

# Pipeline

A Newsletter of South Walton Utility Company, Inc.

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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."



## SWU Honored for Excellence by Dept. of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection recently announced the winners of the 2008 Plant Operations Excellence Awards at a ceremony in Tallahassee. The Excellence Awards recognize water and wastewater facilities that demonstrate excellence in operation, maintenance and compliance; innovative treatment; waste reduction and pollution prevention; recycling; and other special achievements.

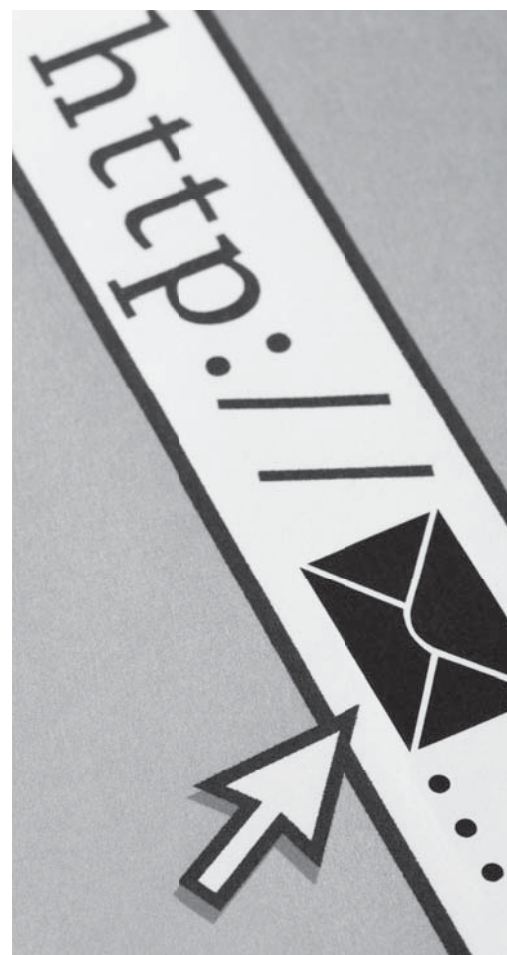
We're proud to announce the SWU Water Treatment Plant earned the Excellence Award for medium communities in the Northwest District. Congratulations!

## Going Green

*SWU now offers E-billing and auto-debit*

Interested in saving some trees, not to mention shortening the stacks of paper in your home office? South Walton Utility now offers E-billing. To sign up, simply send your email address, customer number and a statement that you would like to begin receiving E-bills to [MCL@swuci.org](mailto:MCL@swuci.org). Additionally, if you don't have auto-debit for paying your bill, you can sign up by filling out the form in this newsletter. We debit member bank accounts the first work day of the month. Additional forms may be obtained on our website: [www.swuci.org](http://www.swuci.org).

Sign up today. You'll save paper, postage and time.



## MEET JOE REAM

*Water Operations Manager*



Joe Ream began his career with South Walton Utility as a trainee at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in 1995. Immediately after being hired, Joe began taking classes to become a Wastewater Operator. He progressed quickly, and as soon as he had accumulated the required hours at each level, Joe took the Department of Environmental Protection test. Joe obtained his "A" Wastewater license in 2001. Shortly thereafter, he transferred to Water Operations and once again began studying and accumulating hours to obtain "A" licensure in Water Operations as well. Joe currently serves as Water Operations Manager.

Since Joe transferred to Water Operations in 2001, South Walton Utility has added three new wells and three water storage tanks. Additionally, our system for monitoring the water and tank levels has been upgraded. Joe was invaluable in bringing each of these improvements about.

Joe is an example of the benefit of hard work and dedication. Congratulations, keep up the great work!

# BE PREPARED:

## *Hurricane Season Began June 1*

Water is one of the most vital resources individuals, families and businesses need to begin reclaiming their lives in the aftermath of a major storm. With back-up generators, emergency supplies and GIS equipment on hand, SWUCI tries to restore water quickly. Additionally, we are a partner in FlaWARN, a disaster relief partnership among utilities to provide manpower and equipment to communities hardest hit by a storm.

So what can you do to get ready for this hurricane season? First and foremost, ensure that your family and business are prepared by visiting [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org) to create customized plans. Additionally, to limit the amount of water lost due to storm-damaged lines, turn off the water at the meter box that supplies your home or business. This will minimize water loss should lines become damaged. During evacuations, water service may be turned off to those areas under mandatory evacuation.

