



From: Key to launching massive public health initiative: Teamwork

<https://www.denverwater.org/tap/key-launching-massive-public-health-initiative-teamwork>

The replacement crew

[AGL Construction](#) in Commerce City has worked for Denver Water for years to repair residential meters and replacing lead service lines as they were found during meter work.

So when Denver Water put out a request for proposals for construction crews to help replace thousands of customer-owned lead service lines a year, “that was right in our wheelhouse,” recalled AGL owner Kate Davis.



Workers with AGL Construction set to work replacing a lead service line. Photo credit: AGL Construction.

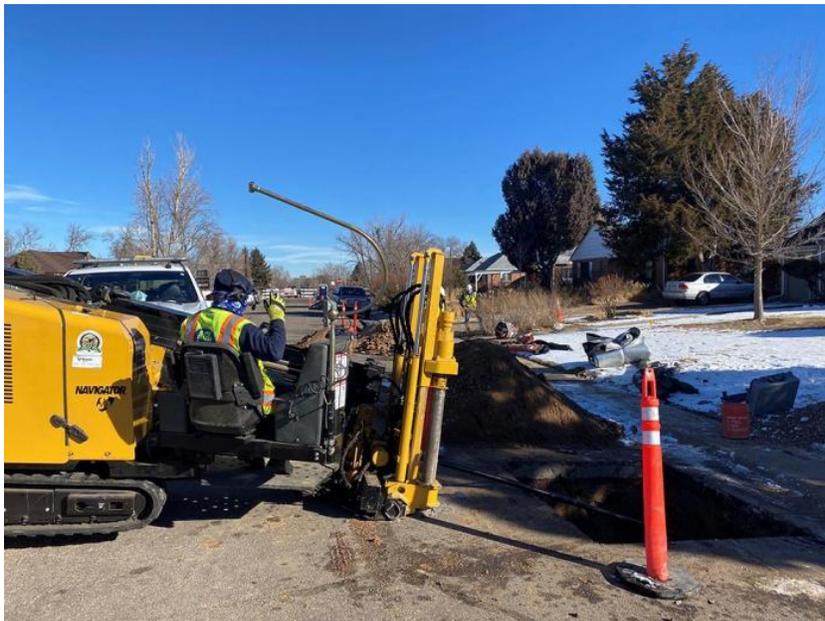


AGL was one of a handful of contractors brought onboard to be the boots-on-the-ground side of the Lead Reduction Program: [replacing old, customer-owned lead service lines](#), the primary source of lead in drinking water. Along with AGL, K.R. Swerdfeger Construction Inc. and Global Underground Corp. also are replacing lead service lines in 2021.

The contractors replace lead service lines through the program. Denver Water crews replace lead service lines when they're found during the utility's regular maintenance and infrastructure work.

The crews dig through pavement to find the customers' old lead service line where it connects to Denver Water's main water pipe under the street. And they go into people's homes and basements to sever the old service line, bring in a new, lead-free copper line, and connect the new line to the home's internal plumbing.

"We started right around the time that COVID-19 started happening, and it was difficult, challenging. We had to protect the customers, protect our own staff, and there was a lot of fear on all sides," Davis recalled.



A machine designed to bore through the earth often is used to replace customer-owned lead service lines. Photo credit: AGL Construction.



Protocols were swiftly developed, including limiting interaction with customers, requiring customers and crews to socially distance where possible, and mandating masks be worn by crews and customers alike while the work was underway.

“It was a couple of strange months, but by the time we hit last summer, having put in all our effort, we really hit our stride, completing 1,500 replacements for the program in 2020,” Davis said.

“Our crews, they are so good. They enjoyed the work and working with the customers. Everyone was — and is — so proud of what we’re doing. It’s a public health service for our community.”

Overall, including work done by contractors in the lead program and Denver Water crews doing regular infrastructure upgrades, [5,287 customer-owned lead service lines were replaced](#) in 2020.