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Ferguson Makes Crucial Donations to Support Wash Station Challenge

Washington, D.C. (June 17, 2021) — IWSH is pleased to announce that Ferguson, the largest U.S. distributor of plumbing supplies, is generously donating water tanks, frost-free faucets and stainless steel basins to be used in community hand-washing stations being deployed on the Navajo Nation.

The Wash Station Challenge 2021, which launched June 1, is a collaboration with the DigDeep Navajo Water Project, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing, Pipefitting and Sprinkler Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA), and Ferguson.

The donation is the latest under a multiyear partnership between Ferguson and DigDeep to contribute to IWSH initiatives that address critical water issues faced by marginalized communities in the United States. Since the original MOU was signed, Ferguson has supported IWSH's efforts on the Navajo Nation by developing household water and decentralized waste solutions on the reservation. Additionally, Ferguson has been instrumental in supporting the development of a new plumbing training program at Navajo Technical University. Through this new program, Navajo students will learn basic fundamental skills and benefit with increased access to apprenticeship and other employment opportunities.

Through June 2021, 10 UA locals and training centers across the United States are assembling approximately 20 wash stations, which will then be delivered to strategic locations on the Navajo Nation. Each station is designed to provide a month's worth of non-potable water for daily hand-washing and general hygiene for a family of six. The UA locals are in contact with their nearby Ferguson branches to coordinate receipt of the products.

"Water and sanitation issues in the U.S. must be addressed collaboratively," said Melissa Hazelwood, Ferguson's senior manager of Sustainability. "Ferguson, along with our partners IAPMO, IWSH, and DigDeep, is delighted to collaborate with UA locals in the implementation of this important initiative, the Wash Station Challenge 2021. Collectively, we have over 200 years of experience in the industry with proven results. When we come together as a team, we can leverage our products, resources, relationships and expertise to improve the quality of life in the Navajo Nation and ultimately for all Americans."

"We can't do what we do without partners like Ferguson helping us to achieve this," IWSH North American Projects Director Jed Scheuermann said.

Scheuermann said the materials used in the construction of the wash stations were specifically chosen because with Ferguson as a national supplier that has branches throughout the United States and Canada, the parts would be available almost everywhere and the same outcome could be assured.

"We were thinking in terms of beyond the pandemic and outside the pandemic, materials that can be sourced locally, virtually anywhere in the United States and Canada," he said, "so that when we came up with our wash station design, it didn't matter if you were building this in Los Angeles or Pennsylvania, in Texas or in Wisconsin — you would have easy, local access to these specific parts."

Plumbers & Gasfitters Local UA 12 (Boston) is assembling two solar-powered wash stations, and the Ferguson branch in Quincy, Massachusetts, donated large water storage tanks, accompanied by washing sinks and faucets, for UA Local 12 members to use.



“On both a local and national level, Ferguson is focused on giving back while supporting the plumbing industry as a whole,” Branch Manager Kevin Kissane said. “The Wash Station Challenge presented us with a great opportunity to do so.”

Kissane added that with Ferguson Cares, “We are committed to doing good in the communities we serve with a focus on hunger, housing, clean water and sanitation and the skilled trades. This great initiative supports our mission and allows us to work together with Plumbers & Gasfitters Local 12, DigDeep and IWSH.”

UA Local 12 Business Manager Tim Fandel said they greatly appreciated the Ferguson branch’s help in supplying them with the products and materials they needed.

“Some of the components aren’t necessarily off-the-shelf items, so Ferguson was very helpful in just being able to make one stop and get three of the items, and deliver straight away,” he said. “So it was very helpful and appreciated that Ferguson would step up and be involved with this really worthy cause.”

Fandel said Local 12 was honored that the UA reached out nationwide and asked its members to participate in this latest IWSH collaboration.

“Unions do a lot — and Local 12 is no different — in the communities that we serve,” he said, “and although we don’t serve the Navajo Nation [on the other side of the country], obviously there’s now a unique opportunity to help out and provide this resource, so we were very appreciative and happy to be involved.”

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