

Things You Probably Didn't Know About Water

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

As a Circuit Rider for the Nebraska Rural Water Association I spend countless hours driving from one water system to another. During my driving the past couple of months I have been trying to decide what to write about for this issue of "Nebraska Good Water News." Well, I usually try to share some recent projects that I've been assisting towns with but looking back at the past six weeks we had two weeks of conferences and two weeks of rain. So now it is crunch time to get my article to the office and I have to search my brain for something to share. I decided to change it up a little bit and give you some facts to ponder about water.

1. Of all the earth's water, 97% is salt water found in oceans and seas.
2. Only 1% of the earth's water is available for drinking water. Two percent is currently frozen.
3. An average household uses approximately 30% of their water for outdoor use, such as watering lawns, washing cars and the like. Inside the home the toilet uses the most water with an average of 27 gallons per person per day.
4. More than 13 million homes get their water from private wells.
5. The average daily requirement for water in the United States is about 40 billion gallons, with about 300 billion gallons used for agriculture.
6. You can survive about a month without food, but only 5 to 7 days without water.
7. About two thirds of the human body is water. Some parts of the body contain more water than others. Your skin is about 70% water.
8. A person should consume 2 ½ quarts of water per day (from all sources including water, food, etc.) to maintain good health.
9. In 1974, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act to ensure that drinking water is safe for human consumption. The Act requires public water systems to monitor and treat, if necessary, the water to protect public safety.
10. The first municipal water filtration works opened in Paisley, Scotland in 1832.
11. More than 79,000 tons of chlorine is used per year in the United States and Canada to treat water.
12. There are more than 54,000 community water systems in the United States.
13. Approximately 1.8 million miles of distribution mains carry water in the United States and Canada.
14. Public water suppliers process 38 billion gallons of water per day for domestic and public use.
15. About 800,000 water wells are drilled each year in the United States for domestic, farming, commercial, and water testing purposes.
16. Total water use in a typical single family home is about 100 gallons per person per day.
17. The average five-minute shower takes between 15 to 25 gallons of water.
18. An automatic dishwasher uses about 9 to 12 gallons of water while hand washing dishes can use up to 20 gallons. That's good news for us men.

19. If every home in America had a faucet that dripped once each second, 928 million gallons of water would be wasted every day.
20. You can refill an 8-ounce glass of water approximately 15,000 times for the same cost as a six-pack of soda pop.
21. A dairy cow must drink four gallons of water to produce one gallon of milk.
22. One gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds.
23. One inch of rainfall drops 7,000 gallons or nearly 30 tons of water, on a 60' x 180' piece of land.
24. 300 million gallons of water are needed to produce a single day's supply of U.S. newsprint.
25. Industries released 197 million pounds of toxic chemicals into waterways in 1990.

Now you have been supplied with 25 interesting or maybe not so interesting facts to baffle your friends or board members! Good luck!