



IWA PIPELINE



ã **THE ISLAND WATER ASSOCIATION, INC. • WINTER 2001 • VOLUME 24 ISSUE 4**

3651 Sanibel-Captiva Road Sanibel, FL 33957 • <http://www.islandwater.com>

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. • Phone: (941) 472-1502

IWA IN THE AFTERMATH



Everyone at IWA joins the nation in mourning the unbelievable losses incurred by many people in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. on the morning of September 11th, 2001. As was the case across our great nation, we all stood transfixed before the TV, watching the unthinkable unfold before our eyes. It is an undeniable fact that our lives will forever be divided into two parts: that before September 11th, and that after. That is also very much the case at IWA.

Since September 11th, the national and local news media have focused a lot of attention on the safety and security of our drinking water supply. Some of the media reports have bordered on hysterical over-reaction to non-incidents and fears. In one case, there was a state-wide over-reaction to an unsecured padlock at a pumping station in the City of Naples, even though there was absolutely no sign of intrusion, let alone water contamination. At IWA, we have severely limited media access to our facilities and knowledge of the steps we are taking to secure them. While we understand the concept of the public's right-to-know, we strongly believe common sense dictates that concept should not apply if it could result in

compromising the safety or security of our water supply. We have been supported in that view by all the security experts whom we have consulted, including local law enforcement agencies. For that same reason, the information in this article will be of a general nature, when it concerns the specific additional security measures which we have taken. Although we believe that we have taken more precautions than any other utility in the area, we also believe that specifically defining what we have done would possibly detract from the effectiveness of our actions, and that could actually be counter productive.

The actual probability of a serious terrorist contamination incident involving a public water system is said by some experts to be quite small. To quote USEPA Administrator Christie Whitman, "The EPA believes the possibility of successful contamination of a water system is small. As someone who drinks water at home from the tap (as does my family) this is a concern I certainly understand. People are worried that a small amount of some chemical or biological agent (a few drops, for instance) could result in significant threats to the health of large numbers of people. I want to assure people that scenario just can't happen. It would take large amounts of contaminants to threaten the safety of a city water system. Because of increased security at water reservoirs and other facilities around the country, and because people are being extra vigilant as well, we believe it would be very difficult for anyone to introduce the quantities needed to contaminate an entire system." While Ms. Whitman's official guidance is reassuring, there are other "experts" who believe that a clever terrorist might be able to accomplish meaningful contamination of our nation's water supply. At IWA, we have chosen to err on the side of caution, and we therefore have taken many steps to prevent any contamination.

We have had five separate vulnerability assessments of our facilities performed by outside

groups, including: (1) the Sanibel Police Department, (2) the Sanibel Fire Department, (3) the Lee County Sheriff's Department (Captiva only), (4) the Captiva Fire Department (also Captiva only) and (5) an outside professional security company. In the cases of the local law enforcement and fire departments, we have implemented every one of their recommendations. The Sanibel Police Department said that they were "very impressed with the thoroughness and speed in which your organization implemented the preventative measures identified by your open critique and analyses of your facilities." In the case of the outside security company, we applied common sense to their recommendations and implemented those items that we believed would significantly increase the security of our facilities.

Most of the things we have done to better protect our facilities are not visible, although many of them were quite significant (and expensive!). In total, we took 38 separate actions to improve security. For the reasons explained above, we do not believe it would be prudent for us to explain everything that we have done in this newsletter, or in any other public document. On the other hand, some of the things which we have done are obvious, just from visiting our business office. For example, we now have a guard at our front gate, checking every vehicle entering our site. It is also obvious that we have added new fencing. We apologize for any inconvenience that our heightened state of security may cause for Members who stop in to see us to pay their bills, etc., but we are sure you will understand why we have taken these steps. It is also inconvenient for IWA employees, including the author of this newsletter, who locked himself out twice one day last week!

HELP (AGAIN)!!

Further to the previous article on actions which we have taken to improve the security of our facilities, there is also one very important step which our Members can take to help us in this regard.

Recent bio-terrorism events have made us all a little leery of opening our mail. At IWA, we open around 4,000 water bill payment envelopes every month, in addition to all the bills and junk mail we receive. The employees opening the mail are now wearing rubber gloves, and we are considering the use of surgical masks as well, so it takes longer and costs more than was the case prior to September 11th. Anything we can do to reduce the

amount of mail we handle will reduce our costs and the risk to our employees.

Therefore, ***PLEASE*** consider joining our automatic payment program. It will save IWA money, thereby helping to keep our water rates as low as possible, and it will save Members money on stamps and envelopes, while at the same time making bill payment a little less painful. We've reprinted the application form below to make it as easy as possible for you. It is also available for

AUTHORIZED AGREEMENT FOR PRE-ARRANGED WATER BILL PAYMENTS

I (We) hereby authorize The Island Water Association, Inc. (IWA) to begin debits to the bank account listed below. I authorize the bank to debit the amount of my monthly water bill. I have the right to stop payment of a charge within seven days of receiving my bill from IWA. I am responsible for notifying both IWA and the bank of this stop-payment request.

