

# IT'S COLD OUT THERE!

## PROTECT YOUR PIPES!

With the recent and upcoming frigid weather, the Wisconsin Rural Water Association and the City of Beloit Water Utility are offering these winter maintenance tips:

- **Check the temperature of your water.** Normal groundwater temperatures are typically in the upper 40s and lower 50s, so check the water temperature in your homes. To do so, you can use a simple digital thermometer. If it's getting close to 32°, you should take action to prevent freezing.
- **Prevent freezing of service laterals by keeping water moving.** This can be done by letting a faucet run or by drilling a 1/8" hole in the overflow tube of a toilet in the building. If you live in an area that is susceptible to freezing such as a dead end street or cul-de-sac you may want to consider allowing your water to run continuously. A pencil-wide stream is typically sufficient to prevent freezing. You may also simply run the water on a frequent basis throughout the day and night to minimize risk of freezing. If you plan to be away for any length of time have a friend or neighbor run water for you.
- **Check Heating Components.** With the early and extended cold weather we've seen so far, heating components have been running far more than usual. Maintain furnaces to make sure they're operating correctly and replace filters more often. Also check heat tapes and space heaters used with control system elements. For less expensive items, consider purchasing back-ups should something fail. The cold weather is affecting everyone in the state, so space heaters and heat tapes are in short supply.
- **Be careful when thawing frozen pipes.** For exposed pipes in buildings you can use a simple hair dryer. For underground pipes the older method is using electrical current from welders or transformers. However it's best to do this with the help of an electrician so you can check to make sure the current is being confined to the section of piping you're wishing to thaw. Failure to do so can cause fires in nearby buildings. Newer methods of pipe thawing use recirculating hot water or steam. These are much safer than electrical current and they also have the additional benefit of being effective on non-metallic pipes such as plastic or PVC.
- **Check empty and vacant buildings.** Check vacant properties and ask neighbors or relatives to check homes of people on vacation. A great deal of frost or condensation on windows may indicate that a heating system has failed and water may be running due to frozen and broken pipes.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Beloit Water Utility at (608) 364-2888.