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“Drinking Water Week” May 7-13 reminds of water’s value, cost to deliver

As water treatment professionals from across the state gather in Bath Township on May 3 to learn about new requirements for evaluating, maintaining and replacing aging water infrastructure, Michigan and other states are preparing to celebrate **Drinking Water Week** (May 7–13) and remind consumers that safe, affordable water is a public health and economic necessity that requires investment.

“There isn’t another commodity that will deliver nearly a ton of material directly to you on demand, anytime you want, day or night, for less than a dollar a day,” says **Randy Roost**, spokesman for the American Water Works Association/Michigan Section, who will present asset management best practices at the seminar. “Water is free. It’s collecting it, treating it and delivering it that costs money.”

While residents and businesses pay bargain prices of less than \$1 a day on average for water on demand, the cost to provide it will continue to rise as water mains, pipes and valves age and need repairs and upgrades, AWWA cautions.

“Funding those repairs and upgrades will be a challenge for most communities,” Roost explains, “because consumers are using less water so utilities are not collecting as much revenue as in the past. Less revenue means less money for water infrastructure investment.”

More than 7.2 million Michigan residents receive water service from about 1,425 community water systems. At the seminar May 3, professionals from those plants and facilities will learn about new state rules and how to comply with them to better manage and protect water infrastructure assets.

Comprehensive plans are required from local water systems by January 2018.

During ***Drinking Water Week***, water facilities across the state will host open houses, plant tours and other community events to better educate the public about the essential commodity and service they provide.

Current spending by local, state and federal sources fund only one-third of the needs to upgrade all U.S. water systems. It will cost \$1 trillion over the next 25 years to restore those delivery systems to a state of good repair.

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