



IWA PIPELINE

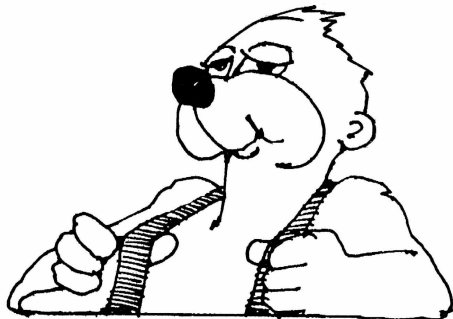


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3651 Sanibel-Captiva Road Sanibel, FL 33957 • <http://www.islandwater.com>

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GOOD NEWS (AGAIN!)!



At their meeting on October 20th, the IWA Board of Directors again decided not to increase water rates, for the eighth year in a row. In fact, the only rate change since the last increase in 1992, was a 7.5% decrease in 1994. If you factor-in a compound rate of inflation of over 22.5% since 1992, our rates have actually decreased by around 30% in the last 8 years. Meanwhile our reserves have remained about constant this year, at a level sufficient to cover any reasonable emergency. Our total debt is only equal to a little less than one year's gross revenue. All in all, we are in excellent financial condition!

Our ability to keep our rates constant is, in large part, due to our intelligent expenditure of money on things that increase the efficiency of our operations. We are constantly looking for capital improvement projects that can reduce our operating expenses by more than the capital costs, over a reasonable number of years. Many of these efficiency improvements have been the subject of articles in previous issues of this newsletter. Good examples include: (1) improved, lower pressure reverse osmosis membranes, (2) extensive computerization of both treatment plant and office operations, (3) continuous replacement of old,

underground piping, and (4) use of more accurate water meters. We are already working on additional efficiency improvement opportunities that we hope to be able to implement over the next few years.

Of course it would be unrealistic to believe that we will be able to hold our rates constant forever. Inflation will likely continue to increase the cost of everything we use to make our water, including chemicals, power and labor. In addition, when the City of Sanibel commissions its new reclaimed water system, our revenues will decrease by a yet unknown amount, as customers switch to that more economical source of irrigation water. The combined results of these two factors will result in the need for a rate increase sometime in the next few years. In the meantime, we can all enjoy the fact that at least one item in our household budget has not increased in price for nearly a decade!



MEET YOU ON THE "WEB"!

~~other websites that you may find to be useful, including many other sites concerning weather conditions and both local and water-related~~



If you are Internet-enabled, we invite you to take some time to look around our website at <http://www.islandwater.com>. We have had a website for about four years now, and we are constantly improving it so that it meets the needs of our members and others interested in our operations. Following are some of the highlights of the available information.

All IWA employees carry pagers (those annoying "beepers" that always go off at inopportune times!) capable of receiving alpha-numeric messages. On our home page (see above address), there is a drop-down list of all employees. Just choose the one you are trying to reach, and you can type in a message which will reach that employee's pager within about a minute of your sending it. Talk about accessibility!

Another area which you may find helpful is the "Customer Service" page. On this page, you can determine which week of the month your meter is read. Also, there is a calculator, which will enable you to determine what your bill would be, based on any water consumption. This calculator is also useful to help you to understand the effects of our tiered rate structure (the more water you use, the more each thousand gallon increment costs). There are also forms available on this page to sign-up for bank drafting (please do it!) or to change the name(s)/mailing address on your account.

On the "Maps and Graphs" page, we have included information regarding current construction projects. There are also facts and graphs regarding various useful/interesting data, such as: causeway crossings, rainfall and water meter locations. It's probably akin to the appendix of a book, but if you like detail, it's the place for you.

There is also a page called "About Us," which has a general and a more detailed description of how we produce your drinking water, as well as a list of the holidays when we will be closed and a list of all employees' IWA phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

The "Resources" page contains copies of literature that is sometimes requested by our members and others. Included in this section is an archive of past issues of this newsletter, going back to 1986.

Finally, the "Links" page contains hyperlinks to

organizations.

We have tried to pack our website with information that you will find useful, interesting (if a water utility can be "interesting") and informative. Although we have not yet included your individual account data or the ability to pay your bills over the Internet, we are investigating cost-effective and secure ways to do that as well. If you have any questions or feedback on our website, feel free to contact our webmistress, Jacque Owens, at jacque@islandwater.com. In the meantime, log on and check us out!

IWA NEEDS YOU!!

