

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



DESTIN WATER USERS INC.

CONNECTIONS



SUMMER 2023



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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Operations Manager Monica Wallis and I attended the Destin Chamber Career Day with Destin High School back in April. There were approximately 20 businesses scheduled to speak to 250 high school juniors and sophomores to talk about various career opportunities and the education requirements for those careers.

The Career Day was held at Destin United Methodist Church Community Life Center. Tables were set up to accommodate three to five students and the speakers moved from table to table talking to the students for three to four minutes in a speed dating format.

Now I've never been on a speed date before, but it was a challenge to get the message of what we do and why we do it out in that short of a period. Thank goodness some of the other presenters didn't show, so we manned two tables which allowed us to split our messag-

hello Summer



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Message from the GM continued

ing up between Monica and myself. She talked specifics about different jobs, and I talked about what and why we do what we do.

I started off by introducing myself, stating my position and sharing the fact that Destin Water Users is the water and sewer provider for the City of Destin and portions of unincorporated Okaloosa County around Kelly Plantation including Destin High School.

I then went on to explain that we have two major priorities that we focus on as the water and sewer provider for our community. First and foremost, we are environmental stewards and secondly, we are responsible for the public health and safety of our community.

As the water and sewer provider for our community, we have been granted permission from the governing authority, the State, to extract a valuable resource, water, and we are charged with delivering that resource to our end users all the while making sure that the resource is used wisely and there are no harmful effects on the environment from our use of the resource. Additionally, after delivering the resource to our end users, we are responsible for collecting the used water and delivering it to a certified treatment facility for proper treatment and disposal. I went on to explain that we take the additional step of treating our wastewater to be disposed of as public access reuse, reclaimed irrigation. We are environmental stewards.

The second priority noted above was public health and safety. We are responsible for properly extracting water from the environment, treating it to specific public health standards and ensuring that it is safely delivered to our customers so that when they turn on the tap, they are guaranteed safe clean drinking water. And when they are done using that safe clean water, we are there to collect it, treat it and return it to the environment, guaranteeing that it has been treated to a level that it will not cause harm. We are public health and safety.

Everyone in the water and sewer industry is an environmental steward and we are responsible for public health and safety.

I went on to share that nearly any community you visit or move to will have a water and sewer provider. The provider could be a small water provider like Baker Water, a medium sized water and sewer co-op like DWU, a municipal or county utility like the Okaloosa County Water and Sewer Department or even a private utility.

But no matter where you go, there is a team of professional people who are responsible for and dedicated to providing water and sewer services to their community.

Additionally, I shared that the water and sewer industry is one of the few industries that no matter what is happening in the economy, people are still turning on the tap to get drinking water and they are flushing the toilet to get rid of it when they are done using it. Water and sewer needs don't go away during an economic downturn.

If time allowed, I talked about the team that it takes to run a water and sewer utility and Monica focused on this in more detail during her presentation. Just think about the various trades that make up TEAM DWU. Site work technicians, pipe fitters, mechanics, electricians, electronics, chemist, biologist, IT, finance, accounting, HR, customer service, engineers, warehousing, GIS, AutoCAD and more depending on the size of the utility. Additionally, many of the positions on TEAM DWU work in multiple trades such as Water, Wastewater, Lift Stations, and Field Crew. The point is that no matter what your interest and your specific skill set, there is opportunity for employment in the water and wastewater industry.

Unfortunately, our industry is struggling to find people who are willing to pursue the available opportunities and fill the vacancies being created by our aging workforce. This is critical as we anticipate that one third of the water and wastewater workforce will retire in the next ten years. Therefore, I would like to encourage you or someone you know to consider a career in the water and wastewater industry.

Why should someone consider a career in our industry can be summed up in our mission statement: We live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is intent on doing our part to keep it that way. What better way is there to do your part to preserve paradise than to work in the water and sewer industry and be an environmental steward who preserves public health and safety.

LOCKWOOD WERNET
General Manager

WHAT IS FOG?

Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) clog sewer pipes (yours and ours) and cause preventable, costly damage that can have detrimental effects on our infrastructure and environment. Putting FOG down the drain can cause sewer overflows into our waterways and put our beautiful Destin ecosystems at risk. We all have a collective responsibility to divert FOG from our sinks, drains and toilets, keeping our systems clean and making a positive impact on our environment. Help us keep Destin beautiful!



