

Y2K prepared DWSD for disaster

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When the Y2K scare prompted changes in emergency preparedness plans at businesses, schools and public utilities around the world, it wasn't a lost effort after the stroke of midnight came without chaos.

The heightened state of awareness following recent terrorist attacks has officials at the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department referring back to those Y2K plans.

"Every utility has a very comprehensive security plan," said

George Ellenwood, public affairs manager at the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.

"Everything we did prior to the Y2K event, going through disaster and emergency plans, that was a very good rehearsal for the type of situation we could possibly be facing now."

With about 4 million customers, the Detroit water system is the third largest in the nation, said Ellenwood. Five treatment plants serve 126 communities in southeast Michigan. Security at those treatment plants is normally tight, he said.

"We have security for our

entire water system 24 hours a day, seven days a week anyway," Ellenwood said.

The plants are located in Detroit, near Port Huron, Allen Park and Dearborn. All of the facilities are fenced, they are not open to the public and employee identification is required to enter the facilities, said Ellenwood.

Security measures were heightened after Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer declared a state of emergency for the city shortly after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon. City buildings in

Detroit were evacuated following the attacks.

"We're looking back and saying that (Y2K training) was worth the time and worth the money," Ellenwood said.

Ellenwood said people should not worry about the drinking water.

"That's our first and foremost priority, to maintain the integrity of the water supply and to maintain our services," Ellenwood said. "The next time you have a glass of water, know that it is safe."

CABLE CONNECTION

Cable came through

Hopefully you were here in Michigan, safe from harm during the national disaster on Sept. 11. But, even those of us who were not directly impacted have felt the shock.

Immediately, we thought, "Are my kids safe?" "Where are my loved ones?" and "What should I do next?"

Many of us relied on television for the answers. On the national channels, we viewed the horrific crash over and over. On the local channels we learned a bit more about what was going on in the

Detroit area. But to find out what was happening in our own back yard, we tuned to the local access channels (Farmington Hills Channel 8, Farmington 15, Novi 13 and TV-10 for the Public Schools).

Right away each of these channels posted relevant information to help you deal with your immediate needs. The city channels informed local residents of closings and cancellations. Although city halls remained open to serve residents, some closed early and there were scheduled civic function and activities that were postponed. Novi posted a notice of Tuesday's canceled ZBA meeting and the postponement of Sunday's Furst Farm Historical Marker dedication (the rescheduled date was also posted on channel 13). Farmington Hills also told us of the postponement of city events Tuesday evening. And all three cities provided a list of local charities conducting special services.

School channels

Those of us with kids in school were reassured by messages on the school channel's TV-10 bulletin board. Farmington Public Schools and Novi Public Schools immediately posted cancellation of all sporting events and after-school events. And to avoid jammed phone lines, you could easily see that schools were back in session on Wednesday, when you tuned into TV-10. On top of that, this venue was used by the schools to recommend that parents talk with their children to allay their fear. The educational channel also listed support available through the schools and other counseling agencies.

The repercussions continued throughout the past week (and even this week), and the access channels kept you up to speed. In view of the tragic events, Heritage Week and their sponsors decided to alter the schedule of events for the week of Sept. 14-23 and informed those interested through special message on Farmington 15, Farmington Hills 8.

How to help

Now, we all want to know what we can do to help. And we can get that information on TV, as well. Tune to channels 8, 10, 12, 13 and 15 for information on local Red Cross Blood Drives and charity fund-raisers, such as the Novi Fire Departments "Boot" drive to raise money for the victims and their families. Various other unity gatherings and functions are also up on the channels.

When you need to know how national happenings impact you locally, you can rely on your local access channels. Anyone with additional information should contact SWOCC at (248) 473-7266 and we'll be happy to post your nonprofit, non-commercial message. Or fax your information to (248) 473-8610.

Caren Collins is the executive director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission. The next CAC meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 9 at SWOCC. The next free orientation (for those interested in Public Access TV) is 7-9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 25, at SWOCC. Call 473-7266 ext. 14 to register.

Hills council candidate leaves COHA post

Ken Massey has announced he will take a leave of absence from his position as Vice President of the Council of Homeowners, effective immediately.

The leave will continue throughout his campaign as a candidate for Farmington Hills City Council in the upcoming November election.

The C.O.H.A. bylaws do not permit the Council to officially support any candidate running for public office, although there are no stipulations with respect to board members who choose to campaign for a publicly elected position.

Massey said he has decided to take this leave of absence to preserve the spirit, intent and integrity of the C.O.H.A. bylaws and to devote more time to his campaign.

If elected, he will officially step down from his C.O.H.A. board position (if not, he will return to C.O.H.A.).

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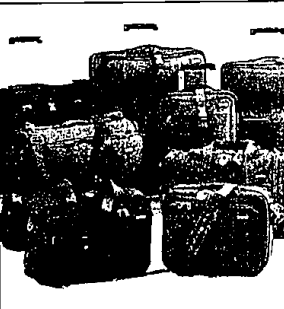
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