



# WATER FOUNTAIN UPGRADE REDUCES WASTE, PROMOTES HYDRATION

**To reduce plastic waste and promote tap water, Argonne’s Sustainability Program has been implementing a Water Fountain Upgrade Program since 2014.**

The program uses revenues collected from the Argonne Metals Recycling Program to purchase and install combination water fountains and filtered water bottle filling stations in selected buildings throughout the laboratory. This program was re-energized over the last year and has received positive feedback. The program aims to reduce the number of disposable water bottles at the laboratory and promote tap water as a healthy, low-cost beverage for employees and visitors alike.

Based on feedback from past program efforts, Argonne selected a standard unit to upgrade existing water fountains that includes combination water fountain/bottle filling stations and filter. The units are designed to quickly fill a reusable water bottle or cup and provide a drinking water spigot for those without a container.

In fiscal year 2017, 12 new combination fountain/bottle filling stations were installed in five buildings. An additional 11 units were purchased to be installed over the next year.

Buildings 202, 203, 208, 360, and 362 were selected for the new combination fountains. The areas chosen for the new combination fountains include highly visible and common areas, such as main corridors, outside auditoriums, adjacent to elevators, and near restrooms and kitchen galley areas.



**Argonne summer interns stay hydrated using combination water fountain/bottle filling stations.**

The Water Fountain Upgrade Program is implemented through a partnership with the laboratory’s building managers and the Sustainability Program. The program’s success relies heavily on Argonne’s building managers to determine the best locations for the upgraded water fountains and to coordinate with Building Maintenance to install the units in the selected location(s).

Argonne also launched an education and outreach effort during this year's Earth Day celebration to engage site occupants. One hundred reusable water containers were distributed to event attendees via a raffle to promote hydration and waste reduction. The reusable water containers are attractive anodized aluminum cups with a matching screw-on cap and straw with the Argonne logo located on the side.

The Sustainability Program will monitor the program's impact over time as it addresses a significant source of material in Argonne's waste stream. According to the 2015 report *Recycling and Waste Reduction Opportunity Assessment*, prepared by the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center for Argonne National Laboratory, plastics and recyclables, including plastic water bottles, make up 27% (or 275 tons) of Argonne's municipal solid waste each year.

The Water Fountain Upgrade Program supports Argonne's continuous effort to minimize the amount of waste the laboratory sends to our nation's landfills. The program is part of Argonne's waste minimization and pollution prevention program and is one of several programs that help the laboratory fulfill its commitment to be a good steward of the environment.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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