

# Utilities Department

# Overview

**Kevin Becotte**

# Overview

- **Water**
- **Wastewater**
- **Reclaimed Water**
- **Solid Waste**

# Overview of Reductions FY 2010

- **Positions**

- *Reduction of 45 permanent positions.*
- *Reduction of 8 temporary positions.*

- **Conservation Resources consolidated with Communications**

- *8 positions moved.*

- **Operating & Maintenance Budget**

- **Water**
  - *Reduction of \$3,200,000.*
- **Sewer**
  - *Reduction of \$4,600,000.*

# Key Programs & Service Levels

## ● Water

- *111,499 retail water accounts.*
- *53.80 MGD sold in FY 2009.*
- *Provides wholesale water service to the Cities of Clearwater, Pinellas Park, Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, Tarpon Springs.*

## ● Wastewater

- *80,139 retail sewer accounts.*
- *27 MGD treated in FY 2009.*
- *Provides wholesale sewer service to the Cities of Pinellas Park, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores and Indian Rocks Beach.*

# Key Programs & Service Levels

(continued)

- **Reclaimed Water**

- *22,425 reclaimed customers.*
- *Provides wholesale reclaimed water to the Cities of Pinellas Park, St. Pete Beach and South Pasadena.*

- **Solid Waste**

- *Plant processing design capacity is 3,150 tons per day.*

# Impacted Departments

- **Communications**
- **Operations**
- **Engineering**
- **Customer Service**
- **All have stories to share related to service levels and customer impacts.**
- **FY 2009 compared to first half of FY 2010.**

# Communications

**Tim Closterman**



# Communications Department

***Communicates Pinellas County government issues, services and functions with the public.***

## ***Divisions:***

***Conservation Resources/Public Information***

***Information Desk***

***PCC-TV***

***Graphic Arts***

# Overview of Reductions

## ● 9 Positions Eliminated

- *Assistant Director – Exempt*
- *Communications Specialist (3)*
- *Sr. Graphics Designer*
- *Video Specialist (2)*
- *Production Specialist*
- *Administrative Support Specialist*

# Key Programs & Service Levels

- *Public information and outreach are focused on education of major county issues, services and initiatives.*
- *Primary focus for PCC-TV has been coverage of meetings, in-house training support, Web-based videos and Public Service Announcements.*
- *Website overhaul has begun in order to address countywide customer service reductions, as well as major reduction of marketing resources.*
- *Conservation communication efforts have been reduced.*

# Impacts to the Public

- *Notices about county events and services were reduced due to the major reduction of marketing funds.*
- *Reduction in departmental support resulted in a decrease in emergency preparedness outreach (videos, Speakers Bureau).*
- *Elimination of programming resulted in fewer educational videos.*
- *Printed material reduced more than 50%.*

# Operational Changes

- *Partnerships forged with other county departments and agencies allow sharing of resources.*
- *A review process is in place for project requests.*
- *Focus is on priority projects.*
- *Consolidation with the Conservation Resources Division resulted in additional workload being shared.*

# Challenges & Lessons Learned

## ◉ Challenges

- *Balance requests with consideration for priorities and effectiveness of the communication*

## ◉ Lessons Learned

- *Diverse skill sets are a critical factor in workforce makeup.*
- *Completion of priority projects means other projects are put on hold*
- *Low-priority projects can be accepted by extending deadlines.*
- *Some project requests must be turned down.*

# Operations

**Jim Rolston**

# Utilities Operations

- *We treat, distribute and monitor 57 MGD of potable water.*
- *We collect, treat and recycle 27 MGD of wastewater.*
- *We treat and distribute 20 MGD of reclaimed water.*
- *We convert all wastewater sludge into 6,000 tons of pelletized fertilizer annually.*
- *We collect and process over 3.5 MG of trap grease annually.*



# Overview of Reductions

- ◉ **7 Positions Eliminated:**

- *2 Operator positions*
- *2 Water Quality positions*
- *1 Exempt Project Coordinator*
- *1 Environmental Specialist*
- *1 Operations Coordinator*

# Key Programs & Service Levels

- ◉ *Operation of 2 wastewater facilities, and 1 water treatment facility.*
- ◉ *Maintenance of 2 wastewater facilities, 1 water treatment facility, 5 water booster stations, 2 major wastewater pumping stations and 300 wastewater lift stations.*
- ◉ *Regulatory compliance for 30 significant industrial businesses discharging to the wastewater system.*
- ◉ *Regulatory compliance for Safe Drinking Water Act.*
- ◉ *Regulatory compliance for DEP permit requirements.*

# Impacts to the Public

- *Reductions have resulted in discontinuing our response to customers, after hours, for all water quality complaints other than those deemed public health and safety.*

# Operational Changes

- *The reductions will have little, immediate direct impact to the customer. However, the reductions in Operations and Maintenance personnel will have long-term, far-reaching and much greater impact on the infrastructure needed to provide basic public health and safety needs to the customers of Pinellas County Utilities.*

# Unintended Consequences

- *The job freeze created voids that have resulted in reduced repair and maintenance capabilities.*
- *The reduced repair and maintenance capabilities have resulted in a number of permit excursions at the treatment plants.*

# Challenges & Lessons Learned

## ● Challenges

- *Maintaining operations and maintenance levels that will assure long-term, quality products and services to our customers.*

## ● Lessons Learned

- *Critical operating positions must be identified and filled throughout the organization as quickly as possible, to maintain regulatory compliance.*

