



Tinker Creek Road Gas Main Installation Project - April 2020

## Natural Gas Update

We started installing a 2" gas main on Tinker Creek Road the last week of April continuing to work while still social distancing. Project should be completed within a couple of weeks if weather permits.

Crews continued valve maintenance, inactive meter surveys, stub ups surveys. Four new gas service lines were installed during the month.

**Tap Station was hit by lightning on 04-13-2020.** Valve was manually controlled for 2 weeks. We currently have One Line operating with Flo Boss, our #2 Flo Boss is on order and will be installed asap. All transmitters had to be replaced in the entire station. The lightning ran through our surge suppressors and then hit our equipment.



## Electric Update

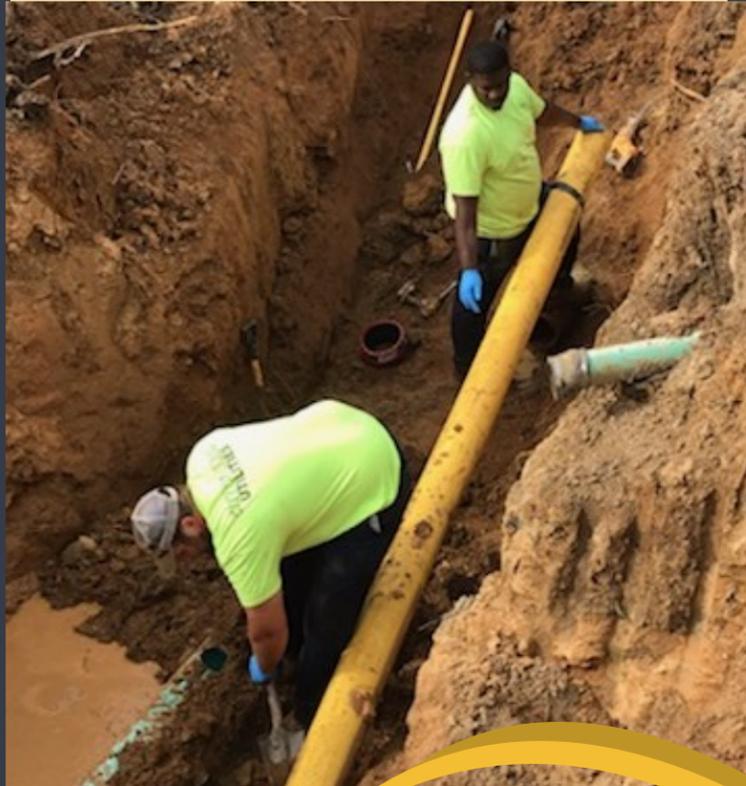
April saw many changes with our crew. Clarence Retired after 25 years of service and Clayton Smith left to pursue his dream of a Business Owner. We wish them the best of luck in the future. Jamie Babb has been named as Interim Supervisor for the crew.

We welcomed a new member to the family, Ridge Aiken son of Dustin and Jamie Beth Smith was born on 4/27/2020.

During all the chaos of Social Distancing and Quarantine we managed to pull Fiber in from the City Fire Dept to Aqua Lane and build a new service to complete our portion of the Pump House upgrade. We saw a few violent storms through the upstate and even though we were spared any significant damages, others were not so blessed. We were able to help our friends in Orangeburg during their time of need with Storm Damage.

## Water/Sewer Update

This month we had a lot of stuff going on and it made it a little harder with split crews. We had a major leak on Barnado Rd. that blew out the bank on the side of the road. We also had 17 other leaks. We started up on our yearly valve maintenance program and our Right of Way program. We had a few sewer mains and taps we repaired. We made six new water taps and checked all of the city's backflows. Tank sites were cut and sprayed. Also hydrants were cut and sprayed. Everyone on the crew is happy that we are starting to get back to normal with everyone working together.



# UNION UTILITIES

Monthly Journal of Progress, Innovations and Achievements  
ISSUE 6 May 2020



## The Importance of Dedication

During this COVID-19 crisis, I have witnessed greatness, leadership and dedication. There has been virtually no fanfare associated with our utility, no news articles or TV shows but there are just as many heroes here as anywhere and maybe more. During this crisis, we have asked our team to revise the way that they do their jobs, their hours and their processes. We have asked them to stay out of harms way while not at work, to help insure the safety of all of our services. We have asked them to work in different groups, avoid contact with others, etc. We have not had organized groups of meetings. We have been communicating much in the way folks used to fight fires with the bucket brigades yet we have not seen one iota fall in service. I doubt our customers even knew.

And that is my definition of dedication. Making these sacrifices, many of them personal, even though very few people noticed. Well, I have noticed and I salute all of those everyday heroes who have been standing ready and willing to help when needed. Those who work in public utilities are on the front lines, in many ways like our police and firefighters and other first responders. They are all united in their commitment to our customers and I salute you all!

