

Aqua Pennsylvania: A History of Providing Earth's Most Essential Resource

By Marc Lucca, Aqua Pennsylvania President

Growth in suburban Philadelphia in the 1870s gave birth to what is today, one of the largest investor-owned water and wastewater utilities in the country, Aqua Pennsylvania. As it was first known, Springfield Water Company was founded in 1886 by Swarthmore College professors and residents of the Village of Swarthmore out of true community spirit generated by a common need to provide safe drinking water to their community.

While our community and its streets look much different today than back then, much of today's existing water infrastructure across Pennsylvania was constructed generations ago by men in top hats who used horses to pull their equipment into place. As communities grew, so did the need for safe drinking water. By 1925, the needs of 58 communities across three neighboring counties were met by Springfield Water Company, which led to the company's name change to Philadelphia Suburban Water Company.

Decades later, having served dozens of communities throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania, we began to serve Northeastern, Central and Western Pennsylvania and in 2004, we changed our name to Aqua Pennsylvania to reflect our statewide presence. Today, Aqua Pennsylvania, proudly serves more than 1.4 million residents and business in 32 counties, with our largest concentration of customers, and our headquarters, in Southeastern Pennsylvania where we were founded.

Our mission of providing and protecting Earth's most essential resource is as important today as it was to those Swarthmore professors and residents of the Village of Swarthmore. You can see our mission in action today as we upgrade and replace aging infrastructure to ensure that our customers have safe drinking water and uninterrupted water and wastewater service provided in an environmentally responsible manner.

The drinking water industry — the collective utilities and businesses responsible for the safe delivery of drinking water to communities — was established in the late 1800s to protect public health from waterborne diseases like cholera and typhoid fever. Today, these diseases are most often read about in textbooks or are associated with unfortunate events that sometimes occur in other countries around the world. At Aqua, we are proud to carry on the vision of those early pioneers of Swarthmore College and the Village of Swarthmore who knew all too well the dangers of waterborne illnesses. The delivery of safe drinking water remains our unwavering commitment to every one of the more than 1.4 million people who drink our water and use it daily. We achieve this commitment by investing wisely in our employees and our infrastructure, which we continually update, rehabilitate and replace to ensure reliable service. Equally important to our commitment to public health is the health of the

environment, which is why we invest in rehabilitation and construction of our wastewater facilities to maintain our practice of returning treated wastewater to the environment cleaner than when it was removed.

We understand that as the only utility providing a service that people ingest, it is critical to the health and safety of the communities we serve to train and equip our skilled professionals with the most modern tools, equipment and infrastructure with which to serve our customers. Our infrastructure improvement program includes the rehabilitation and construction of treatment plants and buried pipelines that carry water to ensure the continuous delivery of safe drinking water to customers. Our commitment to renew our distribution system will be achieved again this year, despite COVID-19, when we expect to have replaced more than 125 miles of aging water mains that will improve the distribution of drinking water to our customers and reduce potential service interruptions caused by main breaks.

We are proud to provide an essential service to you every day and, as such, we want you to get to know us better. We want you to know that we are always looking to improve our customer service by prudently investing in our infrastructure, our employees and the communities we serve. Over the next few months, my colleagues at Aqua Pennsylvania and I will share more articles like this that will inform customers about how Aqua:

- invests in infrastructure upgrades that improve customer service by enabling us to produce high quality water;
- establishes emergency preparedness practices that ensure continued service during crises whether caused by extreme weather or a global pandemic;
- engages in community service and environmental stewardship; and
- executes a growth strategy that benefits current and future customers.

I hope you find the information we share helpful and feel free to reach out to us with any comments, questions or concerns. Please know that we strive every day to provide excellent service to the communities in which we live and work, while being cooperative community partners. For more information you can also read about our company by [clicking here](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marc Lucca is the president of Aqua Pennsylvania, which serves approximately 1.4 million people in 32 counties throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.