



## City of Buffalo Featured at National League of Cities Conference

### City Executive Outlined Six-Year Cost-Saving Water Program

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Partnering with the private sector has saved Buffalo \$21 million over the last six years, according to Joseph Giambria, Commissioner of Public Works for the City of Buffalo and Representative of the Buffalo Water Board, at a workshop held at the National League of Cities annual Congress of Cities.

In front of a national audience, Giambria described how the city's work with American Water and local unions saved taxpayer funds through operational and financial improvements while operating, maintaining and managing the Buffalo water system.

"The City of Buffalo Water Board's public-private partnership continues to be a 'win-win-win' situation," said Giambria. "The city wins by improving its water infrastructure and financial management. The city employees win by preserving valuable pensions and benefits. Most importantly, the taxpayer wins by getting clean, reliable water at a reasonable price and improved customer service."

In September 1997, the Buffalo Water Board entered into a contract with American Water to upgrade, operate, and maintain its water system. Services provided by American Water to the City of Buffalo include repair and maintenance of the distribution system; water treatment and pump station operation; residuals management; customer service; billing and collections; and the repair and installation of water meters. The original contract had a five-year term, which has since been renewed for another five years.

After six years of working with American Water, the City of Buffalo has recognized \$21 million in savings through operational and financial improvements. The partnership has made significant improvements to the city's water system, including the complete automation of customer records, the design and construction of a brand new customer service center, the procurement of new vehicles and repair contracts and a new computerized maintenance and management system.

In November 2005, American Water and the City of Buffalo were honored by the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships (NCPPP). Each year, the NCPPP recognizes organizations that have successfully completed unique and innovative public-private partnerships, illustrating the best practices and applications in the field.

"The partnership between American Water, the City of Buffalo and the unions has resulted in truly remarkable achievements. Our industry-leading internal systems and procedures, coupled with Buffalo's willingness to proactively modify its practices, have lead to substantial cost reductions, measurable performance improvements, and superior service to citizens. This is the ultimate goal of partnership," said James R. Campolong, Project Manager of American Water in Buffalo.

Giambria's remarks at the Congress of Cities workshop were reinforced by executives from other cities and recent research. A 2005 study of public-private partnerships for water and wastewater by the Water Partnership Council showed that they:

- Increase regulatory compliance: 74 percent of respondents rated regulatory compliance as better under the partnership than prior to the partnership.
- Keep citizens happy: 93 percent of respondents note that customer complaints decreased or remained the same under the partnership.
- Save money: 92 percent of the municipalities that projected cost savings before entering the partnership achieved the projected savings. The other 8 percent are too early in the contract term to evaluate.
- Benefit the community: 93 percent of respondents note that their private partners proactively participate in community activities above and beyond what is required in their contract.

With a history of over 100 years, American Water provides high quality water, wastewater, and other related services to over 18 million people in 29 states and 3 Canadian provinces.

#### Contact

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