



CONNECTIONS

SMART BALL

PURE Technologies technician holding Smart Ball just before launching in one of DWU's primary force mains. The Smart Ball collects data on the pipe's condition as it travels along its length. This technology is being used by DWU to prepare condition assessments of its primary force mains so that it can plan future work as needed.



FALL 2019



A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

One of the concerns of the Florida Legislature the last couple of years has been sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). The reason that SSOs are a concern is that these unauthorized discharges may contaminate groundwater or surface waters. A Sanitary Sewer Overflow occurs when sewage (or wastewater) overflows from the sewer collection system. This means that sewage has come out of a broken pipe, manhole or pump station, rather than staying within the collection pipes and being sent to the wastewater treatment plant.

major backups, flooding that causes manholes to go underwater for long periods of time, extreme storm events and loss of power at lift stations (sewer pump stations).

Looking back to 2013, DWU has reported SSOs in its sewer collection system (56%), at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (19%), on private property (13%), and in our reclaimed distribution system (12%). DWU does not maintain sewer collection systems on private property but we are typically notified of these SSOs and as good stewards of the environment we report these incidents to DEP and the Health Department. It should also be noted that some of the reported spills are caused by other contractors working

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Message from the GM continued

in the area where our lines are located as 43 percent of the collection system spills and 30 percent of the reclaimed spills were caused by others.

No matter what the cause, we take all SSOs seriously and we have programs designed to help prevent future spills.

One program is our Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey (SSES). Under the SSES program, we have videotaped all gravity sewer lines we maintain. We took the information that was gathered and prepared a rehabilitation program to fix the problems we found. In 2018, we completed repairs in the oldest part of our service area west of Benning Drive. In 2019, we are working on areas along the northern part of our service area that are susceptible to storm surge. We will complete repairs in the rest of our service area in 2020 and 2021. Once all the initial repairs are completed, we plan to restart the evaluation process because we know that maintaining aging infrastructure is an ongoing process.

To maintain the 83 sewer pump stations (lift stations) in our system, we perform visual inspections of each station on Mondays. These visual inspections assure us that each station is functioning properly, and it helps identify any immediate work that may need to be performed. As part of the budget process, we regularly budget for repairs and replacements of pumps, control panels and piping at lift stations based upon condition assessments.

At the Wastewater Treatment Plant, we are undertaking a construction project to replace our Headworks. Headworks is the point where all wastewater enters the plant and we screen out foreign matter from the waste stream. One of the challenges we have experienced through the years is surges in the flows that come into the plant. The new design will incorporate a surge tank to eliminate this issue, and the new

screens should remove foreign material that has caused problems further downstream in our treatment process.

We have a grease trap program to ensure that food service establishments properly control fats, oil and grease (FOG) to prevent them from entering our wastewater system. The program includes regular inspections of food service facilities to monitor their performance and to educate them on how to properly manage FOG.

Although we are taking steps to help prevent SSOs, we also need your assistance. During a hurricane when power is out at your home, our lift stations don't work because they also don't have power. Now, we do have a fleet of portable generators to help operate our system, but it would be helpful if you could be conservative with your flushes. Another thing that is helpful is to keep the cap on your sewer cleanout. We've had incidents in the past where members have taken the sewer cleanout cap off their sewer line to help drain their yards after heavy rains. Unfortunately, our system is not designed to treat stormwater and that water can overwhelm our system. Finally, we ask that you don't put certain things down the drain. Many of our SSOs are the result of grease blockages or rags that clog the sewer lines and pumps; therefore, we ask that you don't pour fats, oils, or grease (FOG) down the drain and we ask that you don't flush wipes, dental floss, paper towels or feminine hygiene products.

The mission statement of DWU is "We live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is intent on doing its part to keep it that way." We are trying to do our part to preserve our paradise and we hope we can do more with a little assistance from you.

LOCKWOOD WERNET
General Manager



Director Elections

Destin Water Users, Inc. is a member owned not for profit cooperative utility. The business of the corporation is to construct, maintain and operate a water and wastewater system for its members. The business affairs of the corporation are overseen by a nine-member Board of Directors elected from the membership of the corporation. The Directors are elected to staggered three year terms. The Board members meet monthly to conduct their regular business and they also meet in special session from time to time to conduct business of the various subcommittees of the Board. The Directors receive no compensation for their services.

