



## Natural Gas Update

The Gas Department has had 2 car accidents this month involving farm taps. Fortunately we promptly responded and repaired farm tap and there was no interruption of gas service. We experienced one excavation damage on Mt. Lebanon Road during the month. Our crew also completed the installation of a ground bed on Haskell Street.

We continue complying with gas system mandates as we have completed the annual leak survey and are continuing working on Stub Ups and Inactive Meter surveys, and valve maintenance while complying with social distancing for safety during this COVID 19 epidemic.



## Water/Sewer Update

Another busy month for the water and sewer crews. We have been breaking in our two new team members the hard way: work! We have had several water main breaks that were due to the extreme pressure differences caused by the unusual water usage plus the Aqua Lane tank being down for painting. Each time, our crews have responded and our work has not resulted in having to issue any boil water orders.

We have implemented new work rules to prevent and limit contact and protect our work group from the virus. The virus has NOT stopped our progress to make our system continually better and more reliable.



## Electric

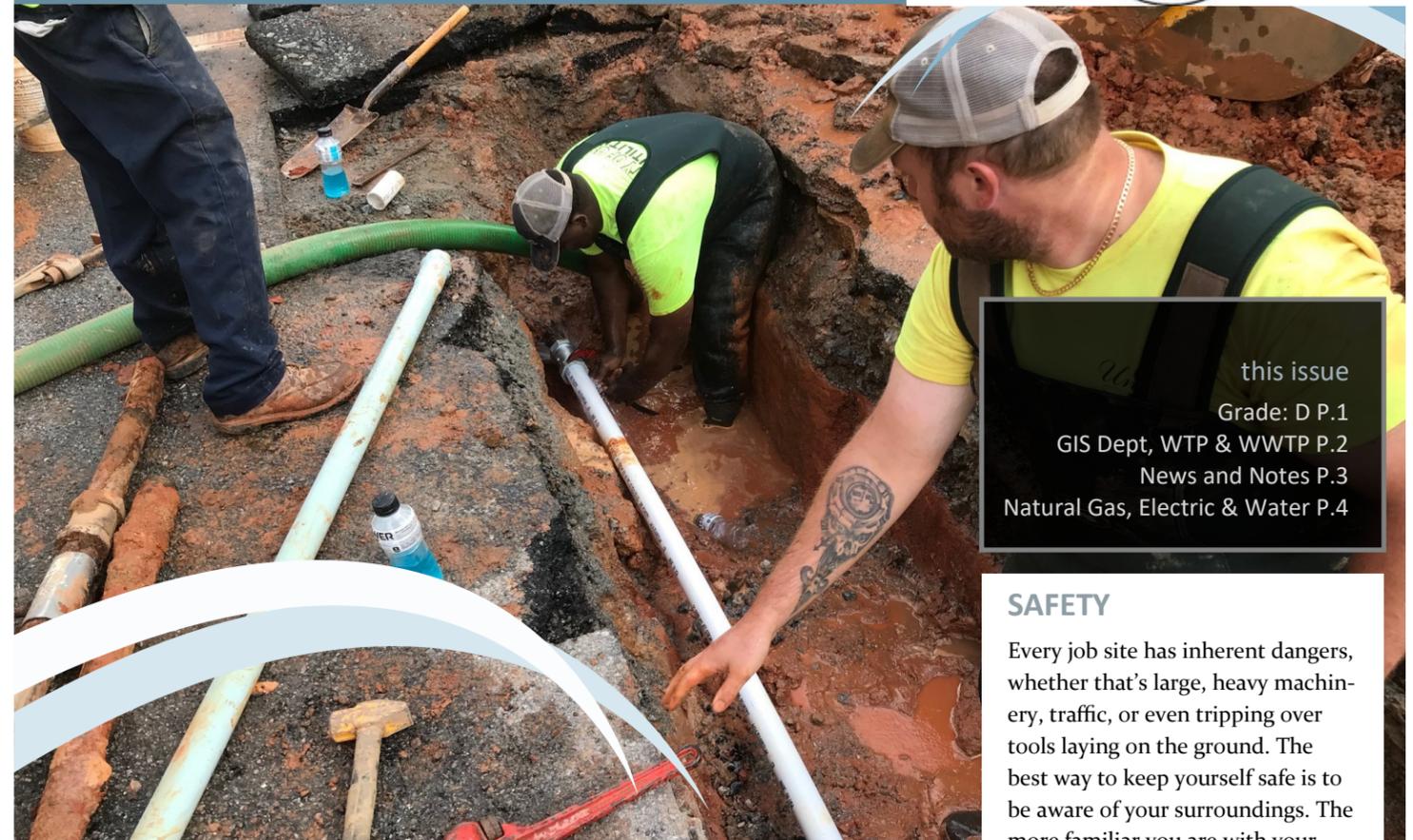
Once again, spring storms have kept us busy. The storm of April 12 was difficult because we had multiple failures at multiple locations and spread our crews out. As most of you know, power was restored in an extremely quick manner. We are proud of our team for their dedication to our customers and their quick response, while maintaining a safe work environment.

