

Valve Exercising

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

One of NeRWA's most popular and most expensive, yet invaluable, pieces of equipment is our hydraulic valve turning machine. This machine in the five years we have owned it has been across the state and from north to south in numerous towns exercising thousands of water main valves.

Why is it important? Well, every town we work in is facing the same problem and that is aging infrastructure. A lot of your water mains, valves and hydrants are 75 plus years old. And over the years most of these valves have never been turned. A lot of times you may not realize the valves won't operate or function at all until you need to use them for isolation purposes.

Another common problem is the old existing map will show the whereabouts of a valve which the operator is unable to locate. Many valves that have been neglected over the years will get buried 12–18 inches under gravel streets or completely paved over by asphalt or concrete.

Valves were put in place for the purpose of isolating different sections of towns or streets so individual areas can be shut off disrupting service to as few customers as possible. When valves are inoperable or don't hold, inevitably you have to shut down a lot more customers and that can be a major inconvenience, especially if you are affecting schools, businesses, nursing homes, etc.

Some towns will request us to bring the machine if they have one or two valves that will not turn at all or are extremely hard to turn. In a situation like this, we are able to apply up to 350ft lbs. of torque, work it back and forth and most of the time free it up. However this can also break the valve, which is why we will have you sign a release form so NeRWA doesn't go bankrupt paying for valves that needed replacing anyway.

Other towns will have us come and do every valve in their system. If your town was done in the past few years, PLEASE be patient with us!! We are trying to prioritize towns that are in close proximity of each other so we are not running from one end of the state to another, and also ones that have never utilized this service.

If you have signed up for this service please keep in mind that there is a \$10 per valve required donation for this service. This is a very expensive piece of equipment and the only service we provide that the donation is required. Valves can be \$1,000-\$2,000 to excavate and replace and live main valve insertion that several companies offer can be well over \$4,000 each, so we feel that if we can bring your valve back to life for \$10 that's a pretty sweet deal.

One thing that we also ask you FIND all your valve boxes and We certainly don't know it definitely speeds up the make sure the lids are easily clear of debris. A lot of guys or air compressor and make them.

This is generally a two man town. We try to bring at least operator can tend to their gladly let you tag along and



to do prior to our arrival is to expose, paint and flag them. where they are all located and process. Also, you need to removable and the boxes are will go around with a shop vac sure we can get a wrench on

operation when we do a two guys. That way the other duties but we would assist us as well.

If you would like to be added to the list or have any questions please feel free to give me a call anytime at 402-672-9084.