

# Pipeline

A Newsletter of South Walton Utility Co., Inc.

September 2020

**IS YOUR COMMERCIAL GREASE TRAP UP TO CODE WITH OUR GREASE TRAP PROGRAM? VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION. SEE THE CUSTOMER SERVICE TAB FOR DETAILS.**

## SWUCI Annual Members' Meeting

**November 19, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**

369 Miramar Beach Drive  
Miramar Beach

All members are encouraged to attend. Elections for the SWUCI Board of Directors will be held. The annual audit report will be presented by Warren Averett, LLC.

As a member owned company it is important to be involved with your utility.

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## A note from your General Manager

Perseverance is the ability to keep doing something in spite of obstacles. People who persevere show steadfastness in doing something despite how hard it is or how long it takes to reach the goal.

This is an understatement of our staff, considering what we are facing in our society today. COVID has created a very daunting obstacle in our society. But your utility system has persevered through all of this. Our system has seen many upgrades this year and we have seen some setbacks but through it all the staff at SWU have worked tirelessly to maintain a safe and reliable water and wastewater system that will handle the continued development we see happening in our service area.

This past year we have upgraded one of our 13 water wells, increased fire protection in areas of Mack Bayou, rehabilitated portions of our wastewater collection system and installed over 1000 new meters in our water system. This necessary maintenance keeps us ahead of the curve when it comes to aging infrastructure that burdens many utility systems.

Some changes that we see coming in our area involve a multitude of hotels, condos and multi family residences that will bring new demands to our infrastructure. With these additions we will be making improvements to our system to handle this growth and ensure the demands of these developments will be provided for in the years to come. We are evaluating a new customer software portal that will offer you the opportunity to keep up with your daily water usage to help you conserve water and make adjustments if you suspect a leak. We hope to roll this out to our customers after the first of the year. Stay tuned to our website and social media for updates.

In mention of leaks we also encourage you to be mindful of leaking toilets, dripping faucets and worn out fixtures that can add a few extra dollars to your water bill and added usage that could easily be prevented. Let's all learn to be conservation minded with our most precious resource.

I also ask you to be mindful of the need for updated information to be shared with our staff to allow us to communicate with you in the event we suspect a leak, need to report a break in the area or contact you about system maintenance in your neighborhood.

As we gear up to start a new fiscal year we will be evaluating our rates to make sure that we have the necessary funds to keep our system in proper working order and we assure you that we will be good stewards of the funds we are entrusted with to provide a safe, reliable, equitable service to you our members.

In closing we want you to know that we are here with you through all the ups and downs of the pandemic and it is our mission to keep the water flowing.

Alicia Keeter, General Manager



Well 7  
Repairs

EVERY  
DROP  
COUNTS



DRINKING  
WATER  
WEEK

MAY 2-8,  
2021



SWUCI:  
Best Tasting Drinking water region IX

## Make Your Voice Heard

South Walton Utility Company, Inc. (SWUCI) is a member-owned and operated utility that relies on a key group of volunteers to keep the company headed on the right track. As a member of SWUCI, you have the opportunity to help to decide who sits on the Board of Directors.

Members of the Board of Directors are elected to three-year terms. The current Board appoints a nominating committee to recommend candidates for upcoming vacancies. Individual members can also make Board nominations.

Directors and officers receive no compensation for their services.

### Proposed Rate Increase

*The Board of Directors will consider a small increase in water and sewer rates. If approved, members will see the increase in their bill beginning in October.*

Backflow Preventers are vital to protecting our water system. Please make sure to have yours tested annually by a certified backflow inspector and provide updated reports to our office.

## Water Conservation

SWUCI has a retrofit program in place. We will provide showerheads, faucet aerators, and leak detection tablets to you at no charge. Ask at our office front desk for more information. Here are simple ways you can save.

- Turn off the Tap—turn it off while brushing your teeth or when shaving
- Shower Power! - Taking a shower uses less water than a tub bath
- Fix that Leak—fixing a toilet leak can save up to 200 gallons a day
- Beat the Heat! - If you're going to irrigate do it first thing in the morning
- Who Needs a Hose—use a bucket and sponge when washing your car

Shared from EPA Watersense

<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids>

Rules for Nominations from the Membership

### HOW TO NOMINATE A DIRECTOR

Any member of SWUCI can nominate a candidate for election to the Board of Directors by following these guidelines:

The individual(s) being nominated must be an eligible member of SWUCI.

- To be an eligible member of SWUCI, the individual must have an active account as of the nomination record date of September 16, 2020.
- Once elected to the Board of Directors, an individual can serve on the Board only so long as that individual remains an eligible member of the company.

You must prepare a petition nominating the individual of your choice on which you have presented sufficient information to validate that individual's status as an eligible member of SWUCI. A separate petition is required for each individual being nominated.

- The petition must include the signatures, addresses and account numbers of fifteen (15) eligible members of SWUCI **in addition to the individual being nominated** who are eligible as of the nomination record date of September 16, 2020.

