

# Community matters

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

SEPT/OCT 2007

## “Clean Rivers, Clean Harbor, Sound Norwich”

A community  
wastewater project  
with far-reaching  
implications

Who doesn't want clean rivers, a clean harbor, and a sound Norwich? The Norwich harbor area is one of the city's finest features and a major contributor to the current downtown rejuvenation. The wastewater treatment plant is among Norwich's most important pieces of infrastructure for growth and economic development, yet it discharges treated water into the Thames River, affecting the harbor.

Are the harbor and treatment plant compatible neighbors? Both encourage growth in our community. And, thanks to continuing advancements in wastewater treatment standards, the answer can be a definitive “YES.”

### Wastewater treatment—then and now

In 1938, before Norwich's first sewer plant was constructed, the standard

method for eliminating sewage from riverfront mills was to send the waste into the Shetucket, Yantic and Thames Rivers. That first sewer plant and others like them led to improvements in wastewater treatment that cleaned up the waterways that we all enjoy today.

The Norwich wastewater facilities now need repair and improvements. The proposed expansion will prepare Norwich to meet its current needs in economic development and population growth.

NPU began the public participation process by reviewing mandates, challenges and choices at an open house and facilities tour held at the wastewater treatment plant. Here are some meeting highlights.

### Mandates

In 2007, NPU received an order from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT-DEP) to eliminate the city's remaining combined sewer overflows (CSOs). CSOs are points within Norwich where the storm drain network combines with sewer main infrastructure. During very heavy rain, this can cause an overflow of diluted, but untreated waste into local rivers. In the late 1800's, when these networks were originally constructed, CSOs were standard in wastewater treatment. But a lot has changed since then.

In 1973, NPU began a state project to eliminate CSOs in the city. Since then, 28 CSOs have been eliminated. Norwich is required to submit a plan to eliminate the 15 remaining active CSOs by 2010.

### Choices

In the 1980s, nitrogen pollution from sewer treatment plants was identified as a problem for Connecticut. Nitrogen is a common fertilizer. Its increasing quantities in local rivers and Long Island Sound lead

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to significant algae growth that kills fish and jeopardizes local industry, recreation and tourism.

In 2000, after the passage of the Long Island Sound Restoration Act (LISRA), a statewide goal to reduce nitrogen discharges from Connecticut's sewer plants by 54% was announced. This requirement gave cities like Norwich

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## “Clean Rivers...”

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two choices—make the necessary infrastructure changes to reduce nitrogen outputs or pay special fees based on existing outputs that will be used to compensate other communities that make these changes.

### Challenges

Cost is the major challenge facing Norwich in carrying out these necessary upgrades.

Back in the 1970’s, when the wastewater plant’s last major upgrade and CSO projects began, state and federal funding covered 90% of the expense. This is not the case now. Meanwhile, the total cost to complete all upgrades is expected to top \$100 million over a 15-year period.

NPU is actively seeking creative funding alternatives. Some funding is

available through the Connecticut Clean Water Fund and the Governor’s Fund for Economic Diversification. Policies like Norwich’s sewer capital connection fee are also collecting money for the project.

### Get involved

We encourage you to learn more, ask questions and make suggestions. “Clean Rivers, Clean Harbor, Sound Norwich” is a community wastewater project with far-reaching implications for Norwich, and perhaps eastern Connecticut.

Call us or visit our website at [www.norwichpublicutilities.com](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com) for more information. NPU is committed to involving our community as we move forward in the decision-making process.

*Look for a special October issue of Community Matters that will share feedback and questions & answers from September’s public participation meetings.*

## Fall Safety Tips

### WOODSTOVES & WOOD-BURNING

- Before the season begins, have your chimney cleaned and clean your woodstove
- Remove any clutter on or near a stove or fireplace
- Be sure your chimney is lined and the liner is in good condition

### SMOKE ALARMS

- Test all smoke alarms
- Place an alarm on each floor of your home
- Practice a fire drill so you’ll know what to do if a smoke alarm goes off

### VEHICLE SAFETY

- Never leave a vehicle running on top of leaves—the catalytic converter can ignite the leaves
- If you smoke while driving, please discard cigarette butts in your ashtray—not out the window; a cigarette dropped on a pile of dry leaves can start a fire

### BRUSH BURNING

**A permit is required to burn brush. For information on obtaining a permit, call the Norwich Fire Department at 892-6080.**

# How NPU keeps your water clean

Clean, clear, healthy drinking water is vital to our community. That’s why Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) carefully monitors and conducts routine maintenance on its water distribution system.

Part of this maintenance involves bi-annual water main flushing. “Flushing” is done to remove harmless, naturally occurring sediments, like dissolved iron and manganese, from local water mains. A flush is performed by releasing water from fire hydrants until the water flow runs clear. This process takes, on average, about



one to two minutes per hydrant. Since some streets do not have hydrants connected to the water system, NPU installs special valves that enable us to perform the flushing process so these, too, can be flushed clean.

Water main flushing is an effective method of improving the appearance of drinking water.

It also serves as a way to check hydrants to make sure they are in good working order for fire emergency use.

