000 the James J. Corbalis, Jr. water treatment plant became the first water treatment plant in Virginia, and one of the few in the nation, to use ozone to treat the water. Also in 2000, Fairfax Water was assigned a triple-A bond rating. At the time, Fairfax Water was the only independent public water agency in the United States to have such a designation. At about the same time, construction began on the new Frederick P. Griffith, Jr. water treatment plant. The plant was constructed to

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Outreach Program Grant Applications

Each year, Fairfax Water provides funding and technical support to qualified organizations that undertake water supply education or watershed protection projects.

After February 15, 2008,

guidelines and application forms will be available on our web site at www.fairfaxwater.org, under Water Quality, Grants.

The guidelines provide information on eligible projects and organiza-

tions, the selection process, and the geographic area that may be covered by the projects. If you have questions regarding this program, please contact Gregory Prelewicz by telephone at (703)289-6318 or by email at

gprelewicz@fairfaxwater.org. Information can also be obtained by sending a request to Fairfax Water Outreach Program, Attention: Chief, Source Water Planning and Protection, 8570 Executive Park Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031.



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utilize the latest available treatment technologies and began operations in May of 2006.

During this period several events occurred nationally that brought safety and security to the forefront of our thinking. Through Y2K, all of our systems were checked and upgraded as needed to ensure reliable operations after the new-century date change. Then, in 2001, the terrorist attacks further highlighted our need to enhance security and system reliability. In September of 2003, Hurricane Isabel hit Virginia and knocked out power to 80% of Northern Virginia. With all of these events in mind, Fairfax Water has begun a comprehensive system reliability project to protect our system from future vulnerabilities. The project includes

Winter Weather Reminder

Be sure to takes steps to protect vulnerable parts of your home whenever freezing weather is forecast.

- Locate and mark your home’s main water-supply valve for quick access in case of a burst pipe.
- Maintain heat inside a vacant house or turn off the water entirely.

If you suspect you have a frozen water meter, call us for help. Our service crews are available 24 hours a day and will respond as soon as possible to your request. You can reach our Customer Service Department at (703) 698-5800. The after-hours emergency number is (703) 698-5613.

additional storage, as well as back-up power for our major facilities.

The story of Fairfax Water and its mission may best be illustrated by then-Chairman Morin’s 1997 remarks about Fairfax Water’s “satisfying record demands for water, developing advanced treatment methods and facilities, providing excellence in customer service, and maintaining the exemplary financial management that secures our commitment to the people we serve.”

We have a proud and rich history and hope you have enjoyed learning a bit more about your water source. Fairfax Water is proud of its past and dedicated to providing its customers with excellent service in the future!



Water-Saving Tip #34: Don’t use running water to thaw food.

According to the USDA and the FDA, frozen food should be thawed in a refrigerator or by submerging in cold water.

Once thawed, food should be cooked promptly.

For more information and other water-saving tips, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com.

Editor’s Note

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, let us hear from you.

E-mail us at jbailey@fairfaxwater.org or write us at the address below. If you have questions regarding water service, please call Customer Service at (703) 698-5800, TTY 711.

For all other departments, call (703) 698-5600, TTY 711; After-hours emergency, call (703) 698-5613, TTY 711.

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