

Water Utility justifies industrial water request to DNR

Duchniak: Many businesses trying to get back to pre-9/11 levels

By Sarah Pryor

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WAUKESHA -Waukesha won't dial back its request for Lake Michigan water for industrial customers, mainly because many manufacturing businesses have plans to re-expand to their pre-9/11 levels.

In a Thursday letter to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Waukesha Water Utility General Manager Dan Duchniak justified the city's increase in projected water demands for industrial customers from 0.9 million gallons per day in 2012 to 2.1 million gallons per day in 2050.

Duchniak said the utility spoke to 10 industrial customers, and several said they planned to expand in the future to recoup losses they have incurred since the economy tanked after the terrorist attacks upon the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

He declined to mention any businesses specifically.

However, Eaton Cooper Power Systems recently announced plans for a \$54 million, almost 52,000-square-foot expansion that could add 200 new jobs to the Badger Drive plant, and Lifeway Foods, the new owner of the shuttered Golden Guernsey plant, has plans to hire dozens of workers to replace the 100 who lost their jobs when the plant closed last year.

Additionally, Duchniak said that industrial demand is a small percentage of the city's water use – a little more than 10 percent – but just one of those industrial customers having a significant expansion can drastically affect how much water the city needs.

"When you try to project out for 100 years like we're doing, you have to develop a margin. We build a range and choose an amount within that range," Duchniak said. "From a planning perspective it's never effective to choose the lowest alternative, because the cost implications of being wrong are huge.

"If we underestimate how much we need and then install a \$200 million infrastructure that includes a water main that's too small, it would cost us significant dollars to increase that pipe size."

Waukesha has until June 2018 to implement a sustainable, radium-compliant water source and has selected a Lake Michigan diversion as the best option. However, since the city is outside the Great Lakes basin, it must get approval from the governors of all eight Great Lakes states.

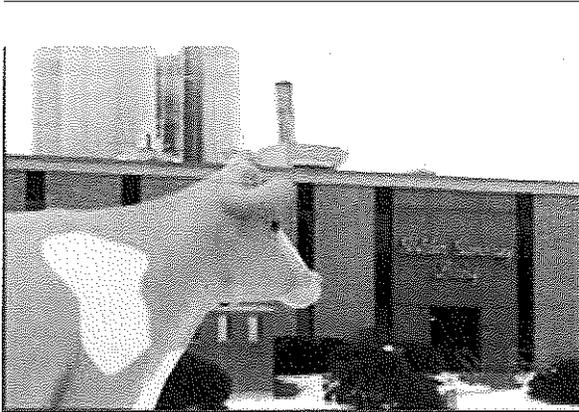
Waukesha has decreased its initial request of an average of 10.9 million gallons of water per day to 10.1 million gallons per day by 2050, thanks in part to studies that more accurately predict future development in the city's water service area, as well as the effect of conservation.

Representatives from the Waukesha County Business Alliance wanted to make it clear where the alliance stands on Waukesha's application for Lake Michigan water.

"The Waukesha County Business Alliance continues to support the city of Waukesha's water application as currently proposed," said Amanda Payne, director of public relations and marketing for the Business Alliance. "The Alliance feels that the application is the best environmental decision for the region, as it will have no impact on Great Lakes levels; will improve the quality and level of return flow in the Root River, and provides Waukesha with a safe and reliable water supply for the long term."

For more information, visit www.ci.waukesha.wi.us/982, www.cooperindustries.com and www.lifeway.net.

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Potential increased water need from industrial customers like the Golden Guernsey Dairy – now owned by Lifeway Foods – is one of the reasons why the city is not decreasing the amount of water requested from Lake Michigan.

Freeman file photo