



## **General Manager's Report**

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July 21, 2021

# We Will Miss You



Jeffrey Christopher Farley

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Gary Lord

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# Protect Our Resources



# COVID-19 Update

- Phase 3 recovery began July 6
  - In-person, customer facing functions & voluntary return to office spaces
- Internal push to get employees vaccinated working!
  - Three \$1,000 prize winners announced
- Positive key health metrics drive decision to lift restrictions
  - Mask and social distancing requirements lifted on July 12
  - Masks always permitted
  - Indoor meetings permitted – still urging remote meetings
- Closely monitoring Delta Variant
- Commercial shutoffs resume August 1
  - Residential shutoffs to resume Monday, September 13 (proposed)
- Arrearage forgiveness program concept presented today



# Open for (In-Person) Business

- Placeholder for Open for Business compilation video



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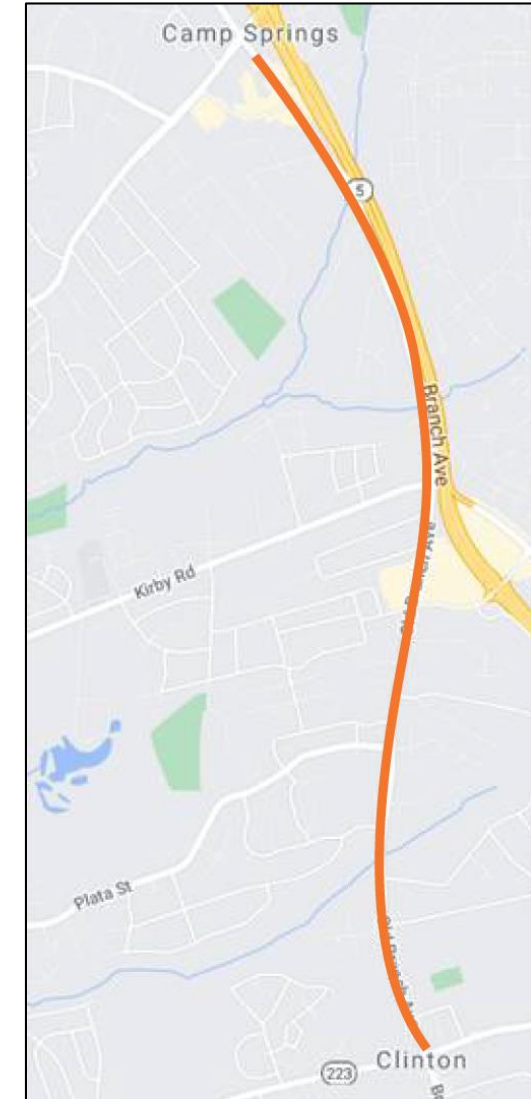


# Optimize Infrastructure



# New Water Main Along Old Branch Avenue

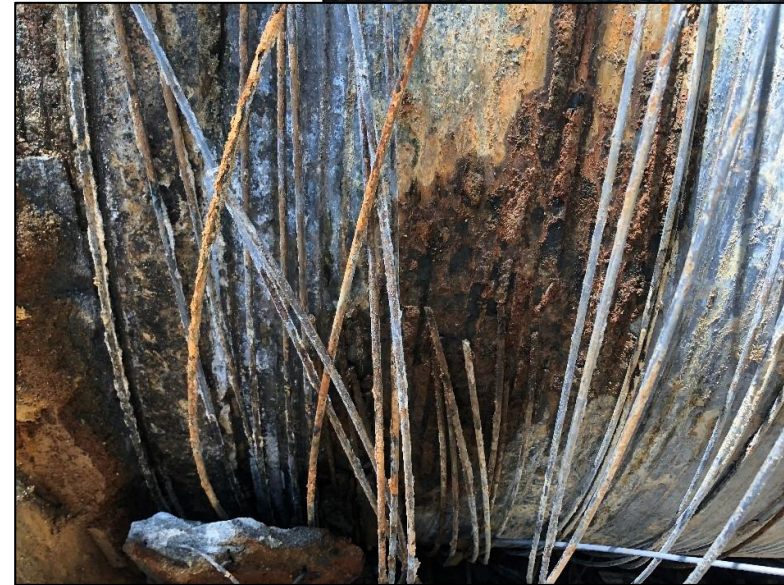
- Planning, design and construction of approximately 16,000 feet of 30-inch diameter water main and a new flow control valve along Old Branch Avenue, from Allentown Road to Piscataway Road
- Provide redundancy for over 100,000 customers in Camp Springs, Clinton, Fort Washington, Piscataway, Marlton and Brandywine areas of Prince George's County
- Construction is set to begin in Winter 2021 with an estimated completion in Summer 2025
- Total cost: \$21.8M





