



Winter 2022

NEWS SPLASH

MESSAGE

A quarterly publication of Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

from the General Manager

As we close out 2021, I'd like to share with you some of the highlights of the past year at BJWSA.

Safety: We are fortunate to have a dedicated and experienced workforce that is driven to provide the best possible water and sewer service to our customers. During this past year, they continued to battle through the impacts of the pandemic and accomplished much. The most amazing accomplishment of the year has to be the company safety record that we achieved when we surpassed 1.9 million safe work hours (more than six years) without a preventable lost work day. Our team places safety as the highest priority, and this accomplishment clearly demonstrates that commitment.



Joe Mantua, PE

Operational Excellence: We strive to operate and maintain our treatment facilities and pipeline systems at the highest levels and 2021 was no exception. Both of our Water Treatment facilities achieved 100% compliance with all Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) requirements. Additionally, our Chelsea Plant was recognized by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) with their **Excellence Award**. All eight wastewater facilities were in total compliance with DHEC requirements, and were all recognized by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) with **Peak Performance Awards**, six plants achieving Platinum level and two reaching Gold.

Infrastructure Growth: The ongoing growth and development of our region continues to keep our team extremely busy, and we completed numerous capital improvement and development projects, adding more than 96,000 feet of water main and 91,000 feet of sewer main to our system. We are also pleased to report that we now have more than 65,000 Beacon meters in the ground. This technology allows us to capture meter data at 15-minute intervals and an online tool, *Eye on Water*, is available for customers to track and monitor their daily usage and be alerted of potential leaks.

Workforce: Workforce investment is one of our top strategic priorities, and this year we launched an internship program for local high school seniors. The program started in February, and three interns were hired as full-time employees in June in our Field Operations and Customer Service departments. This year we will expand to include opportunities in Treatment Operations and are currently interviewing students for six positions to begin in January. The program was recently selected by NACWA to receive a **National Environmental Achievement Award** in Workforce Development.

Customer Engagement: In March, we conducted our Customer Satisfaction survey and we're pleased to have our largest participation ever. Many thanks to the more than 7,000 customers who took the time to complete the survey and provide us with valuable feedback. Some major takeaways from the survey were the desire for more electronic communication and the need to refresh our webpage. We will soon launch our website refresh project and will hold in person focus groups to collect more detailed customer feedback.

As we move into 2022, we will continue to focus on several major initiatives including:

Asset Management: ensuring the best use of our financial resources in maintaining and replacing our systems and facilities.

Workforce Development: investing in our most valuable resource, our employees, with comprehensive training and safety programs.

Regulatory Compliance: continuing to operate our facilities at the highest level and implement actions to comply with the recent *Lead and Copper Rule* revisions. See pages 2 and 3 for more information.

Customer Education and Awareness: strengthening outreach and communication efforts with our customers and business partners.

We are here to serve you, so if you have questions or require assistance please contact us at info@bjwsa.org. On behalf of the BJWSA Board of Directors and our entire team, I wish you a healthy and prosperous 2022.

Best regards,

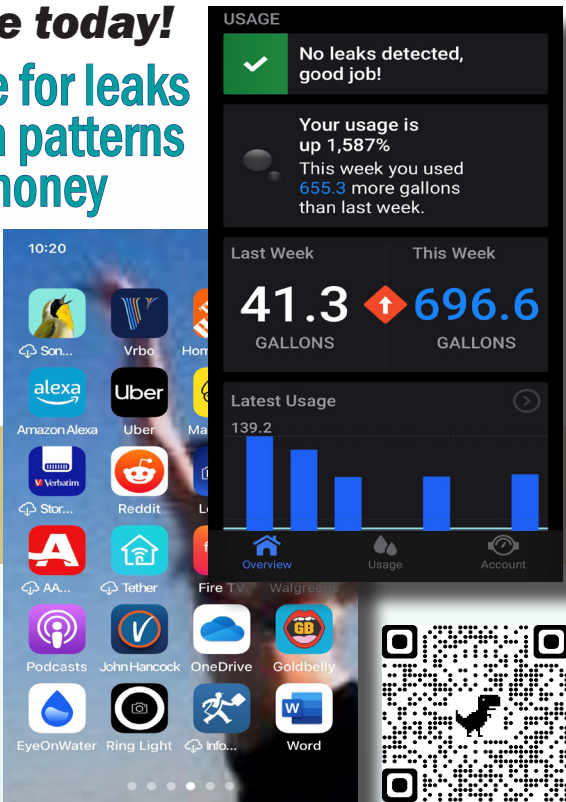
Make this our last printed newsletter! Share your current e-mail and mobile number with us at info@bjwsa.org.

