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DOW, AWWA honors National Drinking Water Week

LIHUE – The Department of Water (DOW), American Water Works Association (AWWA) and water utility partners throughout North America, is celebrating National Drinking Water Week, May 3 to 7 as a reminder to consumers that high quality drinking water is “There When You Need It”.

National Drinking Water Week recognizes the vital role tap water plays in daily life, the infrastructure that is required to carry it to and from homes and businesses, and the important work of water professionals behind-the-scenes.

“Water infrastructure resiliency is paramount in our operations. From source to storage, our water systems safely delivers drinking water to homes, medical centers and businesses which are critical to health and safety,” said Mark Knoff, DOW’s Interim Manager and Chief Engineer. “Employees work around the clock whenever necessary because our customers depend on clean drinking water to be ‘there when you need it’.”

DOW employs 91 service professionals that manage critical water utility functions within six divisions; including Engineering, Fiscal, Administration, Water Quality, Information Technology and Operations. Together, they operate and maintain nine of Kaua’i’s public water systems, over 400 miles of underground pipeline and provides the necessary customer service functions to ensure that high quality drinking water is available for more than 22,000 service connections.

The coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the importance of drinking water for health, hydration and hygiene needs. In the early stages of the pandemic, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued separate statements assuring consumers that drinking water was safe to use as normal.

“Shortly after the coronavirus was declared a pandemic, EPA and CDC reminded us that we should trust our tap water as we normally would for hygiene and hydration purposes,” said American Water Works Association CEO David LaFrance. “This proves to be extremely vital because handwashing is an important way to stop the spread of the virus. We couldn’t do that without our high-quality drinking water.”

In celebration of National Drinking Water Week, DOW is offering free keiki activity booklets, a commemorative rice paddle and other information while supplies last, at their main lobby in Lihue.

Drinking Water Week is celebrated nationally by the AWWA and has been recognized for more than 40 years as an opportunity to honor both water professionals and the communities they serve. For more information about the AWWA or Drinking Water Week, visit www.awwa.org
Photo 1 (left): DOW employees at the base yard in Lihue. (Photos taken pre-covid-19)

Photos 2 and 3: DOW personnel performs replacement and repair work on underground waterlines, island wide.

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