



IWA PIPELINE



FALL 1994

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RATES REDUCED!!



In the last issue of the *Pipeline*, we discussed progress on the annual review of our water rates by the IWA Board of Directors. The review, which began in April, was completed in June.

Detailed forecasts were made for both income and expenditures for the next couple of years. Cash flows and reserves were reviewed with allowances made for factors beyond our control. Water conservation was considered. Basically, we looked at all aspects of the matter.

The Board concluded that rates could be reduced by approximately 7.5%. They decided to accomplish this reduction in an across-the-board manner, giving the same percentage reduction to all members. This seemed like the fairest method and it will enable us to retain our rate structure, which encourages conservation.

We next had to seek approval of the Lee County Board of Commissioners for the proposed rate reduction, as required by our franchise. A public hearing was held on August 31, at which time the new rates were approved. We are going to implement the new rates for the September bills.

The following table compares the old and new rates:

Monthly Rate Schedule

| New Rates | Old Rates | Charges For: |
|-----------|-----------|--|
| \$1.30 | \$1.50 | Reading Charge per meter |
| \$9.70 | \$10.50 | Demand Charge per unit (no water) |
| \$2.80 | \$3.00 | per 1,000 gals. for the first 5,000 gals./unit |
| \$3.35 | \$3.60 | per 1,000 gals. for 6,000-10,000 gals./unit |
| \$3.90 | \$4.20 | per 1,000 gals. for 11,000-15,000 gals./unit |
| \$4.45 | \$4.80 | per 1,000 gals. for 16,000-20,000 gals./unit |
| \$5.00 | \$5.40 | per 1,000 gals. for 21,000-25,000 gals./unit |
| \$5.55 | \$6.00 | per 1,000 gals. for over 25,000 gals./unit |

We are very glad to be able to reduce the rates. Some of the factors which made it possible for us to do so are:

- Technology improvements, such as the new RO membranes, which allowed us to increase treatment capacity for a lower than expected cost.
- Extra revenue from the new rates (introduced in 1992), which allowed us to catch-up on our capital improvement program.
- Use of IWA employees to do work we previously paid others to do, when our normal workload permits.

The Board will continue to review the rates every year. Although we can not predict the outcome of these reviews ... rates could go up or down ... we assure you that we will continue to look for ways to improve our operations and to provide you with a safe and reliable water supply for as low a cost as possible.

NO DISASTERS HERE!

The news media always seems to dwell on "bad" news and disasters. Lately the water treatment industry has been the subject of several such reports.

First, there is the continuing story of very serious copper pipe corrosion in some other areas of Lee County. On the Islands, we also had a serious corrosion problem several years ago. We have taken a number of steps to minimize the problem, and while some corrosion is still occurring, the situation has improved considerably.

Then there was the story about the sinkhole in the northern part of the state and concerns with groundwater contamination. Our water comes from wells that are over 700 feet deep. It is extremely unlikely that we will ever get a sinkhole 700 feet deep on the Islands, so our water supply should be safe from this potential disaster.

Finally, there was the recent story of an acid leak at a water treatment plant in east Lee County. The fumes from the leak resulted in the evacuation of numerous homes and a night of hard work for emergency crews. Of course, accidents can and do happen, but we believe our excellent facilities and operations staff make such an accident unlikely on the Islands. We also are currently replacing all our old steel chemical storage tanks with new double walled plastic ones. Both walls would have to fail for these tanks to leak.

Bottom line ... we should have, "No Disasters Here!"

WHO'S CONTROLLING THE CONTROLLER?

If you have an automatic irrigation system and haven't seen its control box recently, here are some steps to reinstate yourself as head controller:

- Don't wait for a high water bill to learn you have a problem. Occasionally switch the system on manually to check for leaks or broken heads.
- Measure how much water you are applying in a straight-sided can and limit it to 1" of rain or irrigation water per week.
- Try turning off zones which irrigate only mulched beds, which need less water. (Be sure to monitor how the shrubs do.)
- Operate your system on manual for a while to determine the minimum amount of water you can apply and still keep the grass happy. Reset the automatic schedule accordingly.

If you need a house call to help put that control box in its place, please call Dee of Project Water Works at 472-1932.

