

News Release

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Cincinnati Announces Collaboration to Establish a Global Water Technology Hub

Partnership Builds on Cincinnati's History of Water Innovation

Cincinnati, OH - Cincinnati City Manager Milton Dohoney announced today, a collaborative partnership with regional stakeholders and utilities in Israel and Canada to establish a utility-based "water technology innovation hub" that will bring water technologies from idea to market. The announcement comes as the U.S. EPA celebrates "100 Years of Water Research in Cincinnati" this year.

Cincinnati's water technology hub will serve as a catalyst to advance water technology, research and policy in tandem with economic development through the formation of public-private partnerships among utilities, environmental technology companies, researchers, economic development, government agencies and others. Cincinnati is now poised to position itself as a world-leader in water technology innovation.

"The time is now to harness the collaborative power and pioneering minds of our local water and wastewater utilities, academia and the U.S. EPA's Office of Research and Development here in Cincinnati to create a world-class hub of water technology innovation," said Cincinnati City Manager Milton Dohoney Jr.

Dohoney was joined by Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati's (MSD) Executive Director Tony Parrott, Interim Director of Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW), Biju George, and Booky Oren, former Executive Chairman of Mekorot, Israel's National Water Company and current Chairman and CEO of Booky Oren Global Water Technologies. Along with representatives from the U.S. EPA and Confluence, a regional technology innovation cluster, the city will work collaboratively with Oren to build the "water technology innovation hub."

Oren, a world renowned water technology expert, is in Cincinnati to meet with city officials, representatives from the U.S. EPA and local and regional stakeholders to begin building the foundation for Cincinnati's "water technology innovation hub."

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“Cincinnati is a true nexus of water innovation and research. I am here to collaborate and share knowledge, and with Cincinnati’s leadership, this region can take us to the next level of water innovation,” said Oren. “This opportunity, what we develop in Cincinnati, is not for Cincinnati alone, but for America.”

In 2004, Oren initiated and implemented Mekorot’s WaTech, which assesses proposals for water technology. Over the years WaTech has identified more than 500 water technologies. Of those, about 30 have been deployed in the global marketplace.

Oren’s model offers a comprehensive platform for business ventures and emerging collaborations to identify needs and assess, test and develop water technologies. Cincinnati will focus on the development of technologies in the areas of:

- Emerging industrial internet platforms
- Reduction of combined sewer overflows (CSOs)
- Water quality
- Water security
- Wireless and sensor technologies

“Cincinnati’s water technology innovation hub’ will allow us to develop cost saving innovations that can expand our utility services beyond our current service area, keep costs low for ratepayers and create new technologies to foster additional revenue sources,” said Tony Parrott. “As GCWW and MSD continue under a joint utility management framework, this water accelerator will support that mission and carry Cincinnati’s historic water legacy forward.”

GCWW and MSD are renowned for leading innovation in the water and wastewater industry. Water Works has pioneered advances in water treatment for the past 100 years including rapid-sand filtration, the use of chlorine and granular activated carbon. The utility will soon be the largest water utility in North America to use ultraviolet (UV) disinfection following sand-filtration and GAC when its UV treatment facility is completed later this year. MSD is regarded as a national leader in the development of sustainable stormwater management solutions and asset management. The Wet Weather Strategy that MSD is implementing in the City of Cincinnati is viewed as a model for other urban communities across the U.S. that are under Federal mandates to reduce combined sewer overflows.

Under the 1912 Congressional directive, a team of physicians, sanitary engineers, chemists, biologists and bacteriologists began the first comprehensive study of river pollution and natural stream restoration. This early research laid the groundwork for improved design and operation of U.S. drinking water and sewage treatment plants. In 1970, the government merged the environmental activities of more than a dozen federal agencies into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The new agency chose Cincinnati as the site of its primary water research program, in part, because of the area's historic accomplishments in that field.

MSD has been again nationally recognized for Excellence in Management by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), effective through 2014. MSD has now earned this prestigious designation three consecutive times beginning in 2005. This award honors MSD for significant efforts toward improved efficiency and effectiveness. In 2011, GCWW received the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) Platinum Award for Utility Excellence. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in implementing nationally recognized Attributes for Effectively Managed Water Sector Utilities. Earlier this month, both utilities were featured as industry leaders in asset management in a national water report.

For more information about GCWW and MSD visit www.cincinnati-oh.gov/water and www.msdbg.org.

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