Elections for the Board of Directors are held annually. Candidates for Director are nominated by members of the corporation. Secret ballots will be mailed out around the first part of the new year and the election results will be announced at the annual meeting in March.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please go to our website, www.dwuinc.com, for details on how to nominate a director.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



JUNE 2019
Karen McAfee



JULY 2019
Erik Raff



AUGUST 2019
Phillip Allen



TOM WEIDENHAMER, PRESIDENT

Message from the **PRESIDENT**

This past summer, we had a spill that entered a nearby stormwater system and discharged into the Destin Harbor. This was disconcerting for us as a utility because any sewer spill has the potential to impact our environment. What was more disturbing were some of the comments to the news article that implied we didn't care. We do care because we are environmentalists.

According to Wikipedia, the environmental movement (sometimes referred to as the ecology movement), also including conservation and green politics, is a diverse scientific, social, and political movement for addressing environmental issues. Environmentalists advocate the sustainable management of resources and stewardship of the environment through changes in public policy and individual behavior. In its recognition of humanity as a participant in (not enemy of) ecosystems, the movement is centered on ecology, health, and human rights.

If you read this definition of the environmental movement, you should recognize that we are environmentalists. We are part of the diverse movement

concerned with addressing environmental issues and advocating the sustainable management of resources and stewardship of the environment.

Our vision statement reads as follows: We live and work in a little piece of paradise, and DWU is intent on doing its part to keep it that way. That is what is at the core of the environmental movement. People concerned about where they live and doing what they can to preserve and protect it.

We are concerned about providing safe, reliable, sustainable, and economically viable drinking water to our members. Think about the history of DWU. DWU was started when a group of community leaders realized that the community could not support itself with individual wells and they formed DWU to provide safe and reliable drinking water to the community. As we grew and saw demand increase, we recognized how the increased demand impacted our water source. This recognition of the need to provide a sustainable drinking water source led DWU and its partner, South Walton Utility Company, to develop the inland wellfield. Since the development of the inland wellfield, we have seen our coastal wells recover; thereby reversing the drawdown that was threatening the local aquifer.

Throughout our history we have been concerned about cost and maintaining the economic viability of the services we provide. Affordability is an issue in the utility industry, and it is a major concern in communities with low-income households

and high-cost systems. Here at DWU the cost for 5,000 gallons of water to a residential customer is \$0.005 per gallon.

Septic tanks are a pressing concern throughout the State of Florida. The impact of direct discharge of wastewater into the ground for treatment and storage cannot support the growth we are experiencing, and it may negatively impact the surrounding environment especially in springs areas. As Destin and DWU grew, we knew that we couldn't always rely on septic tanks for sewerage disposal. Therefore, in 1972 we added wastewater treatment. Today, we still have approximately 115 members or 1.3 percent of our accounts on septic systems, and we have identified plans to extend sewer to these areas in the coming years.

As Florida and the rest of the country continue to explore water reuse, we can be proud of the fact that we have been producing reclaimed water since 1985. With reuse, we can treat the wastewater we process and send it back out into the community for irrigation. Reuse reduces the demand on our potable and groundwater resources for irrigation. It also eliminates discharge of our treated wastewater into the environment. That is why we are considered a zero-discharge facility.

To this day, we continue to take steps to protect and preserve our environment through our daily operations. Through our meter maintenance, meter testing,

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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 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 1-833-394-8398

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED

meter change out and high usage programs we are monitoring consumption and encouraging conservation. When we respond to sewer spills and clogged lines, we are performing environmental cleanup. When we repair leaking lines, we are sustaining our resource. Through our lab testing, field testing and constant monitoring we are ensuring that the water and wastewater we handle are not harmful to the environment or the people we serve. Everything we do on a daily basis is tied to preserving and protecting the little piece of paradise we live in.

So, I hope you can recognize that we do care about our community and our environment. We try to live out 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.” And we live it out through our core values of Vision, Quality and Stewardship because we are Environmentalists.

DESTIN WATER USERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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President



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