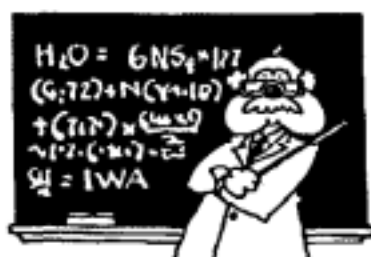
A FISH(Y) STORY

In an earlier issue of the Pipeline, we told you about the ever-changing environmental regulations requiring us to do something about the amounts of a couple of minerals in our brine discharge. Brine is the water that is rejected from our RO Plant. We told you the problem only existed within a short distance of the end of our pipe in the Gulf of Mexico. Beyond that point, mixing with seawater returned levels to normal.

Well, after many months, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has finally agreed with us. The fish and all other sea creatures are truly as happy as we always knew they were. You may wonder how we knew. Well, one day while we were taking samples from the Gulf, a tourist caught a very large snook right over our discharge line (really!!) ... and he (the snook or the tourist ... your choice) told us he was very happy with our brine.



QUIZ



1. IWA adds fluoride to the water to help us all avoid tooth decay.
A. True B. False
2. The temperature of the water from our wells is:
A. 50°F B. 85°F C. Depends on time of year.
3. How much does two acres of prime real estate at 3425 San Cap Road cost?
A. \$100,000 B. \$550,000 C. \$1,000,000
4. How many hours per day and days per week does IWA operate the RO Plant?
A. 8Hrs/5Days B. 8Hrs/7Days C. 24Hrs/7Days

MEET STEVE RENSING



Steve Rensing is a Level III Plant Operator at the RO Plant. Steve operates the Plant and conducts laboratory tests on the water to make sure everything's working properly. He also maintains the equipment so that breakdowns are minimized. When everything is running

smoothly, Steve lends a helping hand on in-house construction projects to improve the plant and to increase its capacity.

Steve is originally from Belleville, Illinois. Prior to joining IWA in 1987, he had worked at a couple of motels and restaurants on the Island. He says he likes working at IWA because there's always something new to learn and that makes his job "fun." He must really mean that, because he lists work as one of his hobbies, in addition to billiards, fishing and boating. Makes you wonder if we really need to pay him!

Steve says that his every waking hour is guided by the well known motto: "If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, some one over there must be wasting a lot of water."

UP GO THE WALLS

You may have noticed our dust along San-Cap Road at the RO Plant site. IWA's new office complex is finally underway. Site preparation and earthwork began in mid-April. We got the building permit in late June and construction began with foundations and walls shortly thereafter.

The Board of Directors decided that we will contract the building ourselves, using the Building Contractor and Electrical Contractor licenses held by IWA staff members. We expect to save money this way and also to get a better quality job. Our Distribution employees have handled much of the earthwork themselves (between repairing water leaks and reading meters). We are also handling all electrical work in-house, thanks to the efforts of our electricians. All other IWA employees are also participating in their areas of expertise on this important project.

We expect to have the building complete in time for next year's Annual Meeting in April. The building will have two rooms which can be combined into one room large enough for the meeting. We hope to see you all there and show you our new facilities.

IN YEARS PAST ...



29 Years Ago (1965)

The Board purchased four lots on Center Street at a cost of \$2,880 for a tank and pumping station. (Our "Dixie Beach" station on Center Street is still in use.)

25 Years Ago (1969)

At its meeting in August, the Board discussed an engineering report on alternatives to purchasing our water from the Greater Pine Island Water Association. Relations between the two Associations had become extremely strained. The two alternatives presented were

supplies from mainland sources and development of a supply on Sanibel. Ultimately it was decided to develop the Sanibel supply. Wells were drilled and our electrodialysis plant was built (decommissioned in 1992).

10 Years Ago (1984)

IWA staff was directed to prepare plans for servicing Buck Key in the event that development there is approved.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. B. False. The addition of Fluoride to drinking water is a controversial topic. IWA adds none.
2. B. The temperature of our well water is a constant 85°.
3. B. IWA is selling our old office/plant site for \$550,000. Call Dick at 472-1502 for details.
4. C. The plant is operated around the clock every day.

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

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