Scan the QR code today!
Monitor your usage for leaks
or other changes in patterns
that can cost you money

Our new equipment transmits information on usage and meter readings through cellular lines directly to our office. This eliminates the need for us to drive by your location monthly to obtain meter readings. We will continue to visit your location in order to investigate leaks, high consumption or to turn your water service on/off.

The most significant benefit of this *free* technology to our customers is that you will be able to see your daily water usage and if desired, set notifications for leaks or high consumption via the EyeOnWater website or phone app.

Follow these instructions, or contact customer service at info@bjwsa.org or 843-987-9200 for more information.



Get the App

1. Go to the App Store on your Android or iPhone and search for "eye on water".
2. Download the free app.
3. Open the app.
4. Tap on "Login" if you already have an account set up.

It takes our village

BJWSA makes Lead and Copper Compliance a Priority

In early 2021, the US EPA finalized the *Lead and Copper Rule Revision*. The new rule has three goals:

1. Better protect children at schools and daycares,

Because lead is dangerous for children, the new rule requires testing at day cares, elementary schools, and middle schools. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) is performing this testing, and BJWSA is supporting DHEC in the sampling in our service area, which will take five years to complete. For more about school and daycare testing, visit www.scdhec.gov/bow/lead-testing-schools-child-care-programs.

2. Get the lead out of drinking water, and

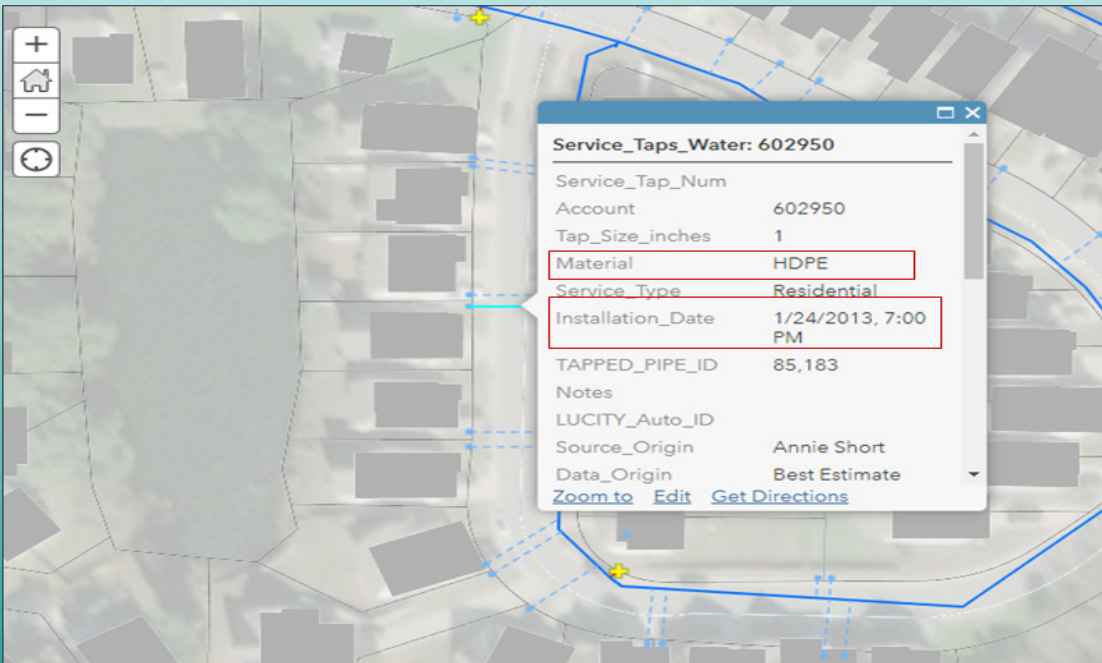
Most lead in drinking water comes from pipes or plumbing fixtures in homes which is leached from the metal into the water. Getting lead out of drinking water means finding and addressing these lead sources. BJWSA has a robust corrosion control program and has been in full compliance with the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule. Our source water and our treated water are lead free. While lead was commonly used for service lines in other parts of the country, especially the Midwest, in our area, lead was rarely used. We sometimes find a lead fitting or connector in the oldest parts of our system, but never a lead service line. Anytime we find a lead fitting, we immediately replace it. Lead pipes were banned by federal law in 1986, and BJWSA has been using plastic pipe for service lines since the 1970s.