# Engineering

**Mike Sweet**

# Utilities Engineering

***Provides planning, design and construction inspection of all CIP projects, for Pinellas County Utilities.***



# Overview of Reductions

- **8 Positions Eliminated**
  - *4 production staff*
    - *2 exempt - Senior Engineer*
      - » *Project Coordinator Technical*
    - *2 classified - Engineering Tech*
      - » *Office Specialist*
  - *4 Field Inspectors “Green Vests”*

# Key Programs & Service Levels

## ◉ Green Vests

- *Provided customer liaison during major, visible and potentially disruptive construction projects.*
- *Customers, who could get rapid customer service from Green Vests, must now wait for an available Senior Field Inspector to address their concerns or issues which are delayed from several minutes to potentially hours.*

# Impacts to the Public

- ***Green Vest liaison eliminated.***
- ***Belcher Road Water Transmission is next major construction project for which there will be no Green Vests available - undetermined.***
- ***Previous major projects in which the Green Vests provided this very valuable service were Gulf Boulevard and North County Reclaimed Water.***

# Operational Changes

- *Green Vests spent as much time as necessary to address customers concerns.*
- *Focus was on the customer.*
- *Provided customers their cell phone number for continuous personal contact.*
- *Reduced repeat complaint calls to Customer Service.*
- *Senior Field Inspectors whose core function is to ensure proper construction will now have to field customers inquiries with added documentation of customer contacts, and will respond as time permits.*

# Unintended Consequences

- *Potential consequences as a result of the reductions are not yet known.*
- *Potential for elevated complaint/resolution cycle.*

# Challenges

- *Balancing core function of construction compliance.*
- *Addressing customer issues/concerns in the field in a timely manner.*

# Customer Service

**Tim Wiley**

# Utilities Customer Services

- **Customer contact and customer care**

- ***Customer Service Reps are the voice of Utilities for providing service via telephone support.***

- ***Customer contact for:***

- ***Start and Stop service (move, delinquent or seasonal)***
    - ***Billing explanations and high bill complaint resolution***
    - ***Explanation of service charges***
    - ***Credit card payment acceptance***
    - ***Maintenance work orders***
    - ***Respond to inquires on liens, bankruptcy, rate/fee changes***

- ***Inquiries for contractual billings for other agencies.***

- ***11 cities and 2 private agencies (rate/fee changes).***



# Overview of Reductions

- ***Call Center FTE did not change in new budget year.***
- ***Call Center resources changed.***
  - ***Majority of staff went from trained to untrained.***
- ***20 FTEs for phone center to answer calls.***
  - ***12 out of 20 were replaced with untrained staff (60%).***
- ***Began extensive training program 10/1/09 – 8 week training.***
- ***Transition period of lower volume of calls per new rep for first 90 days.***

# Key Programs & Service Levels

- ***Calls per day***
  - *600-800 calls per day (peak - 1,250).*
- ***Major changes affect calls (rates and fees).***
- ***Average call 5 minutes with 2 minute wrap up.***
  - ***Target service level***
    - *Answer calls <2 minutes*
  - ***Actual service level with staffing changes (< 2 minutes):***
    - *October, 2009 – 20%*
    - *November, 2009 – 36%*
    - *December, 2009 – 55%*
    - *January, 2010 – 54%*
    - *February, 2010 – 66%*

# Key Programs & Service Levels

(continued)

- ***Target service level***

- *Abandoned rate <5% of total calls (customer's hang up)*

- ***Actual service level with staffing changes (Abandoned):***

- *October, 2009 22% of 17,876 calls*
- *November, 2009 18% of 15,401 calls*
- *December, 2009 16% of 15,812 calls*
- *January, 2010 15% of 16,182 calls*
- *February, 2010 14% of 14,135 calls*

# Impacts to the Public

- *Over-flow is a process where peak call volumes route to secondary group in call distribution system.*
- *Over-flow handles peak call demands.*
- *Had to rely on Back Office for over-flow support for calls.*
- *Norm – 10% of daily call volume.*
- *After staffing impacts in over-flow:*
  - *October, 2009 - 31% of calls answered.*
  - *November, 2009 – 25% of calls answered.*
  - *December, 2009 – 18% of calls answered.*
  - *January, 2010 – 16% of calls answered.*
  - *February, 2010 – 12% of calls answered.*

# Operational Changes

- *Had to re-assign staff in call center as call takers.*
- *Provide more support to primary call takers.*
  - *60% of new staff require greater amount of support as new call takers.*
- *Increased overtime utilization in Back Office due to increased call volume from over-flow.*
- *Slowly reducing hold times as new staff have been trained and gain experience.*

# Unintended Consequences

- *Two employees transferred in have retired.*
- *Four employees transferred in have left.*
- *Low service level in first week of October.*
- *Developed incentive program to stimulate call taking.*
  - *Customer Care Rewards Minutes Program.*
  - *Implemented mid-October after first week of low service level [hold times 20 minutes abandoned 28%].*
  - *Reward-to-award for exceeding set levels for primary and over-flow call takers.*
  - *Program in place through completion of initial training transition through February 2010.*
  - *Increased cost of Randstadt support from former employees to supplement call center resources.*

# Challenges & Lessons Learned

## ● Challenges

- *Completion of training for new employees is only the first step in achieving full competency (it takes about 1 year to become fully competent).*
- *Extended support from remaining trained staff is crucial in order to support new staff in decision making.*
- *Second training session for back office staff delayed until completion of front office training – delayed comprehension of job duties without training.*

## ● Lessons Learned

- *Limit the extent of change.*
- *Recognize that job descriptions do not guarantee compatibility.*
- *Anticipate new bumping rule will mitigate the problem.*