



Waukesha Water Utility

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Don't flush dollar\$ down the drain, Waukesha says

*Water users urged to conserve by
updating toilets and other plumbing fixtures*

Kohler Co. donates plumbing fixtures for demonstration project at City Hall

"Don't flush your dollars down the drain," Waukesha Mayor Carol Lombardi said today. "Soak up some savings instead by updating your plumbing fixtures."

Replacing older plumbing fixtures – including toilets, faucets and showerheads – is one of the best things Waukesha water users can do to save water, water officials said. Updating toilets alone can save families of four as much as \$200 per year on water and sewer bills.

The city is replacing plumbing fixtures at City Hall to provide a demonstration of the potential savings of water and money, the mayor told a press conference today. The city's demonstration project uses fixtures provided under a grant from Kohler Co., a worldwide leader in kitchen and bath plumbing products based in Kohler, Wisconsin.

"Updating plumbing fixtures at City Hall with Kohler's grant will conserve water and save tax dollars," said Mayor Lombardi. "Hopefully, residents, businesses, schools and other governments will join us in replacing toilets, urinals and faucets with modern fixtures that use one half to one fifth the water. They'll save money while helping the environment."

Dan Duchniak, general manager of the Waukesha Water Utility, said, "In single-family homes alone, Waukesha could save more than 500,000 gallons of water every day by updating toilets. That's more than 5% of the water utility's average daily use."

He said 81% of Waukesha's homes were built before 1994, when low-flow toilets using 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf) were required by federal law.

A family of four with toilets from before 1950 can save about 40,000 gallons of water every year by replacing the 7.0 gpf toilets with modern 1.6 gpf low-flow toilets, Duchniak said. That's a savings of almost \$200 per year in reduced water and sewer costs, at current rates. About 23% of single family homes in Waukesha were built before 1950.

A family with 5.0 gpf toilets can save about 25,000 gallons of water, or about \$125, every year. Those toilets were used between 1950 and 1979, when 45% of Waukesha's homes were built.

Even a family with 3.5 gpf toilets can save about 14,000 gallons, or about \$70, every year. Those toilets were used between 1980 and 1993, when 13% of the city's single-family homes were built, Duchniak said.

Duchniak said the estimates do not include the additional savings that occur if the older toilets leak.

The demonstration project at City Hall is replacing 3.5 gpf tank toilets with 1.6 gpf and 1.4 gpf models. Urinals using timers – which can use 15 gallons per hour – are being switched to 0.5 gpf models. 1.0 gpf urinals are also being replaced. Aerators on faucets will reduce flow from 2.5 gallons per minute to 0.5. The city has been monitoring water use to calculate the effects of the updated fixtures, which are expected to reduce water use by more than 50%.

The drawdown of the deep groundwater in southeastern Wisconsin has forced the Waukesha Water Utility to examine new sources of water, including Lake Michigan surface water and shallow groundwater. "No matter what the source, we must conserve and protect our water," the mayor said. The city has reduced its annual water use by 25% since 1988, while its population grew 17%. In addition, the mayor has committed to a 20% per capita by 2020.

"Today's announcement is just another small step in our continuing conservation efforts," Mayor Lombardi said. "Waukesha will be a leader in water conservation."

Duchniak said other elements of the utility's conservation plan will likely include education and outreach programs, ordinances to restrict lawn watering, programs to reduced hot water used, leak detection and repair, changes in water main flushing and hosting conservation conferences.

Waukesha's plan will also aim to protect and replenish water supplies, through planning and zoning, protecting groundwater recharge areas, adopting stormwater best management practices and protecting drinking water from pollution.