



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: Grants, business training available as district pushes for salt reductions

MADISON, Wis. – Grant money and an upcoming training session are among the ways Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is working with area businesses to reduce salt use.

Up to \$200,000 in grants is available through the end of 2018 and a [workshop for businesses](#) will be held May 30 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the district's [Maintenance Facility](#) to share best practices on smart salt use. Register for the workshop at www.madsewer.org/smartsaltuse. Apply for the grants [here](#).

To meet Clean Water Act permit requirements and keep sewer bills low, the district must achieve a 30,000 pound per day reduction in salt use in area homes and businesses over the next five years. Already, the district has seen a reduction of about 8,000 pounds of salt to the sewer per day.

“Area businesses have been leading the way in efforts to reduce salt use at the source,” said Emily Jones, pollution prevention specialist for Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. “These admirable efforts are saving time and money for the businesses, supporting the environment and keeping sewer rates low for everyone. Reducing salt use at the source helps avoid the need for expensive treatment infrastructure.”

District grants fund projects that reduce salt use in water softeners and on roads, sidewalks and parking lots. In addition to salt reduction rebates and road salt reduction grants, the district now offers innovation grants to spur changes in business practices related to salt or chloride use.

Since 2015, the district's grants have supported:

- 46 salt reduction rebate projects (1,541 pounds of salt reduced per day, or 562,708 pounds per year);
- two water quality professional grants (890 pounds of salt reduced per day, or 325,458 pounds per year); and
- 10 road salt grants to municipal and private road salt applicators, saving tons of salt applied to local roads, sidewalks and parking lots that otherwise would have ended up in local waterways.

Salt reduction grant recipients include Hydrite Chemical, UW-Madison, Epic Systems, Steve Brown Apartments, UnityPoint Health-Meriter Hospital, Dane County, Barnes Inc., The Bruce Co., Village of DeForest, Friends of Lake Wingra and Best Western Plus InnTowner. Joe Baldwin, general manager of the InnTowner, said the hotel is saving more than 550 pounds of salt per month after replacing old, malfunctioning water softeners with new high-efficiency units.

“We want to do the right thing for our business and for the environment,” Baldwin said. “After finishing a major renovation of our guest rooms, we began working to upgrade our mechanical systems. Our old softeners were extremely inefficient and the district’s grant money was helpful in defraying the costs of new units, which feature brine reclaim. The technology recirculates brine, saving on salt, labor and delivery costs.”

In addition to the organizations that have improved the efficiency of their own mechanical systems, local water softening companies Hellenbrand and Capital Water Softener are using innovation grant money to install more efficient water softeners in local homes and businesses.

Most wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove salt, so every bag of salt that goes into a water softener passes down the drain, through the treatment plant and into local fresh water streams. Wastewater that now reaches the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant contains an estimated 220,000 pounds of salt per day.

Sodium chloride, called table salt or rock salt, is composed of approximately 39 percent sodium and 61 percent chlorine. It is the chloride portion of salt that threatens local freshwater and is included in the district’s permit. Consultants estimate costs ranging from \$400 million to \$2.3 billion to build infrastructure capable of addressing the chloride issue. The most cost effective solution for ratepayers is to reduce local salt use at the source.

For more information about the district’s salt reduction rebates and how to apply, visit the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District website, www.madsewer.org and search “[chloride reduction](#).”

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District today serves 26 Madison area customer communities covering some 360,000 people. The district owns and operates 95 miles of gravity sewer and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 41 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant each day. Organized as a municipal corporation, the district is a leader in sustainability and resource reclamation, producing clean water, fertilizer and renewable energy. The district’s rates are established by the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission.