Our new lineman trainees are showing much progress and have a great attitude toward their eventual expertise. Having a mixture of youth and experience is important in any organization, particularly ours. In the meantime, we have still performed much system maintenance, which is always ongoing.

## Update

# UNION UTILITIES

Monthly Journal of Progress, Innovations and Achievements  
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## SAFETY

Every job site has inherent dangers, whether that's large, heavy machinery, traffic, or even tripping over tools laying on the ground. The best way to keep yourself safe is to be aware of your surroundings. The more familiar you are with your tasks and workplace, the more aware you'll be of the potential hazards. Knowing your surroundings and being aware of potential hazards will help you and your co-workers avoid unnecessary or dangerous situations.

## IMPORTANT DATES

April Birthdays: TJ Hopper, Joey Gregory, Jacob Robinson, Patrick Russell

April Work Anniversaries:

TJ Hopper 16 years  
Jeff Roberts 13 years  
Clayton Smith 4 years  
Jr. Brock 4 years

## Infrastructure

The Society of Civil Engineers gives the infrastructure of our country an annual grade, in an effort to help focus on the priorities. For 40 years, the trend has been down. In particular, water and sewer infrastructure was recently graded D or D+. Not much difference. Natural gas and electric are usually graded in the C area. Natural gas is a newer utility, going nationwide in the 1950's while electric is 90% above ground. Water and sewer are almost completely underground. Our country's leaders have adopted an "out of sight, out of mind policy" with these. And the truth is, there is not much glamour in water and sewer. Upgrading those rarely shows any outward effects. It is hard to quantify reliability! Most water and sewer systems came about in the 1920's and 30's. 100 years ago. We still rely on much of that system.

We already see more failures in water and sewer and America cannot afford to simply keep putting out fires. We all need to invest in our most important asset: clean, reliable water. In Union, we have started. We are working toward an asset management plan that will allow us to strategize and focus on the highest priorities; therefore spending the money on the most critical needs. But we, like all of America, need to do more. Our future generations are depending on us!

## WATER PLANT Update

In the month of March we installed another new Swan Turbidimeter

which brings the total to three new ones , with five left to do .

We took Aqua Lane tank out of service to be painted . We are still

preparing Aqua Lane pump station for the installation of another new pump to be put in, in the month of April .

Osborn Contract Service finished the spraying of the Flocculator Basins and are starting one of our Sedimentation Basins.

Please check out the differences in the two comparison pictures below. When this project is finished, all of our basins will look like the one on the left and we will be good for another 100 years, plus or minus!



