



"RE-BUILDING THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY"

Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS

C. RAY NAGIN, *President*
TOMMIE A. VASSEL, *President Pro-Tem*

625 ST. JOSEPH STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70165 • 504-529-2837 OR 52W-ATER
www.swbnola.org

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From: Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans

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Contact: Robert Jackson, 451-0566 or

Brenda Thornton, 495-9734

For Immediate Release

To Find Hidden Underground Leaks

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans issues the following statement:

The Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans today gave a demonstration of technology it will use to locate hidden underground leaks to halt the waste of millions of gallons of water each day.

The Board has entered into a contract with Fluid Conservation Systems Inc. (FCS) of Ohio to perform the work throughout the City's 1,600-mile network of underground lines and mains which provide water to homes, businesses and fire hydrants.

FCS will use equipment it developed called Permalog to search for the leak. This new concept for leak detection allows maintenance crews to repair leaks before they cause larger breaks or more difficult-to-repair leaks.

"This proactive approach," said S&WB Executive Director Marcia St. Martin, "is a way to reduce the impact on customers and allow a repair which will be less costly, based on not having to react in an emergency mode and possibly requiring a smaller response of staff and equipment."



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The system uses monitors that "listen to noise" on the pipeline at set intervals. The monitors will transmit signals that will be read by laptop computers. The signals are analyzed, and if a leak is heard, it can be pinpointed and repaired.

It is estimated that since September the Board has already repaired 17,000 breaks.

Mrs. St. Martiin said, "Despite this enormous and consistent effort by our team, new breaks are occurring as quickly as we repair the older ones And, of course, in the meantime we are still making extensive repairs to the sewerage and drainage systems, which also suffered major damage from the storm."

"We are devoting all of our resources to correct the water pressure situation and will seek outside help whenever and wherever possible to assist us with this monumental job."

The Board's water transmission and distribution system suffered severe damage as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The winds uprooted trees causing damage to the mains near them, and the overburden by the floodwaters caused trench subsidence and pipe failures and leaks due to uneven settlement.

In addition, the surge of water through the breaches in the levees washed structures from their foundations and severed water services both in the Board-maintained portion of the house connections as well as in the private plumbing systems belonging to individual property owners.

Adding to the problem is damage to pipes, meter boxes and fire hydrants by debris-removing contractors.

The extent of damage to the steel and iron portions of the water transmission and distribution systems due to extended contact with salt water are being studied, but the damage is thought to be extensive.

To date, all of the water system on the East Bank of the Mississippi River, except for a small portion in the Lower Ninth Ward, has been lifted from the Boil Water Notice imposed shortly after Katrina's landfall. The water is safe to drink, however, the water distribution system's



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high number of leaks requires the Board to produce an excessive amount of water to compensate for the leaking water.

Customers and citizens on the East Bank of Orleans Parish can help reduce the demand for water through voluntary conservation, such as not watering gardens for long periods, not letting hoses or faucets run when not actually in use, shorter showers, less water for baths, conservative use of dishwashers and washing machines and guarding against excessive or unnecessary use of water of any kind.

All citizens, young and old, are asked not to open or use fire hydrants for recreational or cleaning purposes. An open hydrant can cause a serious drop in water pressure in a large area.

Industrial and commercial companies should encourage conservation by their employees in as many of their operations as possible.

Citizens can report water line leaks or leaking hydrants by calling 52-Water (529-2837) or through its website, www.swbno.org.

Some pertinent facts:

More than 85 million gallons of drinking water - - more than two-thirds of the total pumped into the pipes -- is leaking into the ground everyday through breaks.

Before Katrina, New Orleans' 455,000 residents used about 120 million gallons of water per day. At that time, about 30 percent of it was considered lost through leaks or expended for public uses such as fighting fires and street cleaning.

Today, with the population estimated at 221,000, the Board is producing more drinking water than before the storm due to leaks instead of usage by customers.