

# MRWA Purchases a Valve Exercising Machine



Jeff Dale, MRWA Technical Advisor

I want to say thank you to all of our members who expressed interest and replied to our request about gate valve exercising equipment. MRWA purchased a SD800 Spin Doctor with extended reach by Hurco in March of 2014 (*similar to the photo at right of a valve exercising machine, photo courtesy of Hurco*). MRWA members will have the option to rent this equipment by the day or week.

Taking care of your distribution system can be a daunting task. Your fire hydrants should be exercised in the spring and in the fall and your gate valves annually. Valve exercising is usually on the bottom of the list because they haven't been turned in many years or that they turn very hard; this only adds reasons why you just don't find the time to do it. This equipment will help reduce work place injury. Valves that have not been turned in several years will operate very hard; this will take the physical strain off the operator.

The importance of having operational gate valves was very apparent last winter for many cities. The amount of water main breaks from the extreme frost depth had many trying to isolate



\*Drop a gate valve wrench on the valve to verify you can get on the valve.

\*Consider the possibility of leaking gate valves after you have exercised them.

\*Be aware you might have to replace some gate valves after exercising them.

*“Taking care of your distribution system can be a daunting task.”*

portions of their distribution system. The ability to shut down portions of the distribution system to locate a leak or repair the leak is the job of your gate valves.

The equipment that MRWA is offering will have a replacement/maintenance fee that will be charged to each system. Charging by the day or week will help keep this machine on a working schedule to move on to the next city. This equipment will be operated by the city staff, with training provided by MRWA's staff.

I have heard all the reasons why cities don't exercise their valves. I don't agree with any of them! Those valves were put there for one reason; if they don't work it's your responsibility as the water operations specialist to make the decision makers aware of it.

Things to think about if you are looking at exercising your valves:

- \*Make sure you have a map of your gate valves.
- \*Have all your gate valve covers open and inspected, maybe painted.

The benefits far out way the negatives when it comes to exercising your gate valves. If you have never exercised your valves you can consider taking it in steps over a two or three year period to see what condition your gate valves are in.

The first city to use the gate valve exercising machine will be Medford starting in late April. We will be making every effort to keep the machine on a working schedule in the area as requests come in.

Grab your maps, count your valves, and get on the list for 2014! The fee for 2014 for MRWA members will be \$800.00 per week or \$175.00 per day. Contact MRWA's office at: 800-367-6792 if you are interested.



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