Fairfax Water and Vulcan Materials Sign Historic Agreement to Create Future Northern Virginia Reservoir

By Jesse Aranda, Fairfax Water

Lorton, Virginia - Vulcan Materials Company and Fairfax Water signed an agreement during a ceremony at the Griffith Water Treatment Plant in Lorton which sets the conditions for the transformation of a rock quarry into a water storage reservoir in southern Fairfax County.

The reservoir will be developed in two stages: the northern part of the quarry will begin to be filled with water by the end of 2035 after quarry operations cease in that portion of the property; and the remainder of the quarry will begin filling at the end of 2085 after quarry operations cease entirely.

William “Kim” Duke, Vulcan’s Mideast Division President, and Philip W. Allin, Chairman of the Fairfax Water Board of Directors, made official an agreement that has been in the works since May of 2000. It involves a phased conversion of Vulcans quarry in Lorton to a Fairfax Water reservoir ultimately capable of holding up to 17 billion gallons of water. This new reservoir will be used to supplement water supply to accommodate population growth in Northern Virginia.

“Between 2010 and 2040 the population served by Fairfax Water will increase by over 650,000 residents and nearly 550,000 employees working in the area,” said Allin. “The Vulcan Quarry can meet future water supply demands brought on by this growth.”

Main Break Season is Here

Water main breaks can be a common occurrence, this time of year. Changing temperatures cause the pipes and soil around water mains to expand and contract, putting stress on vulnerable areas. We’re fortunate that much of our system is newer than the national average, but our repair crews are still very busy during the winter months.

If you’ve ever passed one of our trucks and wondered what the crew was doing, now the answer could be right at your fingertips. With a few clicks, you can find real-time updates on active water main breaks.

Visit our website at www.fairfaxwater.org and click on the large icon that links to the new Water Main Break Webpage. You can also use www.fwnotifications.org/public to reach the same page.

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Main Break Season is Here  (cont. from page 1)

The page provides a map with the locations of all active water main breaks, details about each break, and real-time repair status updates. You can also report a water main break on the page and find answers to your questions about main breaks.

Although winter weather is often the cause of breaks this time of year, there are a number of factors involved. As mentioned, the age of the pipe affects its vulnerability to breaks. Changes in water pressure within the pipes, vibrations caused by construction or heavy traffic, or changes in soil conditions caused by erosion or flooding can all lead to water main breaks.

What happens in your neighborhood when a main break occurs? Our top priority is to restore water service to any customer whose service is disrupted because of the break. We also want to stop the break from leaking as soon as possible to minimize safety issues and water loss. We have crews on call 24/7 who spring into action to battle fierce - or even fairly mild - water main breaks.

Monitor and report breaks near you!  
www.fwnotifications.org/public

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How a main break is fixed

1 - An employee is immediately dispatched to the site to determine if it is actually a main break and to set up safety equipment. If there is a main break, a crew is dispatched to locate nearby valves to isolate the broken main from the water system. This minimizes service disruptions.

2 - Fairfax Water also notifies Miss Utility of the impending excavation so the water main and other utilities near the water main break can be identified. Repair work cannot begin until all other utilities in the area are identified so that the crew does not damage them.

3 - After the utility lines are marked, excavation can begin. Construction equipment helps to remove most of the ground above the pipe and a pump helps to remove water from the excavated trench. Most Fairfax Water pipes are buried from 3 to 10 feet below ground. Depending on the depth, additional measures may be taken to ensure the safety of the workers. This can extend the time it takes to repair a break.

4 - Once the pipe is exposed, crews can begin to repair or replace the broken main. When the repair is complete, crews open a nearby hydrant to flush air and sediment from the pipe before reconnecting it to the system.

5 - Next, the repair crew backfills the trench with gravel and prepares the road for patching. Workers use cold mix asphalt as a temporary patch until Fairfax Water’s appointed contractor can permanently repave the road.

If your water service has been interrupted due to a water main break, sediment in the pipe and caused water containing this sediment to enter your home. To prevent clogs, remove the aerators from your sinks and washing machine and run the water for a few minutes to flush your pipes. You may also experience cloudy water and bursts of air when service is restored. This is caused by air in the pipes and also can be cleared by running the water for a few minutes.
Why does my water appear to be white, cloudy, or milky?

During this time of year when water coming into the house is colder than the temperature inside the house, your tap water may look cloudy. Cold water holds more air than warm water does. When cold water from the water mains outside comes inside our heated homes and the water begins to warm, the air must escape. It does so by bubbling out in tiny air bubbles, making the water look milky.

The water is safe to drink and there is no "fix" during this time of year since outside temperature isn't controllable. However, you can fill a pitcher or container with water and let it stand for a short time. The water should return to normal as the air escapes.

If you have additional questions, call 703-698-5800, TTY 711, or e-mail us at customers@fairfaxwater.org.

Get a kit. Basic emergency supplies include:

- Three days’ food that doesn’t need refrigeration or electricity to prepare it.
- Three days’ water (a gallon per person and per pet per day).
- A battery-powered and/or hand-crank radio with extra batteries.
- For businesses and offices, water, food bars, and a battery-powered radio or TV to hear local information about whether or not it is safe to travel.
- A power pack for recharging cell phones and other mobile devices.

Make a plan. Everyone needs an emergency plan:

- Decide who your out-of-town emergency contact will be.
- Where will you meet up with family members if you can’t return home?

Stay informed. Before, during, and after a winter storm, be sure to:

- Listen to local media for information and instructions from emergency officials.
- Be aware of winter storm watches and warnings and road conditions.
- Get where you need to go before the weather gets bad.
- Get road-condition information 24/7 by calling 511 or checking www.511Virginia.org.

www.fairfaxwater.org
We Want to Know . . .
If you have comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please send an e-mail to pr@fairfaxwater.org, call us at 703-289-6291, or write to us at this address:
Straight From the Tap Editor
Fairfax Water
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

Important Numbers
Fairfax Water Services
Questions about water service
703-698-5800
After hours/emergencies
703-698-5613
To report a water main break
703-698-5613 or e-mail watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org
Questions about billing
703-698-5800
All other Fairfax Water departments
703-698-5600

Sewer Services
Fairfax County
Department of Public Works
Wastewater Trouble Response Center
703-323-1211
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater

City of Falls Church
Department of Public Works
703-248-5350
www.fallschurchva.gov

City of Fairfax
Department of Public Works
703-385-7810
www.fairfaxva.gov

Dig with C.A.R.E.
Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001 or 811, http://va811.com/homeowners/how-to-whento-
Use TTY 711 (Virginia Relay for all numbers unless stated otherwise

Monday, January 2
New Year's Day (Observed)
Fairfax Water offices Closed

Monday, January 16
Martin Luther King Day
Fairfax Water offices Closed

Friday, January 20
Inauguration Day
Fairfax Water offices Closed

Thursday, February 2
World Wetlands Day

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Tuesday, February 14
Valentine’s Day

Monday, February 20
Washington's Birthday
Fairfax Water offices Closed

Sunday, March 12
Daylight Savings Time begins

Wednesday, March 22
World Water Day

Duck feathers are completely waterproof. When ducks dive underwater, their feathers remain completely dry. You can put away that umbrella, Mr. Duck!

Water-Saving Tip
Upgrade to an inexpensive, water-efficient shower head and save up to 750 gallons of water a month. For more tips on saving water, visit www.mwcog.org/environment/water/watersupply/wisewater.asp.

www.fairfaxwater.org