BEREA MAIL
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Plans to curb water loss

ETHEKWINI Water and Sanitation (EWS) has made sound inroads into curbing water loss and reducing non-billable water consumption.

This is driven by the multi-billion-rand asbestos cement (AC) pipe replacement project, the pressure-reducing valve initiative and the upgrading of antiquated water meters.

EWS head, Neil MacLeod, said, "In January the municipality billed its highest volume of water in history while correspondingly experiencing a decrease in the bulk water purchased from Umgeni Water.

"This reflected the extent to which the multi-pronged attack undertaken by the municipality to limit its water losses was taking effect.

"Our ageing water reticulation system was losing 260 000 kilolitres daily and we now have embarked on a programme to identify and treat the problem source."

Spearheading the programme was the R1,9 billion AC pipe replacement project with the new pipes expected to provide at least 50 years of leak-free service to the municipality.

The municipality began commissioning pressure-reducing valves throughout the city last March as a means to increasing the life span of water mains, decreasing the likelihood of burst pipes and ultimately reducing water loss. This initiative is expected to save the city around R115 million annually through reduced levels of leakage.

"The municipality was proudly ahead of schedule to achieve its target to install 350 new pressure-reducing valves, commission 100 advanced pressure control devices, conduct leak detection and repair activities on 18000 kilometres of reticulation and replace 700 kilometres of existing AC pipeline in the current year," said, MacLeod.

Throughout the city there were 10 604 domestic water meters that were more than 20 years old and the municipality had replaced 8 637 to facilitate better water meter reading and billing.

The municipality has also embarked on a campaign to eliminate illegal connections, providing consumers with a three-month grace period to legally connect to the system. MacLeod urged consumers to be accountable to the city by assisting EWS to prevent water loss.

Who to phone

IF you happen to witness illegal connections or come across a burst pipe, call 0801 313 013.