

2005 – A Year in Review

Norm Labbe, Superintendent

This year has certainly had its share of challenges and successes. Here is a summary of a few of them.

Up To the Task - Like many organizations, we try to find some time at the end of each year to reflect upon our efforts to meet our organization's goals and objectives.

This year, as a result of unusual media scrutiny, we have undertaken much of this self-assessment in a public forum. By questioning our operational readiness to safely provide our customers with safe, reliable and economical drinking water, a very limited number of the media have implied that we are somehow not up to the task. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In considering some of the questions recently asked we have become aware, yet again, of the many positive strengths of our organization. All of our skilled and dedicated employees take pride in their work and the skills with which they perform their



jobs. The regulatory agencies with which we interact know that we are one of the finest water utilities in the State of Maine and our local public safety professionals are confident that we have taken every reasonable measure to protect the public's health, safety and welfare.

Organizations are only as good as the people within them and our organization has great people. Sometimes, during the day-to-day hustle and bustle of going about our business, we lose sight of that. However, we know now, more than ever before, that we are indeed fortunate to have skilled and competent employees who are unquestionably up to the task

of successfully accomplishing our mission.

New Relationship with Sanford— Communication and cooperation is now at the center of our relationship with the Town of Sanford. Our Technical Services Director Don Gobeil is a member of and is

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Beneath the Surface - More Than a Dartboard Approach

Don Gobeil, Technical Services Director

At the end of 2004, the Water District listed over 1,000,000 feet (1,085,882 to be precise) of water main installed and in service within the seven towns that we serve. That is over 205 miles of active water mains in service. If the lines were placed end to end, it would extend from Kennebunk to just outside New York City.

When the District was formed in 1921 as the result of a transition from an investor owned water company, the first annual report listed 385,440 feet (73 miles) of mains in the ground. Over the next 50 years, that number had increased to 782,069 feet (148 miles). And in the last 35 years, another 57 miles of main have been placed in service, resulting in the amount we have today.

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Beneath the Surface (continued from page 1)

What do these numbers mean and how does it effect how our District plans for the future? A general rule of thumb for water systems is that 1% of the mains should be replaced every year. This would theoretically result in replacing the entire distribution system in 100 years. For our system, that would be 10,000 feet per year as a general guide. This is above and beyond all the new mains that are installed as part of the normal growth cycle.

Starting with this goal, how do we identify and prioritize a list of projects on a yearly basis in the most efficient manner? We begin by gathering information from several sources, both internally and externally to help us. We know the age of any main within our distribution system. We still have in service approximately 23% of our total system that was in place in 1921. So there is no shortage of replacement candidates available based on age alone. Next we track locations that have a record of poor or deteriorating performance; either because of frequent breaks or aesthetic (color & odor) water quality. We also target mains that, because of growth or system needs, should be greatly increased in size.

If the lines were placed end to end, it would extend from Kennebunk to just outside New York City.

We then communicate with the public works departments and sewer districts of the towns we serve to get a list of their upcoming road maintenance, paving or sewer projects. This is also done with the State Department of Transportation for work slated on State highways. We prioritize a replacement project to the top of our list if we know the area is scheduled for another public infrastructure upgrade or installation. We have, on many occasions, dovetailed a project with those of other agencies in a way that dramatically improves overall cost efficiency while lessening prolonged neighborhood disruption.

So, while we formulate our budget using projects that meet our need to address operational issues, the final list reflects a priority ranking that is only firmed up after we understand what everyone else is doing. In an era of burgeoning regional thinking and shared efforts among varying agencies and towns, we believe we have exhibited a regional approach to our planning process for many years. This process is beneficial to our utility as well as to the communities that we serve.

As always, if you would like to learn more about our past, present or future construction efforts, don't hesitate to contact us.

DID YOU KNOW???

