

## Public Works Report January 2018

**Freeze Alert:** Frozen water mains, house services and basement plumbing are a very real concern for drinking water providers during extended periods of sub zero weather. Already this winter the LAC crew has responded to several members who called to report no water. As we always do we paid each home a visit to try and determine what the problem was. In each case we found that the homeowner had failed to adequately heat their basement space which caused pipes to freeze. Some folks had pipes burst causing much damage. During some past winters we have had house water services and even some water mains freeze solid as much as six feet deep underground. Usually frozen services start to happen late January into February during very cold winters like this one. Common problem areas are under roads and driveways that are kept plowed which allows the frost to penetrate deeply. There is a proven method to prevent this problem. Moving water rarely freezes even in pipes surrounded by frost. We highly recommend that LAC homeowners run water from a hose bib or other location at a strong trickle 24/7 until overnight temps are consistently well above 0°F. Some folks may say it's a waste of water. It's not. The cost of that water is a tiny fraction of what it costs this community to thaw frozen services and mains. Then consider the huge inconvenience of being without water service for any length of time... We appreciate every homeowners help with this issue.

**Maintenance and More Maintenance:** Operating diesel trucks and heavy equipment in sub zero conditions brings on its own set of problems. Many vehicle systems and components need extra tender loving care to keep them operating properly in the harsh conditions. This time of year our crew spends much of their time between snow and ice storms performing cold related preventive maintenance and repairs. Even with all that extra TLC sometimes equipment just breaks or simply stops working for no other reason than the bitter cold temps. Those breakdowns require quick action to get back into service, especially when the snow and ice is piling up. Luckily we have some very multi talented mechanics on our team. In fact our entire public works crew is quite mechanically inclined. Without their dedication to winter fleet readiness much of our equipment would grind to a halt and become frozen blocks of ice and steel until the glacier recedes in the spring.

**Recent Water Main Breaks:** On a bitter cold Sunday afternoon our crew fixed a bad main break on Leisure Lane. In fact it was so bitter cold that the shank end of the huge frost ripper on our JD 200 excavator snapped off as we tried to chisel through 3 feet of frozen gravel to get to the main break. Luckily when that happened we were almost through the hard frost so we managed to chisel the rest with the bucket and get to the main. I would like to thank the thoughtful LAC member who brought us hot coffee and donuts that day. Also our crew has repaired and improved the broken frost ripper.

**Water Production for December 2017 was 13.6 Million Gallons.** We have seen a significant increase in water use since the announcement of the freeze alert a couple weeks ago. I expect January's numbers to be in excess of 15 million gallons.