

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 2/1/2018

"Toledo Area Water Authority"

On January 31, 2018, the City of Sylvania and eight other local communities met and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to create the Toledo Area Water Authority (TAWA). The ceremonial signing by the nine leaders signals agreement that a regional water authority is needed and should follow the organizational blueprint envisioned in the MOU.

The nine communities are the Cities of Toledo, Sylvania, Maumee and Perrysburg, the Village of Whitehouse, Lucas County, Northwestern Water & Sewer District of Wood County, the Monroe County Drain Commission and Fulton County. The current water service contracts with Toledo all expire in the next ten years.

The MOU will now be considered for approval by the legislative bodies of those nine communities. Sylvania City Council will officially began consideration at their February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, with approval by March 15<sup>th</sup> the goal.

TAWA will provide for regional ownership of a water system that can provide abundant safe drinking water with redundant backup sources at fair prices for all. Fresh water should be a regional asset for attracting new business and residential development.

Water system shutdowns such as occurred a few years ago must never happen again. I envision a system with water from the Collins Park Water Plant interconnected with water from the Cities of Oregon, Bowling Green, Monroe and perhaps even Detroit serving as a backup, creating a truly regional water system. There is also the possibility of a new water plant built on a City of Sylvania easement at the western end of Lake Erie.

We have worked on a regional water system for more than twenty years. With the help of the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) and the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, great strides have been made in the last two years. TAWA would be a standalone Ohio Revised Code 6119 public utility with its own independent board of directors and manager separate from the regular political subdivisions.

With the legislative approval of the member communities, TAWA would be established by action of a Lucas County Common Pleas Court judge. The next two years will be spent establishing the new utility, planning for efficient operations and for redundant water sources in the future. Water rates for all member communities will be gradually equalized over the next eight years.

Thank you to all the regional leaders who have invested their time and energy to formulate this vision for the future of safe water in northwest Ohio! Their hard work and willingness to find solutions will benefit us all as we move towards a better future.



(Left to Right): Jerry Greiner, President, Northwestern Water & Sewer District; Ziad Musselam, Director/Sanitary Engineer, Fulton County; Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, City of Toledo; Commissioner Pete Gerken, Lucas County; Mayor Don Atkinson, Village of Whitehouse; Mayor Craig A. Stough, City of Sylvania; David P. Thompson, Monroe County, Michigan Drain Commissioner, Mayor Rich Carr, City of Maumee; Mayor Thomas Mackin, City of Perrysburg.