



South Walton
Utility Company, Inc.

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Pipeline

June 2011, Vol.37

A Newsletter of South Walton Utility Company, Inc.

As One Project Ends, Another Begins...

SWU is proud to announce that our Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant Project – funded through a low interest loan from the state with the help of the Regional Utility Authority – is complete after almost two years of hard work. Throughout the plant upgrade, our wastewater operators have been trained to operate the new equipment and utilize a twenty-four hour monitoring system.

One of the most significant improvements is the redundancy within the plant, allowing for continued operation if one area should be offline. In addition, we now have a system in place to dispose of our reclaimed water in times of heavy rain and exceptionally high flow. Also, having met the water quality standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environmental Protection, we can now discharge into the Choctawhatchee Bay when necessary. This process will be constantly monitored to ensure we are not affecting the quality of the bay water.

With this project coming to a close, a new project will soon be underway. South Walton Utility and Destin Water Users have joined together as WRP – a non-profit member owned company – in an effort to secure a long-term water supply to the coastal areas. This \$21 million project will bring water down Highway 331 from the General Bill V. Brown Wellfield, across the Choctawhatchee Bay, and connect it to our current transmission line that runs up the Gulf Power right of way. This undertaking will provide our members with a reliable source of water for many years to come.



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By Jack McGill

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South Walton Utility Company Mission Statement

"From water to wastewater, our mission is to provide our members quality and reliable service in a responsive and equitable manner."



Help SWU Conserve Water

South Walton Utility Co. is calling upon each member and visitor to help protect our precious resource by practicing water saving measures and becoming more aware of the need to save water. Read the "You Can Help!" section of this issue to learn more.



AUTHORIZATION FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OF FUNDS

SOUTH WALTON UTILITY COMPANY, INC.

369 MIRAMAR BEACH DRIVE • MIRAMAR, FL 32550-4938
Phone: (850) 837-2988 • Fax: (850) 837-7648

CUSTOMER NAME(S) _____

SWUCI _____

ACCOUNT _____

NUMBER(S) _____

Please deduct payments from my: **Direct debits will occur on the 1st of the month. If the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday, direct-debit entries will be deducted on the next working day after the 1st. Please allow two (2) weeks processing time before your direct-debit order is operational.**

Checking Account
 Savings Account

SOUTH WALTON UTILITY COMPANY, INC., IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO PROCESS AN ELECTRONIC DEBIT — FROM THE ACCOUNT DESCRIBED ABOVE — ONCE A MONTH IN THE AMOUNT OF MY MONTHLY WATER/SEWER BILL.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Please be sure to include a voided check for bank account verification, and mail together with this completed form to:
South Walton Utility Company, Inc.
369 Miramar Beach Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550-4938

Project

Continued from page 1

Timing is a critical component on this project. Next year, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has plans to begin a four-year project that will widen Highway 331 and force our utilization of the existing pipeline running down Highway 331 to expire in 2021. If we wait to place a new pipe until FDOT finishes their project, we may miss this opportunity. Therefore, our project is on the fast track. Upon completion of this project – which we are calling the Phase IV Water Supply Project – we will be able to deliver 9.2 million gallons daily (MGD) from the General Bill V. Brown Wellfield.

Would you like to learn more about these projects or others that we have in the works? Please contact our office and we would be happy to discuss them with you.

Another project that will be in the news throughout the next few years is the construction of a large diameter potable water pipeline that will transmit water south from the General Bill V. Brown Well Field to our service area. We have joined with Destin Water Users, our current well field partner, to form a Water Resource Partnership known as WRP, Inc. WRP is a non-profit, member owned corporation exempt from federal taxes. WRP's sole mission is to provide a reliable, economical, long term water supply to customers of South Walton Utility Company and Destin Water Users. The proposed 30 inch pipeline will connect to our existing well field storage tanks and follow U.S. Hwy 331 south to a connection point adjacent to the Walton County Annex on U.S. 331 south of Choctawhatchee Bay. A subaqueous crossing of Choctawhatchee Bay is included in the project. Our preliminary cost estimate is \$21.1 million and the total cost will be shared equally between South Walton Utility Company and Destin Water Users. WRP has applied for a loan from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to help pay for the project. Our schedule calls for construction to begin this summer.

The Board of Directors wishes to recognize the major effort expended by our staff in planning and organizing this new pipeline project. And also the Board would like to thank you for allowing us to serve our community.

A letter from the President



The beaches are clean, the water is beautiful, and the Emerald Coast is slowly coming back from the economic downturn that started with last year's oil spill and was only made worse by larger monetary woes at the national level. Our recovery is demonstrated by increased water production -- up a little over 1% from last year.

We are coming to the end of a couple of large wastewater projects that have taken almost seven years to come to fruition. Our wastewater plant upgrade and our wetlands pipeline project are now complete and in operation. Total costs for these projects were approximately \$20 million. The projects were paid for by a \$13 million loan from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and \$7 million in company reserves. The new and improved wastewater plant now provides reclaimed water treated to AWT standards -- the highest form of wastewater treatment available today. They say "good things take a little longer" and these two wastewater projects are definitely a "good thing" that took "a little longer".

Over the last few years we have increased our rates to provide debt service coverage for the FDEP loan. Our rates remain comparable to those charged by other utilities in NW Florida, but we are in the process of conducting a rate study under an independent consultant to ensure these rates are adequate and fair for the next four years.

Jack McGill, President

Make Paying Your Monthly Bill Fast & Easy!

South Walton Utility customers can now access online bill pay. With the click of a mouse, you can quickly review usage history and pay your utility bill – no more checks, no more stamps!

Go to www.swuci.org and follow the link to the secure web page or click on 'View Your Account' under the Customer Service drop down menu. Enter your customer number for your login ID and PIN, both printed on your bill, and review water usage, account information and pay your bill.



You Can Help! Play a Part in Conserving our Water Resources

Here are some tips to promote water conservation:

- If your shower fills a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the shower head with a water efficient model that is available to you at no cost in SWU's office. We also have bathroom aerators and kitchen aerators available.
- Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap, then reuse the pan of water for house plants.
- When cleaning out fish tanks, give the nutrient-rich water to your plants.
- Report broken pipes, open hydrants and errant sprinklers to the property owner or your water provider.
- Listen for dripping faucets and running toilets. Fixing a leak can save hundreds of gallons a day or more.
- Put food coloring or leak tabs (available at SWU's office) in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing you have a leak. Fixing it can prevent a high water bill.
- We're more likely to notice leaks indoors, but don't forget to check out door faucets, sprinklers, and hoses for leaks.
- Water only when necessary. More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering.
- For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.
- When you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant.
- Adjust your watering schedule each month to match seasonal weather conditions and landscape requirements.

Proclamation

WHEREAS, water is a basic and essential need of every living creature; and **WHEREAS**, The State of Florida, Water Management Districts, Florida Section of the American Water Works Association, and South Walton Utility Co. are working together to promote the efficient use of water and advocating sound water conservation practices; and

WHEREAS, South Walton Utility Co. and the State of Florida have designated April, typically a dry month when water demands are most acute, Florida's Water Conservation Month, to educate private citizens and other users about efficient use of precious water resources; and

WHEREAS, South Walton Utility has always encouraged and supported water conservation, through various educational programs and special events; and **WHEREAS**, every business, industry, school and citizen can help by saving water and thus promote a healthy economy and community; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of South Walton Utility Co., Inc do hereby proclaim the month of April as *Water Conservation Month*.