3. Empower communities through information.

The new rule requires all utilities to create and publish a service line inventory showing the lead status of pipe materials from the water main to each customer's house by 2024. The inventory will be on the BJWSA website. BJWSA's Geographic Information System (GIS) has an inventory of service lines that will be the basis for our published inventory. Our GIS system already includes records for the BJWSA side of the water meter, from the water main to the meter. We are currently filling in some data gaps and building the inventory for the customer side, from the meter to the house, which is not owned by BJWSA.

The Service Line Inventory is a multi-year project, and multiple departments at BJWSA are already hard at work. This inventory will empower our customers to know that their water is safe and also fits squarely in BJWSA's mission to inspire trust and enhance public health. Learn more at www.bjwsa.org/lead.

We sometimes find a lead fitting or connector in the oldest parts of our system, but never a lead service line.



How do I identify my service line material?

A service line is the smaller pipe from the water main to a house or business. The water meter is on the service line. BJWSA owns the pipe from the water main to the water meter. The section of service line past the meter to the building belongs to the homeowner or property owner.

The most common service line materials in BJWSA's system are HDPE (high density polyethylene, a kind of plastic) and galvanized iron. We also see some PVC, another kind of plastic. On the military bases, copper pipe is commonly used for service lines. Sometimes PEX, a kind of plastic, is used for the owner side of the service.



HDPE



PVC



PEX

First, how old is your house?

In our area, HDPE became widely used in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Before HDPE, services were usually built from galvanized iron pipe. Older homes, before 1970, commonly have galvanized iron service lines.

Second, metal or plastic?

If your pipe is plastic, it definitely is not lead. Plastic pipe can be white, blue or black. Green plastic pipe is usually a sewer service line.

Third, what kind of metal?

The metals used for drinking water services are galvanized iron, copper and lead. Cast iron is another metal usually used for sewer service lines. Copper is recognizable by its distinctive color. Lead and galvanized iron are harder to tell apart because both are grey. Lead is a softer metal and more bendable than galvanized iron. The easiest way to tell lead pipe from galvanized iron is with a magnet. Galvanized iron is magnetic. A magnet will not stick to lead.



Galvanized



Copper



Lead



Galvanized is magnetic

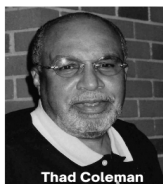


Lead is not magnetic



You're not alone.

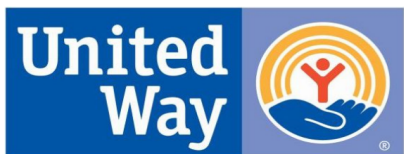
WE CAN HELP.



The Thad Coleman Fund assists Beaufort and Jasper County families who face financial hardship connect to the BJWSA system.



The Juanita White Fund assists residents of the historic Levy-Limehouse Bellinger Hill area of Jasper County connect to the BJWSA system.



United Way of the Lowcountry, Inc.

BJWSA's hardship fund is designed for customers in crisis – those with extenuating circumstances who could be in danger of disconnection of their water and/or sewer services.

BJWSA collaborates with the United Way to facilitate the eligibility and assistance process.

Go to www.bjwsa.org/helping-people-need or call 843-987-9200 for help.

Our mission: Inspire trust and enhance public health.

WINTER 2022

NEWSPLASH

Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

6 Snake Road; Okatie, SC 29909

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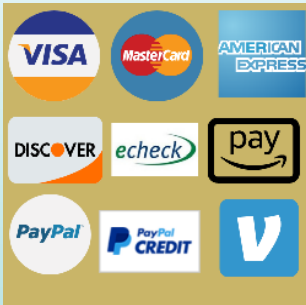
Dr. William Singleton

General Manager Joe Mantua, P.E.



Our annual financial report
is available online at bjwsa.org/publications

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BJWSA offers many payment options

Pay your bill with any of the methods at left, or take the easy way and pay by automatic bank draft! Not only is it the easiest and quickest way to pay your bill, it is also one of the most secure!

Not sure how you want to pay?

Send an email to info@bjwsa.org or call 843-987-9200 to learn more.

Take care of your pipes

Is your home ready for a Lowcountry winter?

When temperatures near freezing, leave a pencil-lead-thin stream of water flowing from faucets coming from pipes in unheated areas or against exterior walls to help prevent pipes from freezing. For pipes under sinks, keep the cabinet doors open to allow more home heat to reach the pipes.

You can also:

- Shut the water off for your entire house at the master shut-off valve.
- Seal off access doors, air vents and cracks to protect exposed pipes.
- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses.
- Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas.



If a pipe breaks and you are unable to isolate any leaks during repairs, BJWSA can turn off water at the meter, but charges will apply for the visit. BJWSA cannot make repairs beyond the meter box. After the leak is repaired, call 843-987-9200 to report the leak and inquire about a possible billing adjustment.

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