

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 2019



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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

The aging workforce is creating an employment crisis for utilities and other skilled worker industries. Talk to anyone in these industries and they will tell you that they are having trouble finding workers to replace their employees who are retiring. This issue is a concern for water and wastewater utilities, electrical utilities, gas utilities, the construction industry and others.

According to an Environmental Protection Agency report on Water Sector Workforce, it is projected that in

the next 10 years, 37 percent of the water utility workers and 31 percent of the wastewater utility workers will retire. An article by Fayola Powell, "The Worker Shortage in the Welding and Utility Industries", states that the average age in the welding and utilities industries is 55 and above and these sectors stand to face a shortage of more than 300,000 workers in less than a decade. An article on workforce development published on The Associated General Contractors of America website reports that 80 percent of contractors report difficulty finding qualified craft workers.

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Message from the GM continued

The report “Renewing the Water Workforce” published by Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, cites Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that from 2016 to 2026, 10.6 percent of the water workforce will retire or leave the industry each year and the industry will also experience a faster than normal employment growth of 9.9 percent during that same period.

Regarding DWU, we compare a little better than the statistics reported above. DWU has 28 percent of its workforce that is age 55 or older and the average age of our workforce is 46. Additionally, we don’t anticipate any major growth in our workforce over the next 10 years.

What these statistics show is that we have a gap in the available workforce to fill vacancies from retirement and that gap will grow as we have additional demand for more personnel to carry out the repair and replacement of the country’s aging infrastructure.

Now as an industry, we hold some responsibility for not doing a better job of recruiting new personnel and promoting the utility industry as a career. However,

the biggest factor for the gap is that the education model has been to push students to pursue careers that require four-year degrees and they have not been encouraged to explore the skilled trades. The primary reason for this model is there has been a stigma associated with students who attend trade schools and as a result these education programs have declined along with the available workforce.

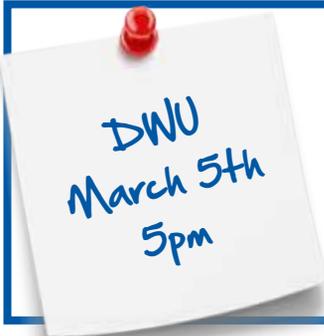
It is my opinion that there should be no stigma attached to working in the utility industry or the trades. Utility workers tend to have a high knowledge requirement across a broad range of subjects. In the water industry, workers need a solid understanding of math, physics, public safety, chemistry, electrical, mechanical, building and construction, and law. Utility workers use a wide range of tools and technologies to perform their job. The “Renewing the Water Workforce” report states that on average water utility workers use 63 tools and technologies each as compared to 6 tools and technologies each used by workers in all occupations nationally.

So, what are we doing to address the issue of workforce development? First off, we are talking about it and making

people aware of the issue. One example is this article; another is that we talk about careers in the water industry at all the tours we conduct during the year. Some utilities have started internships, mentoring programs or they have worked with the local school system to reestablish skills training programs. Locally, we have had discussions with Northwest Florida State College along with other utilities to talk about developing a skills training program in our area. There are more efforts being undertaken to address the worker shortage and I encourage you to lend public support when it is called for.

While people don’t grow up dreaming about working in the utility industry, it is an honorable profession. Utility workers are employed throughout our country in every community. Work in the utility industry provides good wages, benefits and job security. It is a worthy profession to consider and it is a necessity to providing a basic quality of life to a community.

LOCKWOOD WERNET
General Manager



Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Destin Waters Users, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, March 5th, 2019, starting at 5 P.M. in the Board Room at the DWU Main office located at 218 Main Street. Reports concerning the status of the Corporation will be presented by the President, Treasurer and General Manager. 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.



EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



SEPTEMBER 2018
Lena Hall



OCTOBER 2018
Gregg Griffith



NOVEMBER 2018
Maude McCourry



TOM WEIDENHAMER, PRESIDENT

Message from the **PRESIDENT**

The core values of Destin Water Users are Vision, Quality, and Stewardship. We have a vision for the future and the work we need to do to get there. We are continually ensuring the quality of our operations by making the improvements needed to guarantee that we are the best we can be. We are being good stewards of the resources we have been provided to ensure that we provide our members with safe and reliable drinking water and properly treat and dispose of their wastewater. I would like to share some of the projects we are undertaking that show how we are living our out our core values.

This past year, we began repairs on the gravity sewer system; focusing our work on the oldest part of our system on the west side of Destin. This will be an ongoing project that will take several years to complete. The repairs include spot repairs, line replacement and lining of sewer pipe. Ultimately, the repairs will stop inflow and infiltration

of ground water into our system and extend the life of the sewer system.

In the future, we plan to complete condition assessments of our water distribution lines and our sewer force mains. Once those assessments are complete, we will plan a repair and replacement program to extend the life of those assets.

Looking at our water distribution system, we have identified some smaller diameter water lines that need to be replaced with larger pipes. We are also looking at adding fire hydrants to some of these lines to improve fire protection.

If you drive by our well located near the intersection of Calhoun Avenue and Forest Street, you will see a new 750,000-gallon water tank under construction. This new water tank will help improve water distribution and fire protection on the westside of our service area.

At the George French Water Reclamation Facility, we have just completed upgrades to the motor control center (MCC) and the reclaimed water filtration system. This year we will be making

improvements to two of our older oxidation ditches to improve their ability to treat the wastewater we are processing. Additionally, we will be replacing the headworks which cleans inorganic debris from the wastewater stream as it enters the treatment plant. These projects improve our ability to treat the wastewater we process, and they are more energy efficient; thereby, improving our carbon footprint.

We also have scheduled repair and replacement work to perform on the 83 lift stations we maintain as part of our collection system. The work includes replacing aging pumps and piping, upgrading control panels, rebuilding an undersized lift station, and installing a new supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system.

All of these projects demonstrate our core values of Vision, Quality and Stewardship and they show that we are living up to our mission statement that "We live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is intent on doing its part to keep it that way."



DESTIN WATER USERS, INC.

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

OFFICE HOURS

The DWU office is open Monday through 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.



**NEVER
PUT THESE
DOWN THE
DRAIN**

FOG (Fats, Oil, Grease)

- Paper Towels**
- Cotton Balls**
- Chewing Gum**
- Dental Floss**
- Rags**
- Plastic or Rubber Items**

Paint

- Flushable wipes**
- Feminine products**
- Q-tips**
- Toys**
- Unused Medications**

Destin Water Users Board of Directors



Tom WEIDENHAMER
President



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Ames HUDSON



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Vice-President



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