PWSA CURB BOX INSPECTION PROGRAM

With almost daily news headlines across the country citing potentially elevated lead levels in our nation’s aging public water supply, metropolitan water authorities have focused their efforts to the efficient and accurate identification of their infrastructure’s material type. Michael Baker International has teamed with its long-standing partner of 30 years, The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA), to devise an inspection process to locate and identify service line pipe material within its service area which may elevate lead levels.

PWSA owns and maintains water service lines throughout the approximately 25-mile radius of the City of Pittsburgh and the Borough of Millvale, serving over 82,000 customers. Like most older cities, the lack of accurate pipe installation and drill records, very few as-built drawings and unreliable infrastructure age and material information, the challenge becomes accurately inspecting service lines and identifying their composition. Michael Baker leveraged its diverse office and field skillsets, including surveying, GIS, and website hosting, to inspect 15,000 curb boxes over a twelve-month period.

This Curb Box Inspection Program is one of the tools used by PWSA to determine the need for additional service line evaluation or as a method to validate other service line data. These inspections occur with very minimal impact to PWSA customers and without the need for costly excavation activities. This effective inspection process is a key component to PWSA’s larger Lead Line Replacement Program, which aims to replace 2,700 lead services lines in 2018.