



IWA PIPELINE



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IT'S TIME...



Normally, the articles contained in issues of the IWA Pipeline are of an upbeat, informative nature. This article meets the second criteria (it is informative), but fails to meet the first one (it is not upbeat).

As noted in several previous Pipeline articles and discussed at our last several Annual Meetings, IWA is not going to be able to avoid a water rate increase forever. Our last increase was way back in 1992, and we had a subsequent decrease in rates in 1994. We are unaware of any other local utility which has gone for 16 years without a rate increase. In fact, we cannot think of anything that has not risen in cost over that period of time.

At IWA, we have worked hard to keep our rates unchanged. We have implemented many money-saving ideas. Some, like using the latest Reverse Osmosis membrane technologies, reduced our energy costs. Others, like increasing our use of computers, enabled us to avoid growth in our workforce, despite new challenges like additional security measures after the 911 tragedy. Every IWA

employee has contributed to this effort.

The costs of nearly everything it takes to produce our water product have risen in recent months, with more increases on the way. For examples, we are heavy users of electricity and chemicals, the costs of which have increased dramatically. Health insurance costs for our employees have also continued their annual double digit percentage increases. We need to continue to keep our facilities up-to-date and in a good state of repair, which will lead to increasing costs for construction projects.

At the same time our costs are rising, our revenues are falling. It is impossible to determine exactly why this is happening, but certainly the state of our national economy and recent water conservation efforts, like irrigation restrictions, have contributed to the revenue decline.

As any businessman will tell you, a business cannot continue to exist with the combination of rising costs and falling revenues. That also holds true for a not-for-profit corporation like IWA. The only fiscally responsible course of action available to us is to increase our water rates. We are currently conducting a detailed study to determine exactly how large an increase we need and how the increase will be structured. We hope to present our rate increase request to Sanibel City Council, in accordance with our Franchise Agreement, sometime early next year, with implementation of the increase shortly thereafter.

Watch upcoming issues of this quarterly newsletter for updates on this important matter. Rest assured that we will do everything in our power to keep the rate increase as small as we can, consistent with providing you with a safe and reliable water supply. At IWA, we take our company motto (Quality Water at Reasonable Cost) very seriously. Feel free to call our General Manager, Rusty Isler, with your comments or questions. Rusty can be reached at (239) 472-1502, or by e-mail at rusty@islandwater.com.

TROPICAL STORM FAY'S VISIT...

On Monday morning, August 18, 2008 it was beginning to look like Tropical Storm Fay was going to follow the path of Hurricane Charley to our doorstep. Fay was located over Cuba and forecast to make landfall Tuesday on the Lee County coast as a minimal category 1 hurricane. IWA personnel immediately went into hurricane preparation mode. We have a well-documented Emergency Response Plan that includes weather events such as hurricanes. We began installing our storm shutters, filling all vehicles with fuel, and securing everything that could possibly become a wind-driven missile. After all the preparations were completed, some employees were able to leave early to make their storm preparations at their homes.

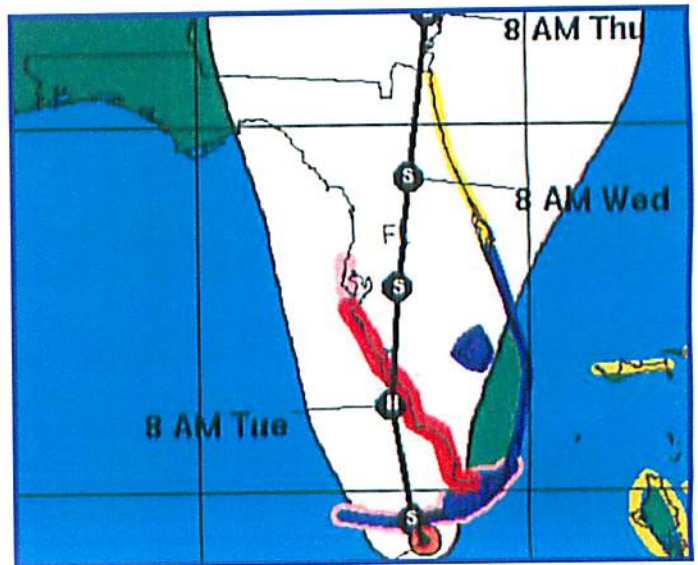
At a 3PM Monday staff meeting, it was decided to close the office on Tuesday and have a skeleton crew from each department (Distribution, Plant, and Administration), spend the night at our facilities. The crew along with Lizzie, our office cat,



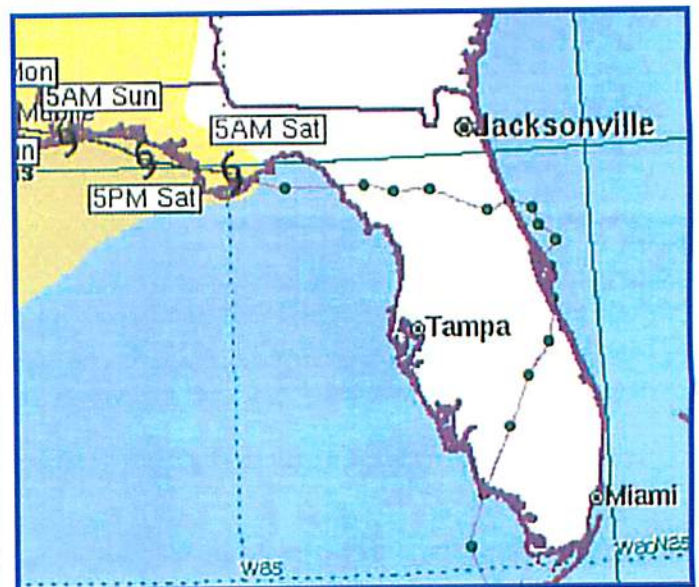
Storm Shutters Go Up — Mike Rush

stayed on-site hoping to prevent or minimize any damage to our system and equipment. Fortunately, during the night the storm wobbled to the east and made landfall south of Naples which kept the worst of the weather east of us. We received more rain from the storm's feeder bands after it passed than we did during the approach of the storm. Anxiety levels were much lower this time around, due to our experience with other recent tropical systems and the lower winds of Fay.

