

IN THE PIPE



NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall 2016

No. 15

Investing in Your Community: How WCSA's Customer Fees Make an Impact



Middle Fork Drinking Water Treatment Plant

When you pay your water bill, where do those funds go?

As an independent service authority, WCSA is responsible for supplying approximately 21,000 customers with clean, potable water, and for efficiently processing wastewater before it is safely returned to the environment. In a mountainous county, that's a challenge that requires dozens of pump and pressure stations, approximately 70 miles of pipe for sewer services, and nearly 900 miles of pipe for water services — a length which, if laid end-to-end, would stretch from Virginia Beach to St. Louis, Missouri. It's a constantly evolving infrastructure that requires a skilled staff to engineer, install, operate, inspect and maintain.

Paying for it all comes down to one central source of funding: revenue collected from

the sale of water and sewer services. With the exception of the occasional grant, WCSA's funds come from water and sewer connection and monthly user fees. There are no state or federal subsidies, and — to the surprise of many — no revenue from town or county taxes.

"A lot of people are shocked to hear their tax dollars do not support us," says WCSA General Manager Robbie Cornett. "We're an independent provider, so we function



Hall Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant

WCSA Water

- 21,000** connections
- 900** miles of water line
- 226** feet of pipeline per customer
- 300** square-mile service area
- 12** million-gallon-per-day surface water treatment plant
- 2.5** million-gallon-per-day membrane filtration plant
- 2** springs
- 1** well
- 26** pump stations
- 20** water storage tanks

WCSA Wastewater

- 2,300** wastewater connections
- 70** miles of wastewater collection lines
- 160** feet of pipeline per customer
- 26** lift stations
- 2** wastewater treatment plants

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WCSA Project Updates

To learn more about WCSA projects, visit www.wcsawater.com.

Recently Completed Projects:

The **Childress Hollow Road Water Line Extension Project** was completed in April 2016 and is now serving 15 customers along Childress Hollow Road, where water service was extended from Spring Valley Road to Black Hollow Road.

Ongoing Projects:

The **Galvanized Water Line Replacement — Phase 2 Project** is the second step in a three-phase project to replace all galvanized pipe in WCSA's distribution system over the next several years. The first four divisions of Phase 2 were recently completed. Construction on a fifth division of Phase 2 began in June and is expected to be completed by the spring of 2017.



Construction recently began on a fifth division of the **Galvanized Water Line Replacement — Phase 2 Project**.



Construction on a fifth division of the **Galvanized Water Line Replacement — Phase 2 Project** is expected to continue until the spring of 2017.

Upcoming Projects:

The **Exit 13 Phase 2A Sewer Project**, located off I-81 at Exit 13, is the second step in a multi-phase project to extend wastewater treatment service to the Lee Highway area of Exit 13.

Phase 2A will consist of installation of a sewer main from Spring Creek Road to the Virginia Highlands Airport, as well as some branch lines or laterals to provide service for customers who are not directly adjacent to the Oak Park Sewer Project. Construction is expected to begin in late summer of 2016 and continue through the winter of 2016-2017.

The **Route 58 Corridor Water System Improvements Project** will include improvements for the water system

serving the town of Damascus, Alvarado and areas east of South Holston Lake. Installation of a new water storage area tank will begin in the fall of 2016 and continue until mid-year of 2017.

The **Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant Improvements Project** will feature a new membrane filtration system and additional repairs, replacements and upgrades to the water treatment plant. Construction is expected to begin in late summer 2016 and continue until the end of 2017.

The **Haskell Station Road Water Line Extension Project** will replace and install approximately 4,700 linear feet of new water line. The project is currently in the design stages and WCSA will advertise for bids by late summer 2016. 💧



The Mill Creek Drinking Water Treatment Plant's current membrane filtration system will be replaced as part of the upcoming **Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant Improvements Project**.

Investing in Your Community: How WCSA's Customer Fees Make an Impact

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to reinvest approximately \$120 million back into Washington County.”

An estimated 20 percent of those funds have supported labor and employment, while the remainder has helped create or upgrade essential infrastructure, such as the Middle Fork Drinking Water Treatment Plant, South Fork Intake, Mill Creek Regional Drinking Water Treatment Plant, Hall Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Route 58 Water Storage Tank, and

according to traditional business principles — we offer goods and services in exchange for a fee. These services include processes such as the transportation, filtration and processing of water and wastewater, activities that are fairly costly to us in terms of infrastructure, power usage and labor.

the ongoing replacement of approximately 200 miles of galvanized water lines. User fees were also used to extend water and sewer service to thousands of customers throughout the county, from Rich Valley to Exit 7, and from Brumley Gap to Damascus.