The City of Union Tosches Creek Wastewater Plant events that took place the Month of March . Over the course of the month we treated 41.67 million gallons of wastewater. We also registered 4.0" of rain for the month. The operators worked hard at keeping wastewater plant in compliance with the permit issued by SCDHEC. They also checked our 15 sewage pumping stations regularly to make sure they were pumping all they were designed to pump. We also received leachate water from the landfill and septic trucks brought water from those who have septic tanks from our county.

We are moving forward with the preliminary engineering on the sodium hypochlorite and sodium bi-sulfite project. The engineer has delivered our first set of plans for corrections. Now, we are starting to feel like we are getting somewhere.



## GIS Update

With the COVID-19 virus in full force in South Carolina, I have been working from home. This adventure has made me think more about the central dispatch for our utilities.

First, we must implement a process that includes feedback from the crews. We need to understand their needs. Currently, we are under a paper-driven process. Although it works, we hope to make it better by getting instant feedback from the field.

Second and most importantly, we must get a single phone number for all our utilities. When customers call in, they are most times given a different department to call for individual services. In this day and age, that is unacceptable. With the dispatch, they will have a human transferring them directly to the person they need. If they are reporting lights out or trash pickups, it will be dispatched out to the supervisors. The work will be completed and sent back to the dashboard with a digital record. This process will ensure a positive flow of information.

The third and final piece will be the response of the SC811 locate tickets. Currently, the locator has to turn in the tickets daily, and it works well, but we can do better. We desire to make it easier for whoever is locating. When they have finished just like with the work orders, they will be able to send information back to the dashboard. This way, we know immediately if the work has been done or needs to be completed at a later time. Locates are typically done by Beverly, but she has vacation and not often a sickness that will cause her to be absent from work. When that happens, each crew assigns someone to do locates until her return. It can be a headache trying to figure out which locates have been completed by which crew. With the dispatch dashboard, there will be no guessing, we will know.



- We have put into place many safety precautions to insure that our staff are safe during this COVID 19 emergency. Our staff is essential and we have taken every reasonable precaution to keep our staff safe and healthy. Yes, the critical work continues but as with surgery, some elective things are being postponed.
- We have had one major power outage since our last newsletter. That occurred early on the morning of April 13 (of course). Our crews responded to multiple trees falling across power lines. We were blessed to once again avoid the major damage. We dispatched one crew to Orangeburg to assist in their cleanup.
- Work continues at the water plant as we repair and re-coat the basins. It is important to note how much time we put into the bidding process, eventually attracting 7 bids. Our original budget for this project was just over \$1.5 million. By beating the bushes, we saved over \$1 million!
- On March 28, we had a farm tap run over by a car. The accident

occurred in the driveway of the home. Seriously. We see more and more examples of distracted driving and the results can be serious. It is events like this that cause us to OVER protect our work sites. Safety of our workers takes precedence.

- On March 31, someone managed to take out a farm tap AND a utility pole at the same time. Now that is efficiency at it's best! Once again, our crews were on scene to repair the damage and maintain services to our customers. Stuff happens!
- The Monarch sewer project is nearing completion. Working with our contractor and design team, we have continued to

To The City of Union Utilities Team

Dear Sir,

We had two City employees arrive this morning to remove tree branches from two dead trees on our neighbors property - 206 Gibert Street, Union, which were close to power lines. We live at 202 Gibert Street. I would like to commend the folks for their professionalism and courtesy. While here they needed to bring their truck down our driveway to safely react part of the trees. They explained what they were doing and cleaned up debris afterwards.

Sincerely, Liz Shand

# NEWS and NOTES

A Semi-Regular Feature

make significant progress. The pipe bursting is completed and we only have a few service lines remaining.

- The Aqua Lane tank painting is in full swing. As a part of that project, we have rehabbed the pump building and retooled the entire system. The benefits of this are endless but needless to say, reliability is the key element we have gained.
- The Foster Park tennis court rehab project is currently out in RFP form. We have had almost 10 contractors inquire and 4 site visits already. Our goal is to have two brand new courts, with pickleball lines as well, by late summer.