Thank goodness Fay turned into a non-event and the cost to IWA was limited to overtime hours and a day of lost productivity. On the bright side, exercises like this keep our storm preparation skills sharp.



Fay's Forecasted Course



Fay's Actual Course

NEW METER READING VEHICLE...

If you have been out-and-about on the islands you may have noticed that Scott Somerville, our meter reader, has a new ride. Scott wore the old vehicle out, over the last seven years. Meter reading can be very tough on a vehicle due to all the stops, starts, and daily use. A right-hand drive meter reading vehicle is an important safety consideration which allows the driver to dismount away from the traffic and out of the street.

Scott Somerville has been our faithful meter reader at IWA for over eight years. Scott reads a meter route every week, each of which contains about 1,200 meters. That is a lot of numbers he has to accurately enter in his hand-held computer. At the beginning of each month, he turns around

and starts the whole process over again. Scott is probably our best known face to our members, as he is out in the field all day every day. If you need to know the location of an address, a meter, or a resident, Scott can usually recite it off the top of his head.

As Scott is reading his routes and opening meter boxes (which are all below ground), he comes into contact with lots of different critters. He says he mostly finds snakes, which are just as surprised as he is when the lid comes off the meter box. Hence the long-handled metal hook he uses to open the lids and to avoid unnecessary bending –over! Once in awhile he encounters a rubber snake, thanks to his well-meaning “friends”. The worst thing Scott says he has encountered was a opossum in one of the meter boxes which was no longer playing ‘possum. Most likely the meter reading was estimated that month.



Scott Somerville's new "ride"

As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, one of the biggest obstacles Scott faces is vegetation that is overgrown or planted too close to the meter boxes. Scott can use your help in this area. Please make sure your landscaping and bushes are trimmed adequately. IWA's Service Rules and Regulations specify "a path to the meter at least 7 feet high and three feet wide, with two feet of clearance on all sides of the meter box". Scott is a much better meter reader than he is a bush trimmer. Keeping vegetation away from your meter box will help Scott march through his meter reading duties in a safe and efficient manner.

MEET SCOTT SHELDON...

In March of 2008, Scott Sheldon joined the crew at the RO plant as our newest Plant Operator Trainee. After moving from frigid Rochester, New York, Scott has spent most of his life in Orlando, Florida. Nine years ago he transplanted to sunny

Southwest Florida, where he now lives in Ft. Myers with his wife Laurie and their two children (Mitchell and Abbey). He previously worked in retail and construction. His construction skills should serve



Scott Sheldon; Checking Pressures

him well at the RO plant where there is always something being assembled or repaired.

Scott is finding his work at the plant a welcome challenge, both mentally and physically. He is fitting in well with the other operators, who find Scott a pleasure to work with.

In his leisure time Scott enjoys reading American History, particularly the American Revolution and the Civil War. Scott also enjoys fresh water fishing. Now that he resides in Southwest Florida, he has also taken up salt water fishing.

MAINTENANCE...

On a barrier island in a saltwater environment, there is no shortage of objects that need maintenance. Here at IWA we take maintenance of our equipment and facilities very seriously. We even have a department dedicated to maintenance. We are constantly fixing, replacing, painting, cleaning and repairing all types of equipment. Our expertise spans through engines, motors, pumps, instruments, pipe fitting, gauges and even janitorial tasks. One of recent maintenance jobs was to clean, prime, and paint the Blind Pass bridge crossing. This was done so that it would be completed before the pending Blind Pass dredging project. It is a lot easier to work off a ladder than it will be a boat in fast moving current!

Another project nearing completion is the relocation of our water main along Dixie Beach Boulevard. This project was done so the City of Sanibel could install four culverts in order to improve the tidal flow to the mangrove forest along the road.

Two of our long ago retired chief plant operators, Pete Wilson and Dale Smith, were old navy guys. Their motto was "If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, pick it up; and if you can't pick it up, paint it.." If you have ever taken a tour at one of our annual meetings, I am sure you noticed that our plant and Maintenance Department still follows that mantra to this day.



Joe Scofield Inspecting the Primer Coat



LIZZIE UPDATE...

As loyal readers of this newsletter may recall, the previous author (who retired last summer) periodically included updates on our office kitty, Lizzie. Inclusion of those articles were the result of two factors: (1) the previous author was a cat lover, and (2) he had written dozens of newsletters over the previous 14 years, and sometimes was thankful for an



I am so tired of Tropical Storms

article to fill a blank space. On the other hand, (1) the current newsletter author is a cat "tolerator," and (2) he usually can still think of topics to write about which are more relevant to IWA's water business.

For all you cat lovers out there, rest assured that Lizzie is still doing just fine. She has all IWA employees fully trained to give her whatever she wants, which mostly boils down to food, a quiet place to sleep, and of course all the high quality tap water she can drink.



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