# AFO Saves the Day... Again

- **2016:** Acoustic Fiber Optic (AFO) installed in 42- and 36-inch prestressed concrete cylinder pipes (PCCP) near the intersection of the Beltway and Branch Avenue
- **Spring 2020:** Technology indicated wire breaks
  - Additional inspections identified six sections to be replaced
- **Spring 2021:** New sections of pipe installed
- Investment in AFO technology saves money and protects public safety
  - Avoids costly emergency repairs, decreases length of service interruptions and damage to roads and buildings



# Meter Reading Delays Extend to June

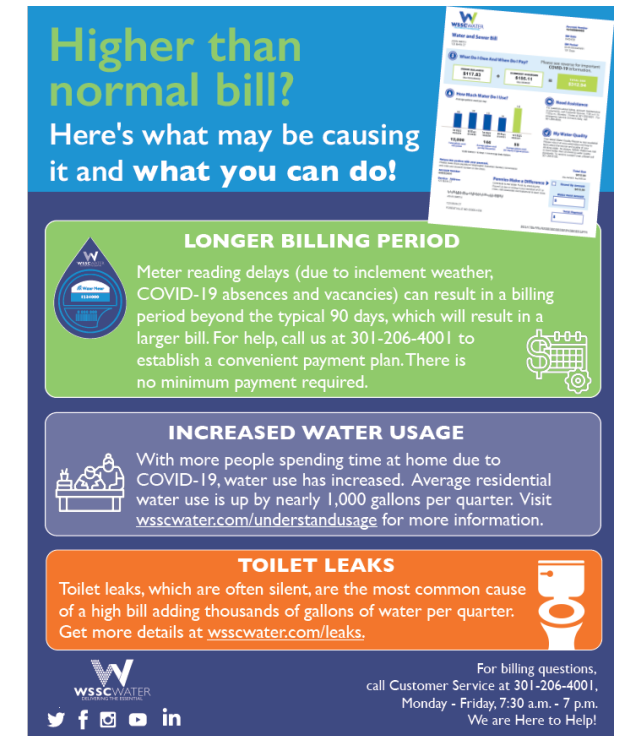
- Meter reading delays continue in June
  - Montgomery = **5.7 days behind**
  - Prince George's = **1.8 days behind**
- Results in longer billing periods
  - More than 150 days in some cases
  - Longer billing period results in higher bills
  - Increase in customer phone calls
- Continue outreach to customers, elected officials, media to explain high bills



**5.7 days behind**



**1.8 days behind**



**Higher than normal bill?**  
Here's what may be causing it and what you can do!

**LONGER BILLING PERIOD**  
Meter reading delays (due to inclement weather, COVID-19 absences and vacancies) can result in a billing period beyond the typical 90 days, which will result in a larger bill. For help, call us at 301-206-4001 to establish a convenient payment plan. There is no minimum payment required.

**INCREASED WATER USAGE**  
With more people spending time at home due to COVID-19, water use has increased. Average residential water use is up by nearly 1,000 gallons per quarter. Visit [wsscwater.com/understandusage](https://wsscwater.com/understandusage) for more information.