If your service line, piping or meter freezes:

- Open a faucet near the frozen point to get water flowing and to release excess pressure.
- Direct a hair dryer or heat lamp at the frozen section of pipe.
- NEVER thaw a frozen pipe or meter with an open flame. This is not only a fire hazard but could also cause a steam explosion.
- If you are unable to thaw the frozen pipes, consult a licensed plumber.

Lots of Changes in the Water District

Cindy Rounds, Administrative Assistant

Over the past year, we've seen a lot of changes in staff at the Water District. Three of our longtime employees, **Don Holbrook**, **Harry Ross** and **Babe Nadeau**, retired after a total of 120 years of service. While the loss of these experienced men could have had a negative effect on our services, we were fortunate to have capable employees who were promoted into their positions.



Paul Cote (left), who joined our staff in 1990, assumed Don's position of Assistant Distribution Manager at the end of 2004. He had been Don's "go to guy" for a number of years and his advancement has proven to be a good fit. **Keith Archibald** (right) has been kept busy since his promotion to Assistant Utility Person. He also maintains the Backflow Prevention Program.



John Gove (left), with the District since 1986, became our new Service Technician. His duties are a combination of those previously undertaken by Harry along with other areas as needed. **Mike Johnston** (right), an employee since 2000, has been promoted to Utility Person, taking over Babe Nadeau's territory of Kennebunk and northern Wells.



Over the summer we welcomed (from left) **Mike LeBlanc**, **Tim Smith**, and **Dennis Buzzell** who have brought considerable knowledge to their jobs at the Water District. Mike came to us from the Arundel Public Works Department as a driver/operator. Tim most recently worked for Apex Construction doing projects in the Kennebunk area. Dennis has worked in construction for most of his life with an emphasis on welding and metal fabrication. We are very pleased that, as stated by their former employers, they are all conscientious and hardworking individuals.



A new face on the Board of Trustees is **Bob Emmons**. He was elected in April to serve a three-year term as representative of the town of Kennebunk. Being a former employee, Bob has a unique perspective on how the District works to accomplish its mission, *to provide the highest quality of water and customer service at a reasonable price.*

Our newest staff addition is Assistant Superintendent **Scott Minor**. See Meet the New Assistant Superintendent on page 4.

Converting to Condominiums? Planning Ahead Can Save Time and Money

Paul Cote, Assistant Distribution Manager

Some local towns and the Water District have recognized the need to address the increasingly popular trend of converting transient rental properties such as motels, hotels, cabins and cottages into individual living units/condominiums. In recent years, these conversions have affected the Water District because these types of conversions have to meet certain requirements. Better communication will help all parties involved to be sure that the new complexes meet the necessary requirements before the proposed ownership changes take place.

The Water District's concern with these condominium conversions is that in accordance with our Metering Policy (see our website, www.kkw.org), individual units must have individual shut offs and meters. This is not always the case with some existing transient rental properties and it is often necessary to reconfigure the

plumbing to meet the District's requirements. In many cases, the District becomes aware of these changes of ownership only after they occur. To reconfigure the plumbing after the conversions are complete is generally more involved and costly to the new owner/association. With better communication and planning, you can be assured that your property conversions go as smoothly as possible.

DID YOU KNOW that individual residential or commercial units require separate meters and shut offs? Any questions, please contact Paul Cote.

If you have questions or concerns, give me a call at 985-3385 or email me at pcote@kkw.org. I look forward to helping you.

Meet the New Assistant Superintendent

Norm Labbe, Superintendent

When Dacri and Associates, a local Human Resource consultant, recently recommended that we should re-institute the Assistant Superintendent position, the timing couldn't have been any better. In addition to our technical and administrative work load reaching an all time high, one of the most well-liked and respected water utility managers in the state was seeking a new opportunity in the waterworks industry. **Scott Minor**, a "Maine boy", a UMO graduate (go Black Bears!) and a registered professional engineer, has worked 18 years at Augusta Water District, first as Engineer, then as Assistant General Manager, then for the past 10 years as General Manager. On January 1st, 2006, he became our Assistant Superintendent.