Next, have a printed copy of SWUCI's instructions for boiling water on hand so you'll know how to sanitize your water after water service is restored. Our boil water notice information is available online at: [www.swuci.org/pdf\\_docs/Precautionary-Boil-Water-Notice.pdf](http://www.swuci.org/pdf_docs/Precautionary-Boil-Water-Notice.pdf).

Finally, be sure to pay close attention to weather advisories as a storm approaches. You can monitor our Web site at [www.swuci.org](http://www.swuci.org) as well as listen to local radio stations for emergency information and advisories.



# A Letter From the President



Greetings,

As you know, the South Walton Utility Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) plant project is well under way at our facilities on

Miramar Beach Drive. The Board of Directors is pleased to inform you that we have now received the initial disbursement for the project from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The disbursement, in the amount of \$8.6 million, will assist us in funding the AWT plant.

The new facility will process wastewater using an advanced wastewater treatment process, producing substantially higher quality reclaimed water. With this new advanced wastewater treatment expansion, SWUCI will be able to meet our area's growing needs well into the future. Additionally, capacity will increase from 2.5 million gallons a day to 4.75 million gallons a day. The reclaimed water from the plant will be piped to area golf courses for irrigation purposes, and in wet weather conditions we will be permitted to discharge that water into Choctawhatchee Bay. When completed, the project is expected to cost approximately \$20.4 million, including \$14.8 million for the AWT plant and \$5.6 million for a wetlands disposal system.

Funding for the project is coming from two sources: \$7.1 million from our reserves, and the balance of \$13.3 million

from a loan, sponsored by the Regional Utility Authority (RUA) and provided by the FDEP. Our wastewater service area includes a portion of Walton and Okaloosa counties, as well as the City of Destin, all of which are within RUA's jurisdiction. Their eligibility to receive funding under the Clean Water Act enabled us to receive FDEP funding at very favorable interest rates. We are grateful for the RUA's interest and sponsorship of our project.

Our original game plan had been to use funds from the FDEP State Revolving Loan program to pay for the most of the AWT portion of the project, and to use our reserves to



pay for the wetlands disposal system. Unfortunately, due to the economy, we have experienced numerous delays in receiving the pledged funding from the FDEP. They approved the project and authorized us to incur costs in September 2007. In April 2008, we were authorized to award the contract for construction of the AWT plant, and to begin spending the funds which were to be provided by FDEP. We issued the Notice to Proceed to the contractor in late April 2008, anticipating availability of a substantial

portion of the FDEP funding at that time. However, economic conditions effectively closed credit markets and inhibited the State's sale of debt instruments in 2008. They had no available funding, and as such could not honor their commitments.

We elected to proceed with construction, funding the work through a combination of spending our wastewater treatment reserves, and the use of a letter of credit which we negotiated with Regions Bank in anticipation of the above mentioned circumstances.

I'm pleased to report that the situation has been resolved. The State was able to sell a bond issue in January, of which \$10 million was allocated to our project and the funds have been received. An additional \$3.3 million will be allocated during FDEP's next fiscal year.

With the new capacity the AWT plant will provide, South Walton Utilities will have the ability to meet all future growth demands. J & P Construction is approximately 40-percent complete with the work, and anticipates substantial completion by this November.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, I want congratulate our staff, especially General Manager Pete DeBogory, Project Manager Alicia Keeter, and our attorney, Don Anchors. Each was instrumental in guiding us through the problems and bringing the matter to a successful conclusion.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve our community in this manner.

Jack McGill, President



# South Walton Utility Company, Inc.

369 MIRAMAR BEACH DRIVE ■ MIRAMAR BEACH, FLORIDA 32550-4938

PHONE: (850) 837-2988 ■ FAX: (850) 837-7648

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## We Moved!

### Address Corrections: Online Banking

Last fall, our administration offices moved to a new 6,300 square foot addition to the Field Maintenance Facility on Miramar Beach Drive.

For our members with online banking, please take a few moments to update our new address within your online banking accounts. Our new address is 369 Miramar Beach Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550-4938. For members who have not yet done so, bill payments are currently being returned to your bank. As a result, we are not receiving those payments in a timely manner.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our administrative offices at (850) 837-2988.

### 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:

- Checking Account
- Savings Account

**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.**

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**