“Grants represent a small fraction of our capital project funds and are designated for specific projects; there are no grant funds for operation,” Cornett says. “Although we may receive some low-interest loans from the Virginia Department of Health or the USDA’s Rural Development for capital projects, those loans must be repaid with interest from money earned from customer fees.”



For most residents of Washington County, Virginia, the average monthly water bill is approximately \$40, which is typically less than most other monthly expenses, such as the cost of four weeks of groceries or the use of a smartphone.

Once collected, WCSA customer fees are directly reinvested into the community.

“We work to keep local monies local,” Cornett says. “Job retention and economic health are subjects we’re very interested in, and over a period of 20 years, we’ve been able

“We focus on creating financial stability, and work very hard to keep our rates low,” Cornett says. “It’s our responsibility to manage our customers’ business as efficiently and effectively as we can because, in a small community like ours, at the other end of that phone call or line extension, there’s probably a neighbor, family member or friend.” 💧

High Bill Abatement Policy Amended by Board

During the June board meeting, the WCSA Board of Commissioners voted to approve two minor amendments to the existing High Bill Abatement Policy, which is designed to provide relief to customers who have experienced a water leak. These changes apply to the kinds of documentation needed from customers who are asking for review of a related bill.

To review the policy in its entirety, please visit

http://www.wcsawater.com/files/1914/0207/7540/Leak_Adjustment_Form.pdf.

WCSA Supporting Water Service Extension to Denton Valley

Following confirmation of funding, WCSA has announced it will be making water system improvements that will enable Intermont Utility District to extend water service to the Denton Valley area of Sullivan County, Tennessee.

WCSA will collaborate with Intermont Utility District to bring water to more than 100 homes in the largely rural area, which straddles the Virginia/Tennessee state line and stretches from the upper portion of South Holston Lake eastward toward Damascus, Virginia.

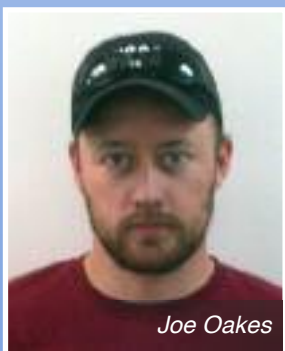
“We’re very pleased to announce this partnership and to update Denton Valley residents on the services coming in the next couple of years,” says Robbie Cornett, general manager of WCSA. “Many residents in the area

have historically relied on private supplies, such as wells, springs and cisterns to meet their daily needs. Some of these sources are challenged by sediment or don’t provide a consistent supply, and we look forward to offering residents a clean, dependable source of running water.”

Joining the Intermont system with WCSA’s network will require some preliminary work, including the addition of a storage tank between Damascus and Denton Valley to help stabilize water pressure. Some lines in the area will also be replaced with larger, 6-inch lines to help meet demand.

These additions are expected to be completed in 2017, with work in the valley slated to begin in 2018. Bids on the project will be accepted later this year. 💧

Welcome, New Employees!



Joe Oakes

Joe Oakes joined the WCSA team on April 4 as an Electrician 1 in our maintenance department. Joe has an underground electrical certification, and has served as an industrial electrician and lead mechanic. His skills also include welding, fabricating and operating a front-end loader.



Kevin Ball

Kevin Ball joined WCSA’s wastewater department as an Assistant Operator on April 11. Kevin has a Class 4 Wastewater License and has accumulated 100 hours in electrical engineering from Southwest Virginia Community College in Cedar Bluff, Virginia. Kevin has experience in SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition), and in operating a fan press, a correlator and an LMIC leak detector.



WCSA offices will be closed on the following holidays:

Labor Day Sept. 5
Columbus Day Oct. 10



Board Meetings

UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES

Aug. 22, 2016

Sept. 26, 2016

Oct. 24, 2016

Board meetings are held at WCSA in the E.W. Potts Board Room at 6 p.m. The public is welcome to attend.

Actual dates may vary. Please contact our office to confirm meeting schedule.

REMINDER

AVOID THE TIME AND EXPENSE OF MAILING AND POSTAGE WITH WCSA’S AUTO-DRAFT, ONLINE BILLPAY OR 24/7 PAY BY PHONE.

CALL OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT AT 276-628-7151 FOR DETAILS.

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