

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."



Pete DeBogory Celebrates 20 Years of Service



This year, General Manager Pete DeBogory celebrated his 20th year of service with the South Walton Utility Company, Inc. (SWUCI).

Within a year of being hired, Pete was promoted to General Manager as a result of his outstanding work. At that time, SWUCI serviced approximately 2,100 members with four coastal wells and 16 employees. Under Pete's strong leadership, today there are seven coastal wells, three wells at the well field, over 8,320 members, and 33 employees.

In 1989, Pete ensured that SWUCI was one of the first utilities ever to use the TouchRead Meter System- a groundbreaking technology that

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significantly improved meter-reading speed and accuracy.

From the very beginning, Pete has played a key role in extending SWUCI and its services. He began by working to secure a long-term coastal water supply to South Walton County through the purchase of a piece of land now known as the Rock Hill well field. Pete has also contributed significantly to extending sewer services into

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Raise Your Glasses to District 9's Best Tasting Drinking Water

"When you drink the water, remember the spring."

—OLD CHINESE PROVERB

On February 8th, judges lined up at the offices of the Holley Navarre Water System to drink crystal clear water during the Region 9 taste-testing contest of the Florida Section American Water Works Association. Among seven utility companies who entered the Panhandle competition, the water produced by South Walton Utilities Company was named the best-tasting water in Region 9. So, fill those glasses to the rims, and drink proudly. SWUCI has the best-tasting water in the region!

"DeBogory" CONT. FROM COVER

Holiday Shores, Gulf Pines, and along the Emerald Coast Parkway.

"We remain committed to protecting and preserving the water source, not just for ourselves, but for our neighbors as well," said DeBogory.

Pete's commitment to SWUCI has produced many internal improvements as well, including the development of the first retirement plan for employees and the construction of the new Administration Building in 1993.

"I have been working with Pete for 18 years and am impressed with his integrity and the way he treats everyone with equal respect and fairness," said Bruce Morrison, Operations Manager.

Congrats and kudos for a job well done, Pete!

Base Rate Increase Effective October 2007

During the SWUCI Board meeting on March 20, 2007, the board approved the results of a rate study that showed a need for a base rate increase. As a result, the base rate for water and wastewater will increase slightly in October 2007. For example, the average bill for a person that uses 5,000 gallons per month will be approximately \$42.97 versus the current \$39.67. The increase only affects the base rate and does not affect the water usage rates.

Tap fee rates will change in July. Please contact our office at (850) 837-2988 for information regarding the new rates.



SWUCI Participates in Relay for Life

In March, SWUCI employees participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life event held at South Walton High School. The SWUCI team was able to raise a total of \$5,000 toward a cure for cancer. Employees hosted a hot dog and hamburger cook-out, a yard sale and entertained the crowds with a participant in the Mz. Relay contest. Additionally, our own Project Manager Alicia Keeter, served as the chair of the entire event. Special thanks goes out to field technician, Jared Duncan, for his willingness to dress up for this worthy cause and to Teri Hamilton, who stayed up most of the night taking laps around the track to keep the SWUCI team spirit going. It was a night of fun filled entertainment and fellowship with the South Walton community. SWUCI employees encourage everyone to get involved next year. We're already looking forward to it!

Meet Alicia Keeter



Alicia Keeter recently began serving as the Project Manager for the South Walton Utility Company, Inc. (SWUCI). Alicia was the very first recipient of the SWUCI scholarship in May 1993 and worked as a co-op student until 1996.

In 2006, Alicia successfully graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Construction Engineering from the University of West Florida in Pensacola. She worked with the St. Joe Company prior to returning to SWUCI in October of 2006, proudly jumping with both feet into her new role as Project Manager.

Alicia is very active in South Walton's Relay for Life Cancer Drive and enjoys riding her motorcycle with her husband David, playing sports with her three daughters, and raising dachshunds. Please join us in welcoming her back to the SWUCI team.

A Letter From the President



First, let me introduce myself as the new President of the Board of your South Walton Utility Company. I have been a member of the board for 11 years and have had the privilege of working with prior Presidents Gen. Bill Brown and Ken Creel. Their leadership has

been greatly appreciated by our Utility.

We have also been very fortunate to have a dedicated staff of employees, headed by Pete DeBogory, our General Manager. Pete observed his 20th year of service at a luncheon held on February 20th at our new maintenance facility with all employees attending. Pete's dedication to our organization and his service to South Walton are major contributions to our performance in meeting the community's needs.

We are also pleased to announce that Alicia Keeter has joined our staff as Project Manager. She is currently working on the Wellfield expansion project and on the addition of ground storage capacity at our Goldsby Road facilities. She attended Auburn University and is professionally trained in construction management.

In the near future, we face a major challenge in the need to expand the capacity of our wastewater treatment plant and to improve the quality of the reclaimed water that it produces. After extensive technical/economic studies of several alternatives by our consulting engineering firm, Baskerville-Donovan, we have opted

for an Advanced Wastewater Treatment process with a wetland discharge capability. The reclaimed water discharged from the plant will, for the most part, meet drinking water standards set by the Department of Environmental Protection. We are presently in the permitting stage of this project and hope to begin construction before the end of the year.

Our current cost estimate for the project is approximately \$22 million dollars. We expect to borrow approximately \$14 million from the State Revolving Fund loan program utilizing the Regional Utility Authority as a sponsor.

Needless to say, due to the financial burdens suggested by our upcoming required water and wastewater projects, along with increase of operating expenses, we are compelled to announce a rise in rates for our water and sewer services. In order to substantiate this increase, we funded a rate study conducted by a professional rate analysis organization.

Last, but certainly not least, we are proud to advise you that our Consumer Confidence Report of our water quality shows that our water continues to meet or exceed all state and federal standards. In fact, our water won a regional water taste test in March and we came in third in the state water taste test last month.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve on your Board of Directors.



Jack McGill, President



Helpful Reminders

Some helpful reminders to help us serve you better during the summer months:

- ◆ **Please keep bushes and landscaping**, such as pine straw, away from your water meters. This allows SWUCI's meter readers and technicians to easily access them. Locating the meters can be difficult when they are covered by new growth and pine straw.
- ◆ When planning an out of town trip, **SWCUI recommends turning your water off at the valve in the meter box**. This will prevent unauthorized usage and could prevent damage should a line break in the house while you are away.



*South Walton
Utility Company, Inc.*

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Meet the SWUCI Board of Directors:



**From left to right:
Bill McQuillan,
President Jack McGill,
Vice-President
Mike Flynt, Secretary
Mike Richardson, and
Ray Kinard. Not Shown
in the Photo: Treasurer
Bill Berberich, and
Dave Brown**