**TOILET LEAKS**  
Toilet leaks, which are often silent, are the most common cause of a high bill adding thousands of gallons of water per quarter. Get more details at [wsscwater.com/leaks](https://wsscwater.com/leaks).

For billing questions, call Customer Service at 301-206-4001, Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. We are Here to Help!

WSSCWATER  
DELIVERING THE ESSENTIAL

Twitter Facebook Instagram LinkedIn

# Meter Replacement Options

Utility Services Director Damion Lampley submitted meter replacement options to Commissioners on June 21:

- **Option 1** - Status quo
- **Option 2** - Formal Replacement Program
- **Option 3** – Expanding Automatic Meter Reading (AMR)
- **Option 4** – Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Implementation



# Increased Calls Lead to Longer Wait Times

- Higher call volume as customers ask questions about late fees, higher bills, pay plans, etc.
  - Average daily call volume this May was more than 30% higher than May 2020
  - Average answer speed was 11 minutes, up from 1 minute last May
- Fewer staff and temporary resources to answer phones and read meters (high turnover)
- Call volume anticipated to grow with resumption of turnoffs
- Actions being taken include:
  - Enabling call-back function to manage peak call volumes
  - Reallocation of consultant resources to meet growing call volume
  - Issuing two Request for Proposals to: 1) establish more sustainable call center staffing solution and 2) additional meter reading support
  - Technology improvements to enable self-service and reduce call volume



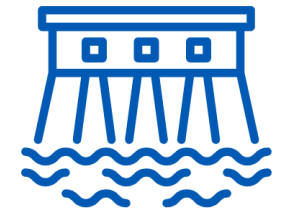
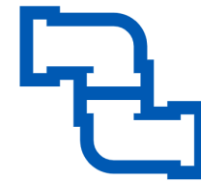
# **Spend Customer Dollars Wisely**



# Meeting with County on Capital Program

- Met with both counties on July 7 for FY 2023-28 Capital Improvements Program work sessions
- Focus on capital affordability strategies
  - Stress the challenges with reducing Capital Budget
- Featured projects in both counties

System	Total 6-Year Program Cost	Share
Reservoirs/Source Water Protection	17,784	0.4%
Water Filtration Plants	292,697	6.9%
Water Tanks	36,000	0.8%
Water Pipes	1,969,559	46.4%
Sewer Pipes	933,385	22.0%
Wastewater Pumping Stations/Force Mains	173,256	4.1%
Water Resource Recovery Facilities	672,541	15.8%
Support Facilities	133,480	3.1%
Lab	19,630	0.5%
Total	4,248,332	100.0%