The next system flush is scheduled for mid-October when reservoir levels are high. During this time, NPU makes every effort to minimize

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any impact on our customers. Sometimes water main flushing can cause a temporary reduction in water pressure or discolored

water. While not pleasing to look at, be assured that according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this discolored water is never a public health threat. NPU’s goal is to minimize adverse effects from flushing. If you experience dirty water, flush your internal piping by opening your cold-water tap. Allow it to run until the water clears up (approximately 5 to 10 minutes).

If you have any questions about the water main flushing program, contact NPU at 887-2555 or via email at [communitymatters@npumail.com](mailto:communitymatters@npumail.com).



# Brrrrrr... Cold weather ahead!

Take these simple steps  
to save energy—  
and money—this winter

Now's the time to improve your home's efficiency—before the winter heating season starts. Discover how these little changes can make a big difference!

- Clean and tune-up your heating equipment (boiler or furnace) annually; Ask the technician to perform an efficiency test; When replacing a unit, install high-efficiency equipment
- Set water heater temperature to 120 degrees
- Install programmable thermostats; Program it to lower your heat—five to seven degrees usually work best—when you are sleeping or not home; Although you may save more by setting

- the temperature back even further, some savings will be lost because it takes longer to raise the temperature up to its original setting
- Caulk around windows and exterior doors to reduce outside drafts; Up to 60% of a home's heating energy loss is due to outside air leaking in; If curtains move when it's windy outside, that's a good sign that there are excessive drafts around your windows; Install storm windows or plastic film on single-pane windows
- Install weather stripping on exterior doors to ensure a tight seal; Storm doors can also help reduce drafts

- Keep south-facing blinds and curtains open during the day to take advantage of free solar heat; Close them at night to keep heat from radiating out

For more helpful energy efficiency tips, visit [www.norwichpublicutilities.com/efficiency-main.html](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com/efficiency-main.html). Run your own home personal energy profile using the Energy Depot online tool and appliance calculator.



## Community resources

The Norwich Office of Community Development is offering the following assistance programs for individuals and small businesses.

### PROPERTY REHAB LOAN PROGRAM

Private homeowners or investors with property in the City of Norwich may be eligible for property rehabilitation loans at 0% interest. Call Wayne Sharkey for information at 823-3776.

### DOWN-PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

First-time homebuyers in the City of Norwich, who meet income guidelines, may be eligible for assistance of up to \$7,000 for a down payment and closing costs. These loans are forgivable if the homebuyer remains in the property for five years. Call 823-3770 for information.

### HEALTH SCIENCES JOB TRAINING

Tuition assistance for income-eligible Norwich residents to obtain skills in health sciences. Qualifying fields: certified nurses aides, RNs, patient care technicians and medical billing. Call Janice Thompson at 823-3748 for information.

### SMALL BUSINESS GRANT FUND

Small businesses in Norwich, with five or fewer employees whose owner has a low or moderate income, may apply for a grant to improve their business or to start a new one. Deadline for applications is October 19, 2007. Call 823-3770 or 823-3746 for information.

## Be prepared before a storm hits

No one can predict exactly where a storm might hit. Take these steps ahead of time to help minimize the trouble that can be caused by serious weather.

### What to do before a storm

- Keep flashlights with spare batteries, a manual can opener, a battery-operated clock and radio handy
- Have potable water available for drinking. If you have a water pump, fill your bathtub with water for toilet use
- Get extra ice to place in your refrigerator and freezer; Before the storm, set your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings, then return the settings to normal when the storm is over
- Unplug sensitive electronic equipment; Leave one light on to signal when power

comes back on, then plug your appliances in one at a time

- Cordless phones do not work during power outages; Make sure your cell phone is fully charged
- What to do if you lose power**
- Keep refrigerators & freezer doors closed
- **DON'T** bring your grill indoors; Only use your grill for cooking outside
- **DON'T** touch downed wires—you do not know if it is 'live' or not; Do not touch anything that a wire is laying on
- **DO** help us by reporting power lines that need attention like broken or leaning poles, sagging wires or wires on the ground; Contact 887-2555 to report downed lines or unsafe conditions

In the event of severe weather, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) will keep our customers informed about power outages through local stations WICH, WCTY, WNLC. We will make every effort to inform customers about repair status when service is expected to be restored.

# Communitycalendar

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## Ongoing—1st Friday of each month

### First Fridays

Downtown Norwich comes alive with arts and entertainment every first Friday of the month! View original art at several galleries or enjoy a musical or theater production in our theaters. Call 886-4683 for more information.

## Ongoing—1st and 3rd Friday of each month

### Open Mic Night

City Perk, located at 154 Main Street (across from the Court house), every 1st and 3rd Friday each month from 5:30 pm-10:00 pm. For more information, contact Shawn at 204-8443.

## July - October

### Farmers Market

Purchase fresh fruit and vegetables grown by local farmers. Markets are held at Brown Park, Chelsea Harbor Dr. on Wednesdays from 11am-2pm and at Uncas on the Thames-Campbell Building, 401 West Thames St., Mondays & Fridays from 10am-1pm. Call 886-4683 for more information.