It's election time at IWA again, and next year three seats on our Board of Directors will be up for election. The seats are currently held by Paul E. Garvey, Stella E. Farwell, and Robert B. (Bob) Davison. Paul, the Board President, is completing his third term and is ineligible for re-election. Stella, Board Vice President, is eligible for election to her second term of service, having served on the Board since April 1999. Bob, Board Treasurer and Vice President, is also eligible for election to his second full term of service, having served on the Board since November 1998, when he was

appointed to the Board to complete the term of departing Director, Paul Storves.

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 Executive Assistant, Lori Thompson, at 472-2113, ext. 125 or by e-mail at lori@islandwater.com before January 1, 2001.

WHERE ARE THOSE PIPES?

At IWA, we have over 120 miles of buried pipe, over 1,100 buried valves and over 4,600 water meters. Knowing where all this equipment is located is a big job, and a very important one when something goes wrong or breaks. For example, when a main break occurs, we need to know where the nearest valves are located so we can shut them and stop the leak long enough to repair it without interrupting the water supply to any more of our customers than absolutely necessary. The tool we use for locating our equipment is called our "Atlas," which is a set of drawings of our piping system.

IWA's original Atlas was made from aerial photographs. Lines were drawn on the photographs to show the approximate location of piping, valves and meters. This first Atlas was inaccurate and contained very limited information. In the second version of the Atlas, we completely redrew our system by hand, on a subdivision-by-subdivision basis. This version was better, because we included additional information concerning property boundaries and limited information on actual physical equipment locations. With the advent of powerful computers and special software, and after many hours of manual data input over the last few years by Shelly Storves, our Engineering Supervisor, we have now created the third, computerized version of our Atlas. This much improved version is a seamless, full-scale map of both Sanibel and Captiva Islands. Among other things, it shows streets, houses, edge of pavement, pumping stations, other utilities, house numbers, and customer account numbers.

There is almost no limit to the additional useful information that can now be added to the new Atlas, such as the most recent maintenance dates

for equipment, etc. This new Atlas can also be used to create hydraulic and water quality models of our system. These models will enable us to determine where we may have low pressure problems and may need to install larger pipes, or when/where flushing of pipes is required to keep our water supply fresh. In addition, Ron Leavitt, our Engineering Aide, has created databases with

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construction specifications/drawings and flushing schedules. All this computerized data is available to all of our employees via our office computer network and our internal Intranet system.

The next step in improving our Atlas is to make it more accessible to our employees when they are not in the office. That's where it is ultimately of the most use. We have recently put the Atlas on a small handheld computer as a first step in that direction. Eventually customer information and other database information will also be readily accessible in this same way, so that for example, we can select a water meter on the Atlas and it will show the customer's water usage during the previous month, thereby allowing us to analyze current usage. We are also working on integrating a GIS/GPS (geographical information/global positioning satellite) system into the Atlas. When we are able to take this step, we will be able to quickly and accurately locate an underground line from its latitude and longitude position. Finally, we hope to be able to include "real time" data, as wireless communications become more dependable and faster. All IWA employees would then be able to access the latest information anywhere, anytime. Isn't technology great??!!

GOODBYE DEBORAH!

Donor Benefit Coordinator with the Pacific Northwest Ballet.

IT'S (ALMOST) OVER!

In the previous issue of this newsletter, we noted that the hurricane season had started off on a very quiet path, despite predictions of a more active than normal season, with 11 named storms, including 7 hurricanes predicted. Finally, on August 4th, the first storm, Hurricane Alberto formed. From that point on, we had a very active season. ~~At the time this newsletter was being written, the last storm of the season was Nadine, which dissipated on October 22nd. At that point, we had 14 named storms, including 8 hurricanes.~~

The storm which came closest to us this year was Hurricane Gordon, which was on the maps from September 14th to the 18th. Although it was a minimal hurricane, with maximum winds of only 75 miles per hour and never came within 100 miles of us, the islands felt a significant impact from this storm. We had torrential rains, and one or more tornadoes hit the East end of Sanibel. At IWA, we took all our normal precautions for tropical storms, and had to rely on our generator for power during the worst part of the storm. We had one main break during the storm and a couple of others afterwards, probably due to the saturated ground. All in all, it could have been a lot worse, but it really makes you wonder what it would be like if we ever take a direct hit from a more severe storm.

LIZZIE UPDATE



On

September 19th, long-time IWA employee, Deborah Rodriguez, resigned her position as our Membership Administrator. Deborah joined IWA in September 1988, and she was our first point of contact with our members on customer service matters for most of her career. Everyone at IWA wishes Deborah all the best in her new life in Seattle, Washington, where she has a new job as



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