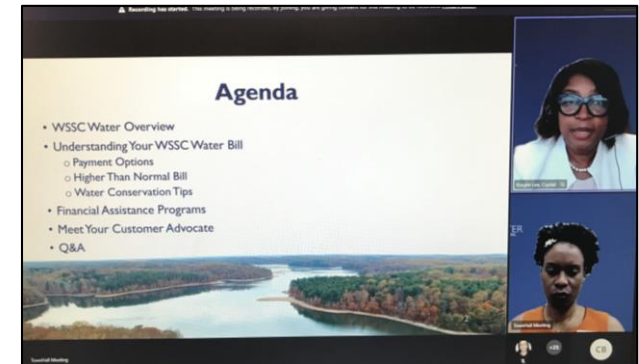
# Enhance Customer Experience





# Community Virtual Town Hall Meeting

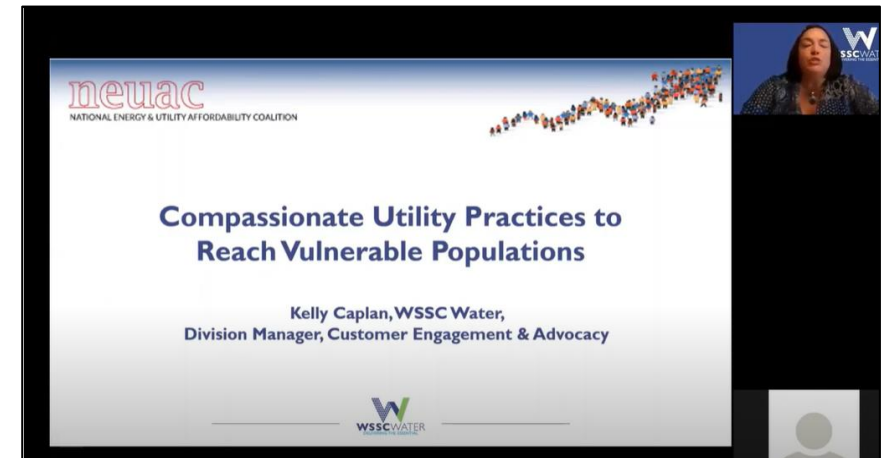
- Held customer outreach meeting on June 22
  - Understanding Your WSSC Water Bill
  - Customer Financial Assistance Programs
  - Water Conservation Tips
  - Meet Your Customer Advocate
- H<sub>2</sub>O People bringing their A Game
  - Melanie Deggins (Comms) coordinated and emceed
  - Crystal Knight-Lee covered range of topics
  - Kelly Caplan outlined our financial assistance programs
  - Steve Billingsley talked about role of Customer Advocates
- Continue to reach out to Montgomery County to gauge interest in hosting Utility Town Hall meeting





# Financial Assistance Outreach Continues

- Customer Engagement & Advocacy and Meter Services hosted meeting with Greater Farmland Civic Association Community
  - Answered questions about meter reading/high bill concerns
- Kelly Caplan co-presented with PECO Energy at National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC) conference on June 9
  - Compassionate Utility Practices for Vulnerable Populations
- Kudos: “WSSC Water is doing great initiatives to reach out to families in need of assistance! I particularly loved the idea of using the Nextdoor application. Keep up the good job!”



**neuac**  
NATIONAL ENERGY & UTILITY AFFORDABILITY COALITION

# Hole in One for the Water Fund

- 67th Manhole Open held on June 14 at the Hampshire Greens Golf Course
  - Organized by WSSC Water retirees
- 124 golfers participated
- 24 business sponsors
- Raised **\$6,000** for the Water Fund



# Kudos Keep Coming!



Christin Patterson

"Christin has been a huge lifesaver as I've navigated very complex water meter and billing challenges. I really appreciated how much she went out of her way to ensure that our problem got solved quickly. Christin is a gem!"

- Monica Huang, Kensington

"Chase Plumbing would like to personally thank you for your professionalism. You went out of your way to get this done in such a timely manner and we truly appreciate your hard work.

You are amazing!"

- Tracy Ocampo,  
Chase Plumbing in  
Montgomery County



Steven Wingerd



Keith Brunner



Jay Stadelman



Corey Norris



# ... and Coming!

CC

Cash, Carla Y. (Guest) 6/22 6:38 PM

My Favorite and the GREATEST BILLING ADVOCATE - STEPHEN BILLINGSLEY. Him and Daisy are the BEST



6/22 6:40 PM

They solve so many issues for Councilmember Monique Anderson-Walker District 8 Constituents. They have educated me so much.

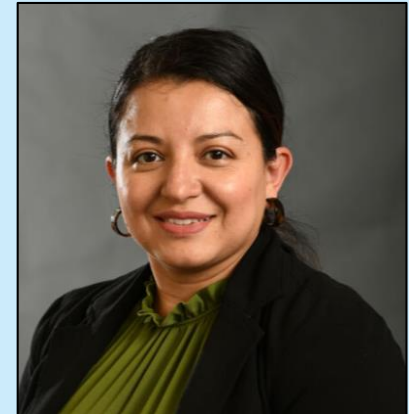


**Carla Y. Cash**

Constituent Services Director



Stephen Billingsley



Daisy Rickert



Angela Ballard-Landers



Nicole Horvath



Denise Beckett



David Wilkins



Jennifer Hawes

"I was reviewing my most recent WSSC Water bill and read the Customer Pipeline insert. I noticed the short articles about WSSC Water employees. Please pass on my congratulations to the Pipeline staff and the employees.

