



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Center for Neighborhood Technology, community advocate and MWRD partner, ensure homes are rain ready

The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), in pursuing drier homes and basements amid changing weather patterns, has earned the praise of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

The MWRD Board of Commissioners (BOC) honored CNT leaders and staff with a resolution at the August meeting, following news that CNT had been recognized this summer with the Association of State Floodplain Managers' 2016 James Lee Witt Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management.

"The Center for Neighborhood Technology has been ahead of its time in merging community outreach with new advancements in stormwater management, leading to the protection of people and property, and the preservation of the natural functions of floodplains," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We applaud them for their efforts and their partnership in managing our region's water."

CNT was founded in 1978 by Scott Bernstein and Stan Hallett to formulate innovative strategies to revitalize the West Garfield Park neighborhood by focusing on energy, transportation, community development, housing and other urban issues.

In 2014, CNT created the RainReady program to develop and implement solutions to widespread urban flooding and stormwater management. CNT became an early supporter of green infrastructure as a tool for stormwater management and has emphasized multi-tiered solutions by engaging people and institutions at all levels, from the individual homeowner to municipalities and other government agencies.

"When we first started working with flood victims affected by the April 2013 federally declared disaster, MWRD's President, Mariyana Spyropoulos and the Executive Director, David St Pierre, and the wider staff of MWRD were working alongside us, attending meetings, listening to flood victims' stories and explaining to them the intricacies of the Deep Tunnel," said Harriet Festing, director of the CNT Water Program, who a day earlier made a presentation on urban flooding at the White House. "We have continued to work alongside MWRD as we help flood victims across the county, upgrading homes and communities to make them safer places to be. We are honored and delighted by this resolution."

RainReady offers residents, community organizations and municipalities a variety of services, including risk assessment, solution mapping, implementation support and ongoing monitoring. RainReady prepares individual property owners for flooding and connects them to contractors to upgrade homes and prevent basement backups and seepage. RainReady also examines how flooding is affecting entire communities and how green infrastructure might mitigate flooding

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.



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issues. The RainReady resilience model has already been implemented in Chicago and seven south suburban communities, including Blue Island, Calumet City, Calumet Park, Dolton, Midlothian, Riverdale and Robbins. Further, CNT has been an active partner with the MWRD in its role as a stormwater management authority of Cook County since 2004. CNT is currently partnering with the MWRD to distribute the MWRD's free rain barrels to property owners to help reduce flooding and conserve water.

"The Center for Neighborhood Technology has been a collaborator and partner for a long time," said Commissioner Debra Shore. "CNT's Rain Ready program represents an innovative, effective and scalable approach to managing urban stormwater challenges. As we experience more intense rainstorms, we know we alone cannot address the effects of these rainstorms coming across our landscape. We need to work with people and communities across Cook County, but through the work of the Center for Neighborhood Technology, we can be a more effective partner, extend our reach, and make a difference in the lives of people throughout our region."

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The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners saluted the staff and leadership of the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) for their efforts to prevent local flooding. Among the staff honored included CNT Interim Executive Director Linda Young

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(front, second from left), CNT Water Program Director Harriet Festing (front, fourth from left) and CNT Board member Bennett Johnson III (back right).



MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore (fourth from right) presented a resolution to staff from the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), including Morgan Mcfall-Johnsen (from L to R), Zoe Gottlieb, Rebecca Raines, Anna Wolf, CNT Water Program Director Harriet Festing, CNT Board Member Bennett Johnson, III, Interim Executive Director Linda Young and Dawn Thompson.

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