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### SAFETY

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping it together is progress; working together is success.”

- Henry Ford

### IMPORTANT DATES

Employee Birthdays:  
Richie Brown is turning the BIG 50

Employee Anniversaries : Dustin Austin is celebrating 6 years and Will Youngblood 1 year

WATER PLANT Update

The month of April was another busy one . The Aqua Lane project is still moving forward . The additional pump was set in place and getting it ready to run is on-going . The rehab and coating spraying of number one basin was completed and the start of number two basin has begun. The installation of another Swan Turbidimeter was completed on number three filter .We now have five completed four left to install.



The City of Union Tosches Creek Wastewater Plant events that took place the Month of March . Over the course of the month we treated 29.1 million gallons of wastewater. We also registered 5.6" of rain for the month. The flow was not as much as usual due to Covid-19, which had a lot of businesses shut down the entire 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 invoiced public services for \$27,900 and septic haulers for approximately \$3700.

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. We have been working to clear minor details and are nearing the end of the design phase of this project.

We also have been assisting the Town of Carlisle with a pump replacement at the #3 pump station. The bypass pumping has come to a halt. (see pic left)



GIS Update

Answer the Phone?

In the process of creating the one number calling for utilities, we discovered the need to rework our after-hours emergency line. Currently, we are using the Water Plant, but it can become hectic if there is a major utility issue. When that happens, customers get frustrated and call 9-1-1, causing more confusion because they can only call the Water Plant, hoping to get an answer. This is unacceptable.

After speaking with Arnold, he suggested having those calls answered by a service. This frees up the Water Plant to do their jobs without having to stop to answer the phone. The current situation is frustrating for the person in the middle of his regular job. If they miss a call, it could be a major issue or something minor as they didn't get my trash today. When the power is out, the last thing a customer wants is a ringing line.

On May 6th, we had a webinar with IUC (Interactive Utility Communications) that was attended by different departments and council. In the meeting, Greg Steele explained their process for handling utility calls that will be based on our needs. We provide them with a script that will come up when a call from our number is in the queue. They read it to the customer, receiving needed information, and call us to dispatch for that particular utility. If a storm takes out a transformer, we call them to give them the status of the situation. At this time, they will switch to a recorded message that we create to let customers know there is a problem, and that we are aware of it.

This company came highly recommended by CPW Greer. I spoke to Fredia Snow, the Administration Manager because they have been using these services for many years. In her opinion, IUC has been the best with low employee turnover and excellent customer service. This has been their after-hours calling service for the past three years.



It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of our electric superintendent, Clarence Auton. Sad because we are losing a well respected and experienced leader but we are happy that he is realizing his dream of running his own business. Clarence has been a loyal dedicated team member for 26 years. If you know Clarence, you also know that his personality is bigger than he is. His smile and laugh will be hard to replace. We are sad to also be losing Clayton Smith, who is leaving for the same reason. Clayton has been with us for 8 years. We wish each of these good guys all the success possible!

The tennis court proposals were opened on May 7. We were fortunate to receive 7 proposals. There were several methods recommended to demolish and redo the courts. The existing court have lasted almost 40 years and it is our goal to do it again. We are recommending the low bid that was proposed by Leslie Courts and Paving from Ander-

son, South Carolina. They will remove all of the existing asphalt, net posts and fencing. They will be adding 4" additional rock base, compacted. Then the asphalt will be placed and a professional court coating will be applied. We will have new net posts, a new black vinyl coated fence and the courts will be lined for tennis and pickleball. Work should begin in early June and be completed for a Labor Day grand opening.

We will be opening bids on the West Main and Evans Street sewer projects Monday May 18. This project continues our upgrades and replacements of sewer lines in our city that are in

NEWS and NOTES

A Semi-Regular Feature

poor condition and will improve service to our customers.

During the pandemic, learning and training have continued. The gas department has attended 4 webinars. They were each an hour long and were led by industry experts including topics of safety and operations.

The pandemic is also presenting us with some opportunities. There are several grants that are being made possible as a result. Our staff is busy working on the qualifying numbers at this time. One project that might get funded is the Medical Science drive sewer, which is a critical part of our infrastructure. More upcoming! Stay tuned.

Thanks to the Utility Billing Staff!

Thanks so much for your dedication!

Very few have been closer to the front line or done more work than the Utility Billing staff. They have been innovative in the use of the drive thru window, and when we reopened to the public, they were ready.

Thanks also to Maxie Sanders, who installed Plexiglass on customer service windows along with markings for 6 ft. social distancing with tapes on carpet in the lobby at City Hall limiting exposure between employees and customers.