## September 8, 2007

### Taste of Italy

This annual event includes bocce games, art exhibit and fireworks. Held at Brown Park. Contact Frank DeMicco at 889-1369 or Frank Jacaruso Jr. at 889-0864 for details.

## September 13, 2007

### Woman's City Club Yard Sale

Proceeds raised are for annual scholarships. Browse through apparel, glassware, small furniture and appliances from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Norwichtown Green. Rain date: September 22. Call 448-3555 for more information.

## September 16, 2007

### Family Day

Food, fun and games, including "Harry O Youth Race." 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Mohegan Park. For more information, call Sherry Filiatreault at 823-3782.

## Norwich Recreation Department Fall Programs

- Archery
- Babysitting Classes
- Basketball Camps
- Basketball Leagues
- Golf Lessons
- Harry "O" Fun Run
- J. Lonardelli Race
- Judo
- Jukido
- Performance Art
- Preschool Sports
- Tennis

For details, visit [www.norwichct.org](http://www.norwichct.org) or call 823-3791.

## September 20, 2007

### Wine & Roses

Annual wine-tasting benefit for the Tommy Toy Fund held under the tent at the Marina at American Wharf. Fine wine, entertainment and hors d'oeuvres from 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Call Cathy Cline at 887-9211 for more information.

## September 29, 2007

### United Community & Family Services Harvest Fare

Celebrate our 30th year at this fair featuring a yard sale, crafters, entertainment, music and kid's activities. Call Cindy Brown at 889-2375 for more information.

## September 29, 2007

### 22nd Annual Run for Reliance House

Kids' race 11:00 a.m.; Adults 11:30 a.m. \$15 for pre-registration; \$20 day-of registration. Kids run FREE. For more information, please call 887-6536 or visit [www.reliancehouse.org](http://www.reliancehouse.org)

## October 5-8 and October 12-14, 2007

### Walking Weekends

35 towns of the Last Green Valley and the QSHC, Inc. sponsor dozens of guided walks of historical, cultural and natural resources along the National Heritage Corridor. Norwich hosts several interesting walks. Contact Andrea Ader at (860) 963-7226.

## October 6, 2007

### NFA Classic Band Competition

6:30 p.m. Features several area marching bands. For information call 425-5742.

## October 7, 2007

### 1st Annual YMCA Rose Pedal Criterion

Riders compete in 10 different categories in separate races on a one-kilometer closed course in downtown Norwich. Range from 10 laps to 80 laps. Call Cheryl Hughes at 860-889-7349 for more information.

## October 12 & 13, 2007

### Dinner Theater—Dead Right!

Premiere of the new murder mystery by The Wild Tyme Players. 7 p.m. at the Donald L. Oat Theater, 62 Broadway. Dinner catered by Olde Tymes restaurant. \$44/person. For more information, call 860-887-2789.

## October 14, 2007

### Norwich Fire Department Open House

Noon to 3 p.m. The NFD is hosting an open house as part of their Fire Prevention Week celebration. For more information, call 892-6080.

## October 27, 2007

### Slater Dinner & Auction Event

Slater Museum, 103 Crescent St., starting at 5 p.m. with self-guided tours. Cocktails, dinner and auction follow. Tickets start at \$75 per person. Contact Joanne Forson at 860-425-5545 for more information.

## October 28, 2007

### Lantern Light Graveyard Walk

One-hour guided walking tour at dusk, led by ghost hunter Donna Kent, featuring The Old Norwichtown Burial Ground & the Norwichtown Green. Or spend the day ghost hunting, which includes brunch at a haunted restaurant. Reservations and lantern or flashlight required. Call 886-4683 for more information. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the CT Graveyard Association.

## Sign up for an energy assistance appointment

Could you or someone you know benefit from energy assistance this heating season? On September 3, 2007—**by appointment only**—the Thames Valley Council for Community Action

(TVCCA) will begin accepting energy assistance applications at the NPU customer service center located at 173 North Main Street. To schedule your appointment, call TVCCA at 889-1365.

When it becomes available, new income guidelines will be posted at the Customer Service Center and on the NPU website at [www.norwichpublicutilities.com](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com)

## Help! Report a streetlight outage

Summer is winding down and the days are getting shorter. This means we will be relying more on streetlights to brighten our roadways and sidewalks.

If you notice a flickering or burnt-out streetlight, please call NPU at 887-2555 to report the problem. Please tell us the street name and pole number. If you can't see a pole number, let us know the number of the closest house to the pole, or other identifiable landmarks. You can also email this information to [communitymatters@npumail.com](mailto:communitymatters@npumail.com).

With your help we can ensure our neighborhoods are well lit for safe traveling.



## Here to Serve You

Visit a special link on our web site for more information:

[www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters)

Please call, fax or email us your questions, comments and suggestions.

Norwich Public Utilities, 173 North Main Street, Norwich CT 06360

Tel: 860-887-2555 | Fax: 860-823-4172 | Email: [communitymatters@npumail.com](mailto:communitymatters@npumail.com)