This authorization is to remain in effect until I notify IWA in writing of its termination. My notification must allow the bank a reasonable opportunity in which to act on it. Both IWA and the bank may also terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice.

Name (as it appears on your bill):

Social Security or Federal ID number:

Address of water service:

Account number of water service:

Your telephone number:

(____) _____

Bank name:

Bank account number:

Signature(s):

Date:

**Don't forget your voided check. Thanks!
MAIL TO: PO BOX 509, SANIBEL, FL 33957**

~~printing off our internet site, located at
www.islandwater.com. Thanks!!!~~



NEW WATER RESTRICTIONS AGAIN

It's getting hard to remember who's on first regarding water restrictions imposed by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). They recently changed again, effective October 10th.

As we noted in the last issue of this newsletter, it was getting kind of hard to understand how we could be in a drought, when the island was pretty much inundated after several tropical rain events late this Summer. At the time this newsletter was being written in late October, things had dried out to a large extent, but we still had standing water in many areas of the islands. In fact, IWA was paying our pipe installation contractor extra money to work in such wet conditions along Sanibel-Captiva Road, and we were considering delaying until next year a project in the Captiva village area, due to an abnormally high water table.

Apparently the SFWMD finally came to the same conclusion. In their own words, they said, "Following on the heels of a record drought, the SFWMD Governing Board has adopted a resolution calling for year-round voluntary water conservation. The resolution recommends limiting lawn watering to three days a week and encourages local governments to continue effective conservation strategies. Mother Nature has provided us a reprieve and that has allowed us to drop mandatory restrictions. Recommended watering days are: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday for addresses ending in an odd number; Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday for addresses ending in an even number. It is further recommended that no watering be done between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when temperature

and evaporation are highest." Of course, we are now about to enter the annual dry season, so guess what is likely to happen before long!!

At IWA, we support all efforts to conserve water, including the above voluntary restrictions imposed by the SFWMD. Watering three days a week is plenty for any lawn or shrub/tree. We are working on implementing a formal Water Conservation Plan at IWA in the near future. As part of that plan, we are considering purchasing a number of devices for automatically shutting-off ~~irrigation systems after a rain event.~~ We would make those devices available to our Members at our discounted bulk purchase price.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY!!

Some of our Members have recently received what are officially called "Precautionary Boil Water Notices." These notices are in no way connected to ongoing terrorism concerns. They are merely the result of a clarification in the rules from the Lee County Public Health Department concerning the steps we have to take when repairing our water mains. The clarified rules go further than before to ensure a even safer water supply for all our Members.

Prior to the clarified rules, when we repaired a leak in a water main, we were very careful to keep everything out of the open pipe while repairs were being made. When repairs were complete, we thoroughly flushed the pipe until the water was perfectly clear, and we detected a normal level of Chlorine in the water at the flushing point(s). The presence of Chlorine indicated that any bacteria inadvertently introduced during the repair had been either flushed-out or killed by the Chlorine. Using this technique, we have never had a problem with water contamination from a repair, to the best of our knowledge.

None-the-less, the Health Department now requires us to issue a Precautionary Boil Water Notice whenever the main pressure falls below 20 pounds per square inch, which is nearly 100% of the time when main repairs are made. Our normal water pressure is around 60 pounds per square inch. Except in very unusual circumstances, main repairs can not be effectively made unless the pressure is reduced to zero. Although our experience indicates that our previous procedures effectively prevented contamination, we agree with the Health Department that cautioning affected customers to boil their water is a further step in preventing the possible consumption of contaminated water.

We attempt to notify affected customers in a couple of ways. We may use hangers placed on house door knobs, or we may use road barricades with signs indicating the area where customers should boil their water. We use whatever means we believe will maximize our ability to reach the affected people. The need to boil the water normally lasts only 24 hours, during which time bacteriological tests are being run in laboratories approved by the Health Department. In some instances, the need to boil water may extend beyond 24 hours, if test results indicate the need to do additional flushing and testing. In addition, when main repairs are made on an emergency basis over the weekend, we may not always be able to find a lab to run the sample until Monday, thereby extending the time during which the water must be boiled.

We apologize for the inconvenience these boil water notices inevitably cause. Although our ~~experience would indicate that they add little to the~~ safety of our water, in cases like this, a little more safety may be very important, and it can certainly never hurt. As they say, "Better safe than sorry!"

IWA NEEDS YOU!!

It's election time at IWA again, and next year two seats on our Board of Directors will be up for election. The seats are currently held by Richard A. Calabrese and Andrew J. Schroder. Rich, the Board President, is completing his second term and is eligible for re-election. Andy, Board Vice President, is eligible for re-election to his second term of service, having served on the Board since April 2000.

IWA is governed by a five member Board of Directors who serve without pay. Directors must

be year-round residents of Sanibel or Captiva and must be IWA members or an official representative of a condominium or other IWA corporate member. Meetings are normally held on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Directors are elected by the membership at IWA's Annual Meeting to be held in April.

~~Anyone who would like to run for one of the open seats should contact our Board Secretary, Patty Henrick, at 472-2113, ext. 132 or by e-mail at~~



patty@islandwater.com before January 1, 2002.

LIZZIE LOO



The Island Water Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 509
Sanibel, FL 33957