In addition to overseeing the District's day-to-day operations and being in charge of the whole organization in my absence, he will be involved with engineering functions such as designing, budgeting and planning and will chair the District's Safety Committee.

He is as close to a perfect fit for our organization as we could hope for. In addition to being intelligent and experienced, he is a team player and believes in the "mission above self" philosophy.

Please join me in welcoming Scott and his family to our community. Scott can be reached at sminor@kkw.org.

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participating in meetings of the Sanford Airport Advisory Committee, helping to assure that the airport area is developed and maintained in a manner that best protects the integrity of Branch Brook's water quality. (For more information on this collaborative effort, go to www.kkw.org - About KKWWD - News Archive.)

Progress with Regionalization—As reported in our previous issue of *What's on Tap* and on our website, much progress has been made toward organizing the Southern Maine Regional Water Council. The first official meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held in January 2006. The primary focus of the Council will be to find ways to reduce costs, improve customer service and to conduct long-term regional water supply planning.

On another front, the Water District has been working closely with the Town of Kennebunk, the Kennebunk Sewer District and the Kennebunk Light and Power District in the areas of coordination of efforts, employee training and investigating ways to reduce operating costs. Several successful training sessions have recently been held.

Overall, it was a good year. We had no significant lost-time injuries. We managed to keep up with the demands of rapid customer growth. From a financial standpoint, our prior year's rate adjustment helped us end 2005 "in the black". Last but not least, we had an organizational review performed by an outside consultant which, along with other positive benefits, has resulted in the hiring of an Assistant Superintendent. We are well poised and looking forward to another successful year.

Multi-Purpose Facility Planned for 2006

Scott Minor, Assistant Superintendent

You may soon see a flurry of activity at the District's Branch Brook Filtration Plant. We will be constructing an innovative treatment, pumping and recycling facility that is designed to increase capacity and lower operating costs. In addition to treating and pumping groundwater from several recently-developed wells, it will also allow us to

capture and recycle the water we use to backwash the filters in a way that meets today's stringent environmental regulations. This will give us the ability to use our emergency backup filters on a routine basis. For more information and updates on this innovative project, visit our website at www.kkw.org.

Continual Learning and Improvement

Bill Snyder, Plant Manager

The District provides many opportunities for its employees to improve their skills and to keep up with the latest regulations and technologies. In addition to a wide array of operational, regulatory and supervisory training, during 2005 our employees participated in over 500 hours of training, including the following:

Chain Hoist Safety	WMD Radiological Nuclear Awareness	Work Zone Safety
Safety Compliance	Water Quality in Distribution System	Source Water Protection
Emergency Response	Distribution System Protection	Hazardous Communications
Chlorine Handling Safety	Chemical Handling Safety	Respiratory Program Revisions

We are confident that our employees are among the best trained water utility professionals in the business.

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DID YOU KNOW that KKW has reduced its worker's compensation risk rating to 19% below expected and achieved over \$20,000 in lower premiums for 2005 and 2006?

Employee Spotlight

Cindy Rounds, Administrative Assistant

Our Employee Spotlight shines on **HENRY "BUTCH" TIBBETTS, JR.** Butch began at the Water District in 1970 in charge of purchasing and inventory control. He's come a long way since then and is currently Distribution Manager and #1 on our seniority list. Butch's 35+ years of experience is evident whether it's when he responds and assists his crew to find a broken water main at 3 am on a Sunday in February or through his cool and calm management style. His staff respects him and describes him as a devoted employee and a fair boss. Area contractors can count

on his knowledge and cooperation to help their project go smoother. Local utilities and public works departments appreciate his helpful and collaborative manner.



A big NASCAR fan, it's not unusual to see Butch sporting a Dale Earnhardt, Jr. hat or a souvenir sweatshirt from one of the many NASCAR events he attends throughout the year with his wife Cheryl.

Keep up the great work Butch!!!