

## NORTH TABLE MOUNTAIN REPORT – OCTOBER 2017

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### WATER MAIN BREAKS!

Water main breaks are a fact of life for those communities worldwide fortunate enough to have potable water delivered to their homes. The annual average for main breaks in the United States is 34 per 100 miles of pipe. Over the last 17 years North Table Mountain Water and Sanitation District has averaged 13 breaks annually. This includes our raw water mains from Ralston Reservoir, through NTM's water treatment plant, and our nearly 100 miles of distribution system piping.

#### Why Do They Occur?

One of the two main reasons is corrosion due to the fairly aggressive soil in our region which causes pitting in metallic pipe which eventually bursts. The other is thermal expansion due to temperature swings, causing the ground to move and pipes to snap.

#### When Do Water Mains Break?

Main breaks can happen all throughout the year. As can be seen on the graph below, we do see some seasonal peaks that are most likely associated with freezing and thawing of the soil above our pipes.

#### What Are We Doing to Reduce Breaks?

There are several factors leading to NTM's lower-than-national average for water main breaks. Our water treatment plant produces extremely high quality water which is not pH aggressive to our piping; our distribution staff is vigilant in the care of our pumping facilities; and possibly the leading reason for our better-than-national average is our proactive approach to water main replacement. The District actively collects and reviews data in order to make informed, fiscally responsible decisions in the allocation of money needed to stay ahead of an aging infrastructure. Repeatedly repairing old pipe is, in the long run, much more expensive than replacing it.

Rest assured, if a water main breaks in your street, NTM staff will respond, day or night, and repair the main as quickly as possible, following all American Water Works Association standards to ensure safe water for your family, and we will not stop working until your water service is restored.



### What Can You Do?

If you suspect we may have a break call the office and we will dispatch a crew to evaluate the situation. If you come across us working in the street, drive slowly and try to be patient with us. Our goal is to complete the repair in the quickest and safest manner possible.

### How Do We Compare?

We are considered a small to medium sized system. According to the Water Research Foundation, on average, main breaks occur at a rate of about 24 per year for a system our size. Random main breaks will always happen with various causes however, by proactively tracking and replacing problem areas we are able to maintain a safe and reliable water distribution system.