MARCH 2023
Rick Martin



APRIL 2023
Abby Martin



MAY 2023
Richard Tidwell

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



TOM WEIDENHAMER, PRESIDENT

Message from the PRESIDENT

Our mission statement is: “We live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is intent on doing our part to keep it that way.” One of the ways we do our part to preserve paradise is to plan for disasters and not just hurricanes but other calamities that could interfere with our ability to serve our members. Below is information taken from the introduction of our Emergency Response Plan that explains the what and how we prepare for when a disaster occurs.

When a disaster occurs, Destin Water Users, Inc. must provide coordinated response and recovery operations and resources to minimize interruption of essential functions and carry out the mission of the Utility.

The Emergency Response Plan (ERP) guides internal response efforts to a variety of threats and hazards, thereby setting the stage for effective short- and long-term recovery efforts. The responses we have prepared for include Chemical Spill/Leak, Extreme Cold Weather, Credible or Confirmed Water Contamination, Extreme Heat, Fire, Hurricane, Lightning, Pandemic, Power Outages, Sabotage and Vandalism, and Tornado/Waterspout.

Emergencies may involve multi-agency coordination from City and County resources as well as from neighboring utilities to create a unified response. Activation of an incident command center known as the Utility Operations Center or support to Okaloosa

County Emergency Services will also activate the ERP.

The plan is based on the National Response Framework and is compliant with America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018. It is intended to complement the County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and other response plans.

Additionally, there is a litany of state and federal regulations and regulators that provide the framework for the ERP.

AWIA requires the ERP to include strategies and resources to improve Utility resiliency, including physical and cyber security, as well as pre-identified procedures and equipment lists that can be used to lessen the impact of an emergency and enhance the safety of personnel, the water, wastewater, and reclaimed water systems, and the public. The ERP is also required to include strategies for detection and mitigation of malevolent acts or natural hazards that threaten the security or resiliency of the system.

The ERP is to effectively plan for, respond to, recover from, and communicate during any emergency that may impact the Utility. The following describes each phase of an incident.

Being prepared is a responsibility of all Utility personnel. This phase is a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, and exercising staff's abilities to respond to an emergency, then evaluate any deficiencies for corrective action. The cycle enhances the Utility's abilities, effectively reducing vulnerabilities to preserve life, facilities, infrastructure, and the environment while carrying out the Utility's mission.

The response phase includes mobilizing staff

and resources to respond to any internal or external emergencies that threaten the Utility's ability to accomplish its mission. To the extent possible, response procedures are predetermined by Incident Action Checklists. These checklists are built for flexibility, which allows them to be tailored to the size and scope of an emergency. They serve as guidance since each emergency may require a slightly different response. Following a real-world event, Utility leadership and staff involved in the response will conduct an evaluation of the operations that occurred and develop an after-action report to correct any deficiencies encountered during this phase.

The ability to quickly return to normal operations is imperative following an emergency. Recovery operations focus on rebuilding infrastructure, restocking supplies, and equipment, and restoring services to customers. This often involves long-term solutions that can sometimes last for years.

Mitigation applies to the previous three phases simultaneously and is the effort to reduce the impact or severity of an incident through effective preparedness, efficient response operations, and smart recovery decisions. Applying mitigating measures throughout each phase of emergency management saves money through resource management, minimizing impacts to infrastructure and maintaining a resilient workforce.

The ERP is a living document, and it is updated regularly to account for personnel and organizational changes and in accordance with industry guidance.

Tom Weidenhamer



DESTIN WATER USERS, INC.

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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) 837-6146

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Running late? Pay your DWU bill over the phone! We accept American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Discover. Contact a Customer Service Representative for more information. You can also pay your bill online at www.dwuinc.com or dial 1-833-454-2973

WANT YOUR MONTHLY BILL PAID AUTOMATICALLY?

You can now sign up for autopay using a credit card or your checking account by visiting www.dwuinc.com

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.

2022 ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

DWU strives to provide you safe and reliable drinking water and to keep you, our members, informed about the quality of our drinking water. Annually, we prepare our Annual Water Quality Report which can be viewed on our website at:

<http://dwuinc.com/advisorynotices/dwu-water-quality-report>

Notices of the Annual Water Quality Report are sent to all of our members to view your 2022 Annual Water Quality Report and learn

more about your drinking water. This report contains important information about the source and quality of your drinking water. In 2022, DWU detected 16 contaminants in the drinking water. However, none of these contaminants were above the EPA acceptable levels for drinking water. For a translation of the water quality report or to speak with someone about the report please call (850) 837-6146. If you would like a paper copy of the 2022 Annual Water Quality Report mailed to your home, please call (850) 837-6146 or email cs@dwuinc.com.

DESTIN WATER USERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Tom
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President



Jim
FOREMAN



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NEILSON
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