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WaterMainBreakClock.com

New Website Tracks National Epidemic of Water Main Breaks, High Costs of Water Loss and Billions in Taxpayer Dollar Waste

(Dallas, TX, March 10, 2011) -- Every day, 850 water main breaks occur in North America at an annual repair cost of over \$3 billion. Today a new website, www.watermainbreakclock.com, was launched to track the jaw-dropping cumulative price tag to taxpayers of the high costs associated with repairs, replacement and more. Corrosion of old-technology pipe materials remains the leading cause of leaks and breaks that are degrading our water delivery and sewage treatment systems, which are critical to public health and the environment. According to a 2002 congressional study, corrosion costs U.S. water and waste water systems over \$50.7 billion annually, or more than \$1 trillion dollars over the next twenty years.

“The costs are astounding, not just in repairs, but emergency equipment, depleted water supply, traffic disruptions, and lost work time,” said PVC Pipe Association Executive Director Bruce Hollands. “Equally astounding is the fact that some local governments and utilities continue to use the same outdated, costly pipe material that corrodes over a very short period of time.”

Hollands notes that today's corrosion crisis is occurring due to the materials used in America's underground pipe networks over the last 100 years. At first, cast iron was used, with ductile iron gradually replacing it. Both now suffer from the ravages of corrosion. The American Society of Civil Engineers says that hundreds of billions must be spent over the next two decades for upgrades and replacements.

Corrosion-proof technology exists. PVC pipe is a proven and extremely durable alternative to traditional corrosion-prone piping materials. A review by *Engineering News Record* in 1999 found PVC for water and sewer pipe to be one of the top twenty engineering advancements in more than a century. An American Water Works Association Research Foundation study confirms the life expectancy of PVC pipe to be in excess of 110 years.

Unfortunately, some local governments and utilities continue to rely on outdated procurement practices that ignore proven materials like PVC pipe. Closing bids to qualified products prevents informed decisions



from being made, resulting in higher costs. With the price tag of water main breaks on the rise Hollands says this must change.

“With government budgets depleted and debts spiraling out of control, the corrosion crisis is a ticking time bomb,” Hollands said. “PVC’s cost-effectiveness and sustainability are important qualities that city and local lawmakers should be considering—and taxpayers should be demanding. Local governments must first repair outdated procurement practices before repairing our critical infrastructure.”

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Bruce Hollands is Executive Director of the PVC Pipe Association, a non-profit organization that serves the engineering, regulatory, public health and standardization communities (<http://www.uni-bell.org/>).

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Learn more at: [**www.WaterMainBreakClock.com**](http://www.WaterMainBreakClock.com).