

TRUSTEE MEETINGS

The monthly meetings of your Board of Trustees are open to the public. For a complete schedule, visit our website and click on **Trustee Meetings** under the **About Us** menu. You'll also find a link to archived videos of all meetings since November, 2014.

Currents

SPRING, 2017



CATCHING “EFFISHIENCIES”

No, these men are not fishing for fish; they're actually hard at work for your wastewater utility, drilling for dirt at the bottom of the Kennebec River!

It turns out that this was the most cost-effective way to analyze the underwater soil conditions in preparation for the installation of a new wastewater line 20 feet beneath the river bottom.

The alternative method, to drill from a barge on the river during the warmer months, would have cost thousands of dollars more—not to mention the risks of mosquito bites, sunburn and falling overboard!

The verdict: the soils passed the test to carry the new pipe (850 feet long), which will be installed as soon as it can be permitted and financed.

Why the new pipe? Last fall, one of our two wastewater pipes under the River became blocked. We cleared the blockage, but our subsequent testing caused the pipe to fail. We require redundancy for all important water and wastewater lines, which the new pipe will restore.

Currents SPRING, 2017

BILLS STILL CLOGGING YOUR MAILBOX... AND YOUR MIND?



SAVE SPACE, TIME, AND PAPER BY SIGNING UP TO... AUTOPAY YOUR BILLS ONLINE!

**To start, visit our website, click on Pay My Bill, and register for an online account.
You'll need your current paper bill to register, or call our office for help.**

HAPPY SPRING...AT LAST!

A classic Maine winter brought out the best in our team, who have had to contend with several feet of snow. Our neighbors who shoveled out fire hydrants on their property also deserve our thanks. Many people may not realize it, but providing the water required for fire protection is one of our essential services.

In this issue of *Currents*, we have tips from Randi Taylor on catching a culprit in your home water supply; a salute to a long-time

employee; and two stories about the work we do to ensure the flow of safe drinking water and manage wastewater and stormwater.

This last function, stormwater management, is costing more than we budgeted in our last five-year plan. A rate increase is needed, which fortunately will not have a significant effect on residential customers. Visit our website for the latest on this possible stormwater rate rise.

FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER



Brian Tarbuck
General Manager

SAFETY FIRST, EVEN UNDERGROUND

Because keeping our employees safe is Job One at Greater Augusta Utility District, early in March, Life Safety Specialists provided an annual confined space entry and rescue refresher course.

This is a chance to practice extracting an injured employee from underground pipes or another confined space.

Why is this necessary? Because our crews often need to enter spaces that are dark, smelly and extremely tight in order to keep our water and wastewater systems properly functioning.

While we take all precautions to avoid the need for a rescue, this refresher helps ensure that our folks will get home safely every night.

*At right, Dana Demos winches out "victim" Bill Wilkinson;
Below, Gary Thorne prepares to descend.*



LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

Our people are our best asset, and we encourage their continual professional development. So we salute four of the state's newest licensed water operators (from left, below): Paul Lamoreau, Hardy Cummings, Tyler Pease and Ben Barry passed their exams to earn a Class 1 drinking water distribution license; Ben also passed the Class 2 wastewater treatment exam. **Great job, guys!**



ASK RANDI



Randi Taylor, Administrative Supervisor, answers your questions about your water utility.

Q: *My water bill has suddenly gone sky high—more than double the previous month.*

Assuming this isn't because of a rate increase, who or what is the culprit?!

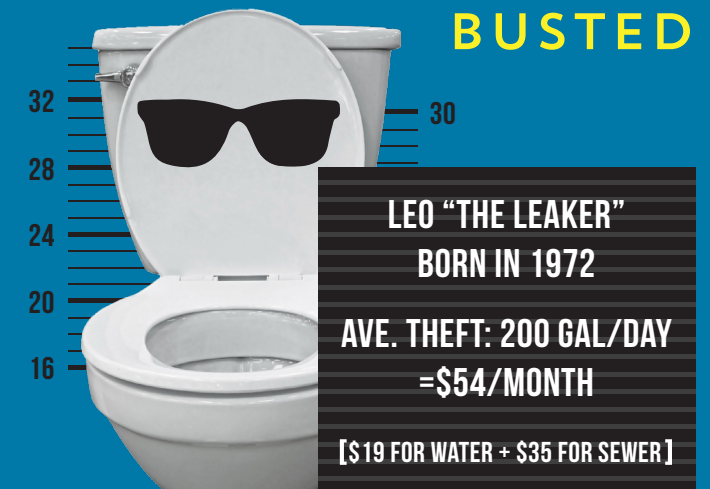
A: *You probably have a leaky toilet or two. It may not be noticeable unless you test it with blue dye tablets, which we give out free.*

Fortunately, it's usually easy to fix a leaky toilet. You may just need to tighten or replace a simple part. Call a plumber, or check out a how-to video here: conserveh2o.org.

Also check for dripping faucets, indoors and outside.

We have not raised our water rates since October 2011—and whenever we do raise them again, the increase will not be nearly so dramatic.

Contact Randi at (207) 622-3701 or RTaylor@GreaterAugustaUtilityDistrict.org



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

June Mooney, Water Quality Specialist

For nearly 28 years, June Mooney has worked diligently in our Laboratory to ensure that our drinking water is always clean and safe.

On behalf of everyone at Greater Augusta Utility District, we wish her well on her planned retirement this June!

We also congratulate June on winning the 2017 Maine Water Utilities Association's Jeff Nixon award for her years of service to the profession.

We asked June to share a few thoughts on her time here at Greater Augusta Utility District:

What was your biggest challenge during your career at GAUD?

When I began working for the District in July of 1989, they were in the process of designing a surface water treatment plant. I had no previous experience with this, but my co-workers and I were determined to get it right, and it was exciting when the plant started operating successfully!

An even bigger challenge came in 2004 when we shut down the treatment plant and started using groundwater from our wells, which differs profoundly from surface water. Our customers noticed the difference right away, and I had to explain to many that their water was at least as safe to drink as before, if not safer.

What is your favorite body of water?

Carleton Pond. When it was our water source, we collected samples at the intake and monitored the dissolved oxygen. This required sitting in a boat over the intake, looking at the pristine shoreline and loons and ospreys, a very special experience.

What are your plans for retirement?

I am still considering options, but hope to be able to use my accumulated experience to continue working for water quality for my community.