- Marc Lieber, Montgomery County customer and former Commissioner



# Transform Employee Engagement



# 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Short Course

## Short Course Planning Committee

- Jay Price
- Michael Lewis
- Angela Ballard-Landers
- David Wilkins
- John Luu
- Dinesh Bahadursingh
- Winfield McKell
- Robert Nally
- Licette Villafane
- Mike Marinelli



## Instructors

- Olivia Higgins
- Michael Lewis
- Angela Ballard-Landers
- Jay Price
- Howard Johnson
- Augustus Davies
- Perry Violet
- Dinesh Bahadursingh
- Robert Nally
- Wanda Ketner
- Marty Johnson
- Jessica Shiao
- David McDonough



# Celebrating Diversity

- Pride Month Celebration – June 22
- Guest speaker Robin Brannan
- Conversation continued – July 9



PRIDE MONTH CONVERSATION CONTINUES

The DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE in collaboration with  
MYLIFE & MYLIFE WELLBEING PARENT COMMUNITY present...

With Guest Speaker  
**ROBIN BRANNAN** (SHE / HER / ELLA)  
Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist and Founder and Director of  
Better Together Family Therapy

Conversation, questions and discussion to follow-up on  
recent H2O People presentation about gender self-identity,  
and understanding and accepting oneself, family and  
friends.

**YOU BE YOU**

**JULY 9** 12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.  
VIRTUAL via GoToWebinar



# Living Our Mission Series Continues

## What We Are Working On!

### Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Sub-Committee of H<sub>2</sub>O People

June is Pride Month – event on 6/22/21

### Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

Working on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives for trainings, town hall meetings, surveys, external facilitators.

Create a better, equitable organization where all H<sub>2</sub>O People feel welcome

### EEO Harassment Training

Online training for this calendar year.

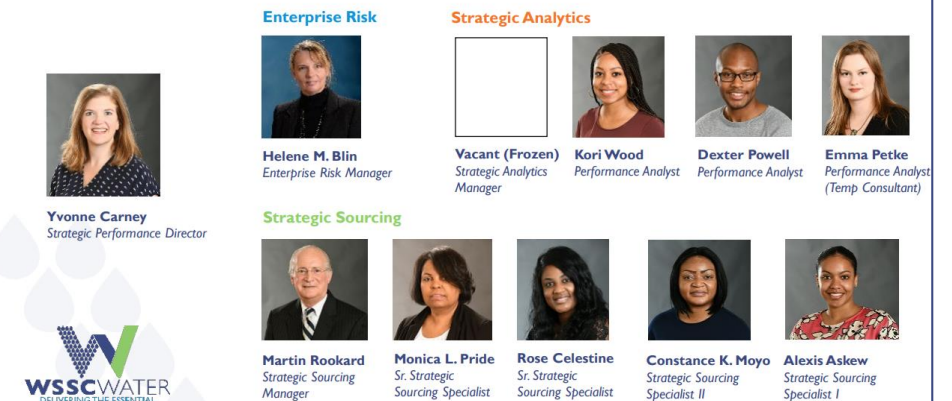


## Who We Are: Innovation and Research



23

## Who We Are: Strategic Performance



24



# Celebrating H<sub>2</sub>O People's Years of Service



**Tom Gingrich**  
Development Services Division

45 years



Employee Recognition  
Awards



**Mike Crowe**  
Seneca/Damascus /Hyattstown WRRFs

35 years



**Michael Harper**  
Regulatory Services Division

35 years

Congratulations to  
all the honorees!



**Rosa Wilson**  
Office of the Chief Information Officer

35 years



**Pamela Hickey**  
Water/Wastewater Systems Assessment  
Division

35 years

# Questions?