You must provide a short (one page) biography of the individual being nominated which specifically sets forth the qualifications you feel this individual possesses which will make him/her an asset to SWUCI and its members by serving on the Board of Directors. Please keep in mind that this individual, if elected, will be expected to attend the monthly Board meetings, the Annual Member meetings and any special meetings as properly called.

All of this information must be delivered to SWUCI by mail or delivery to the Administrative Offices of SWUCI, 369 Miramar Beach Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550-4938.

This information must be received **no later than 4:30 p.m., on September 30, 2020**.

- This time frame is required to permit the individual's name and biography to be included on the printed ballot that will be mailed to all members.
- Petitions received after that date cannot be accepted and will not be considered.

Nominations for Directors will not be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

### FOG - Fats, Oils and Grease

Remember to drain your fats oils and grease and place in a disposable container and dispose of properly, not pour them down your sink. Over time this creates clogs in your sewer lateral that will back up into your home and create costly plumbing repairs.

**In just 10 minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste. Many common household leaks are quick to find and easy to fix.**

<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week-0>

### *Flushable doesn't mean it is biodegradable.*

Products labeled as "flushable" such as baby wipes, paper towels and diapers do not break down in the collection system and creates clogs in our pumping equipment and cause sewer overflows.

We encourage you to throw these items in the trash.



HURRICANE SEASON IS  
UPON US.  
MAKE SURE YOUR  
HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS  
KIT IS UP TO DATE.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR  
ADDITIONAL INFO

Locate your meter box and know how to turn off your water before you may need to shut it off for repairs.

# A Letter from the SWU Board President



Greetings from your Water and Sewer Utility:

As our 2020 fiscal year draws to a close, I reflect on the many changes that we have seen at South Walton Utility. We bid farewell to our presiding President, Jack Lubker, who served our board with great integrity. Thank you, Jack, for your years of service to South Walton Utility.

In December, the board of directors nominated me as your new President. My name is Mike Richardson and I have served in the capacity of secretary and vice president of the board for the past 20+ years. It was an honor to be selected as

your next president.

As we move forward to the challenges facing our area, I want to reassure you, our members, that your water and sewer system is in excellent hands in light of the pandemic affecting our country. I would like to give kudos to our staff who have gone above and beyond to maintain a safe and reliable system during this time of added stress. Staffing adjustments were made as well as added sanitizing procedures have been set in place to maintain a safe working environment.

With the extra efforts to maintain work sanitizing that is taking place all over our service area we remind you that all though these anti-bacterial wipes are labeled as flushable, we would like to remind you that they are not meant to be flushed. Please dispose of them in your nearest trash can to prevent sewer back ups and added unnecessary maintenance.

Along with physical adjustments, the board made the decision to offer a financial adjustment to you, our members, to offer grace to those struggling with the economic burden during this crisis. Lock offs and late fees were suspended during this time to help in a small way to lessen the financial stresses to our members.

As we press on to the next fiscal year we look forward to the many new developments that are coming to our area. I am proud to tell you that SWU is prepared to meet these needs facing our service area and our county.

Stay well,

Mike Richardson

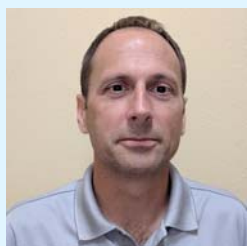
**Visit our website <https://swuci.org/>**

*Review your account, pay your bill, find forms for new service, read important news bulletins, water saving tips and view our annual water quality report. We also post advisories, holiday hours, financial statements plus much more.*

***Meet your SWUCI Board of Directors:***



***Vice President  
Dave Brown***



***Secretary  
Steve Dixon***



***Director  
Mike Abt***



***Director  
Dustin Terry***



***Treasurer  
Jason Scheler***



***Director  
Dave Stowe***

**Did you know that SWU has 60 miles of gravity, 22 miles of force main and 190 miles of water lines?**





# South Walton Utility Co., Inc.

369 Miramar Beach Dr.  
Miramar Beach, FL 32550

Presorted First Class  
US POSTAGE PAID  
Fort Walton Beach, FL  
Permit No. 182



## E-Billing & Electronic Funds Transfer

South Walton Utility offers **two free services** to our members to help you make payments fast and easy:  
E-Billing and Automatic Draft.

**E-Billing** allows you to receive your bill each month by email. This is an excellent way to receive your bill fast, especially if you live out of town. Send an email to [admin@swuci.org](mailto:admin@swuci.org) to request this free service.

**Automatic Draft** is a hassle-free way to pay your bill on time each month. Your bank account will draft on the first business day of each month. To sign up for this free service, complete and return the attached form or download the form off our website [www.swuci.org](http://www.swuci.org)

## AUTHORIZATION FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OF FUNDS

South Walton Utility Co. Inc.  
369 Miramar Beach Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550  
Phone: (850) 837-2988; Fax (850) 837-7648

Customer Name \_\_\_\_\_

SWUCI Customer Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please deduct payments from my:

Checking Account  Saving 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 Co., Inc.  
369 Miramar Beach Drive  
Miramar Beach, FL 32550



**South Walton employees helping with Food Distribution during COVID-19**

**Do we have your current email address and phone number?  
Please update your contact info for up to date information from our office.**