

We live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is intent on doing our part to keep it that way.



CONNECTIONS



Winter 2016

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FIELD CREW

Did you know that Destin Water Users (DWU) maintains 135 miles of water lines within its water distribution system? There are 690 fire hydrants attached to the water distribution system that are maintained by DWU and 2,051 water valves that can be opened or closed to control the flow of water. DWU has 8,465 water meters connected to the system. Every one of those meters has a backflow device installed to prevent cross contamination. Who is responsible for maintaining these assets? The answer to that question is the DWU Field Crew Team.

The Field Crew has electronic records of all of the assets noted above that they have readily available to them

in their trucks. They use an asset management system to record technical information about the assets, repairs, main breaks, service line breaks, and other pertinent information.

When they aren't responding to emergencies, they perform routine maintenance on the system. All valves and fire hydrants are exercised every two years. They also flush the fire hydrants every two years. This work ensures that fire hydrants are functioning properly in case they are needed for emergencies. It also ensures that we are able to isolate sections of the water distribution system to complete any required repairs.

Annually, we test all commercial

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James Bramblett and Monica Autrey receiving the Landmark Award Marker for Tower 1 and the Outstanding Distribution Award at the FSAWWA Conference in Orlando in December.

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backflow devices as well as all water meters that are 2” and larger. DWU has a crew that performs the backflow testing. They complete 95% of the tests on the 1,057 commercial backflows in our system. This is an important public health service because the backflow device prevents any contaminants from private property back feeding into the public water system. This same crew also tests 324 large size water meters each year to ensure that the meters are registering properly.

When the crew is not busy replacing meters, repairing leaks or installing new water lines, they help investigate high usage or no usage meter readings. This work is critical to help limit water loss and to ensure accurate billing. Other routine work includes locating water lines and other assets. When anyone wants to bury something in the right-of-way, they call in locates to identify what’s already in the ground, so hopefully, they won’t damage the existing utilities.

The DWU Field Crew Team works hard to ensure that the water flows when you turn on the tap and they take great pride in serving our members. The work they do is quite involved and they are constantly striving to improve. Recently, the Florida Section of the American Water Works

Association recognized them for their efforts.

The Florida Section of the American Water Works Association (FSAWWA) named Destin Water Users, Inc. the first place winner of the 2015 Division 2 Outstanding Distribution System Award. The award was presented at the recent FSAWWA Conference in Orlando.

Each year, FSAWWA reviews submissions from across the state to determine the water distribution systems deserving special recognition for outstanding performance. FSAWWA committee members judged DWU’s system based on information provided in the following categories: water quality, operations records, maintenance, professionalism of employees, safety and emergency preparedness, and cross connection/control program.

Our mission statement is that we live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is determined on doing its part to keep it that way. We are proud that our peers have recognized our efforts to preserve this paradise we call home.

LOCKWOOD WERNET
General Manager

NOTICE OF HIGHWAY 98 UTILITY RELOCATION

The Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) is widening Highway 98 from Airport Road to the Silver Sands Outlet starting in January 2017. As a result of this widening project, all utilities must be relocated to accommodate the new construction. DWU will begin its utility relocation in February of this year and work should be completed within 12 months. DWU will be relocating water, wastewater, and reclaimed water lines sized from 8” to 16” along 2.3 miles of Highway 98 from Airport Road to the Okaloosa County line at a cost of \$4.5 to \$5 million.

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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

(from left to right)

SEPT 2015 Logan Law

OCT 2015 Jeff Mooso

NOV 2015 Karen McAfee



TOM WEIDENHAMER, PRESIDENT

Message from the **PRESIDENT**



We have just completed the College Football awards season where the best and brightest were recognized for their contributions to the game. In light of recognizing the most valuable players, I would like to take this time to recognize an MVP at Destin Water Users, Finance Director Wanda Fox.

The reason I am taking this time to recognize Wanda is because she will be retiring from DWU at the end of this month and we owe her a debt of gratitude for her long and stellar service to DWU and its members.

Wanda started working at DWU on July 17, 1981. That is not a misprint; she has worked for the same company for just over 34 years and six months. In this day and time when people are constantly moving, Wanda's long time service is a testament to her dedication to DWU and its members.

Wanda was hired as a Records Manager Assistant working in the back office of the old building, located at the corner of Benning and Azalea Drive, assisting with billing and financial record keeping. She worked her way

up through the years holding various positions in the business office until she was promoted to Finance Manager in 1993. She has faithfully served in that position, overseeing all the financial and customer service operations of DWU, ever since.

When Wanda started working at DWU, everything was hand written. Membership information was maintained in a card file, financial information was recorded in hand written ledgers and monthly bills had to be manually prepared. Wanda brought DWU into the computer age implementing the first computerized financial software package for the company. Since then she has overseen two software conversions and the addition of computerized billing.

In addition to the improvements to our financial systems, Wanda helped modernize our billing and payment options. Under her direction, DWU added on-line bill paying, credit card payments, e-bills, and electronic fund transfers. These innovations have made it easier to deliver monthly bills to customers and for customers to

make payments.

As mentioned above, one of Wanda's functions is to oversee customer service which includes meter reading. During her tenure, DWU has undertaken two meter change-outs and she has seen the evolution of our meter reading from manual reads to touch reads to radio reads. Wanda was intimately involved in this work ensuring the completion and accuracy of the change-outs, which ultimately helped improve our customer service.

This is just a short list of what Wanda has done for DWU, but her service has been invaluable. Employees of Wanda's caliber are few and far between - they are MVP's! We can't say enough to express our gratitude and thanks for her years of dedication and service; therefore, I will simply say:

Thank you Wanda, for a job well done!



DESTIN WATER USERS, INC.

P.O. Box 308
Destin, FL 32540-0308

OFFICE HOURS

The DWU office is open Monday thru Friday
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

PHONE NUMBERS

Administrative Office – Bill Payment Questions and Concerns
(850) 837-6146

Emergencies, Nights, Sundays and Holidays
(850) 837-6551

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Running late? Pay your DWU bill over the phone! We accept MasterCard, Visa and Discover. Contact a Customer Service Representative for more information. You can also pay your bill online at www.dwuinc.com

WANT YOUR MONTHLY BILL PAID AUTOMATICALLY?

We can do it! Visit Customer Service and complete an electronic transfer form. The automatic bank draft option is easy and it saves you time. . . your bill will be paid with no worries!

PAY ONLINE



Paying your DWU bill is easier than ever! Simply go online to dwuinc.com and click "Payment Options" at the top of the page. It will take you to the correct location and provide instructions on getting set up for this convenient payment method.

NOTICE Of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Destin Waters Users, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, March 1st, 2016, starting at 5 P.M. in the Board Room at the DWU Main office located at 218 Main Street. The President, Treasurer, and General Manager will present

reports concerning the status of the Corporation. Results from the recent election will be announced and the DWU Employee of the Year will be recognized. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Destin Water Users Board of Directors



Tom WEIDENHAMER
President



Ginger BARRY BOYD



Mike BUCKINGHAM



Jim FOREMAN



Ames HUDSON



Jim LINK



Jimmy NEILSON
Vice-President



Rick SCALI
Secretary/Treasurer



Sandy TRAMMELL