



# NewsSPLASH

Summer/Fall 2013

A bi-annual publication of Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority



## Message from the General Manager

Dear BJWSA Customer,

In 2009, the Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA) purchased the Port Royal Railroad Right-of-Way (RR ROW) from the South Carolina State Ports Authority. Our purpose was to better serve our customers by protecting the existing BJWSA infrastructure located within the RR ROW and simultaneously providing a benefit to the citizens of Beaufort County.

The RR ROW was purchased through the operation of the National Trails System Act, commonly referred to as the Trails Act, as part of a process known as "railbanking." This "rails-to-trails" initiative was a collaborative effort between the BJWSA, Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal to convert the RR ROW into a trail that could be used for various recreational activities. As a result of the RR ROW purchase, many citizens are now able to take advantage of the popular Spanish Moss Trail in Northern Beaufort County.

Recently, one group of landowners along the RR ROW settled a class-action lawsuit they had brought against the United States federal government. In that lawsuit, those landowners claimed that the federal Surface Transportation Board's decision to allow the RR ROW to be "railbanked" without the landowners receiving just compensation was unconstitutional. The federal government and the landowners in that lawsuit agreed to settle the case prior to a decision on the merits with the landowners receiving compensation for the fair market value of the land in dispute. Currently, there are two additional groups of

We are working diligently to protect our infrastructure in the RR ROW and those who rely on our water and sewer services.

landowners bringing very similar class-action lawsuits against the United States. Those two cases have not yet been resolved. The BJWSA was not involved in any way with these lawsuits.

However, certain landowners along the RR ROW have filed a proposed class-action lawsuit against the BJWSA. The landowners claim that the BJWSA is trespassing in the RR ROW and has illegally taken the landowners' subsurface and aerial rights without just compensation. The landowners filed lawsuits in both federal and state court seeking monetary damages for their claims.

It is important to the BJWSA that its customers are aware of the pending lawsuit. We are working diligently to protect not only our infrastructure located within the RR ROW but also to protect those who rely on our water and sewer services. To be clear, the BJWSA purchased the RR ROW in good faith. We believe that we have acted appropriately, and we have engaged legal counsel to vigorously defend these lawsuits. And most importantly, we do not anticipate any interruption in the quality or delivery of our services.

For additional information specifically related to these lawsuits, please check our website at [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org). We will continue to provide information regarding the status of the suit on our web page as we move forward.

We appreciate your continued trust in BJWSA.

Warm personal regards,

—Ed Saxon, General Manager

## NO RATE INCREASE FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR

This summer, BJWSA's Board of Directors voted to hold rates steady for the 2013–2014 fiscal year. While we've been affected by these challenging economic times, it is important to us to keep rates steady for our customers. We are always working on ways to reduce spending and operate more efficiently, even as costs rise.

We know water is a vital necessity to our community. Rest assured that our Board and staff work hard to provide reliable, high quality water and sewer services at affordable rates.

ARE YOU READY FOR A

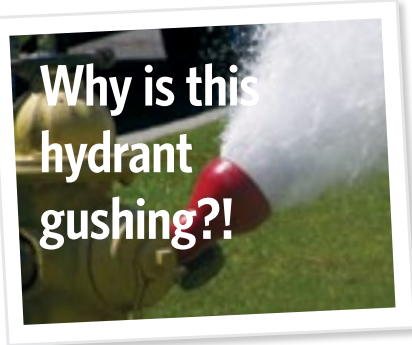
# Hurricane



## hurricane preparation checklist

It's hurricane season here in the Lowcountry. While we've been fortunate lately to dodge these dangerous storms, it's still important to be prepared. As a utility, BJWSA makes preparations to weather these storms, and our expert staff trains regularly for hurricane response and recovery. But there are also things you can do as a water and sewer customer to prepare if we have to evacuate. Also, remember to pay close attention to directions involving safety and evacuations from County Emergency Preparedness officials.

- ✓ Fill unbreakable containers with fresh drinking water, and store in a safe place. Store at least three gallons of water per person for each day you may be without drinking water.
- ✓ Fill your bathtub with water for non-potable use, such as cleaning and bathing.
- ✓ Shut off and secure outside faucets.
- ✓ Remove and store outside hoses, sprinklers and other items or furnishings that could injure your family in high winds.
- ✓ If you decide to evacuate, turn off your water at the main valve. If you are unsure where your main valve is, contact a plumber in advance to locate it.
- ✓ Turn off your irrigation system at the timer, and the power or gas to your water heater.
- ✓ Check with your emergency management department for more hurricane preparation, safety and evacuation information!
- ✓ In the event of a hurricane, check [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org) if possible. We'll do everything possible to provide valuable information as circumstances change.



Why is this hydrant gushing?!

Have you ever seen a BJWSA team member working on a hydrant with water flowing everywhere?

Every year, BJWSA tests each of our our hydrants - nearly 7,000 of them - to make sure they're operating properly and providing enough flow for firefighting. We also use hydrants to test and maintain water quality.

When we test hydrants, the water flows through the pipe supplying the hydrant at a very high rate (over a 1000 gallons per minute). The flow of water can stir up sediment in the pipe and that occasionally discolors the water. We make sure to run the hydrant test until

the water is clear. Because of the large amount of water needed to test hydrants, you may experience momentary lower pressure, but water pressure will return to normal quickly.

If you notice discoloration after hydrant testing in your area, turn off all water, wait 15 minutes, then run cold water in the bathtub until the water runs clear. Then turn on the rest of the taps in your house to make sure all of your lines are flushed.

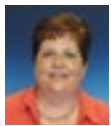
## NEW LEADERS SELECTED

Last winter, Ed Saxon was selected as BJWSA's General Manager. His 25 years at BJWSA positions him well to lead us into the future. Recently, Ed assembled a new senior leadership team of four chief officers. The team, with decades of combined experience, is committed to maintaining BJWSA's status as an excellent steward of our community's resources and a forward-thinking leader in the industry.

### OUR NEW SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM:



**Ken Jordan** was appointed BJWSA's Chief Administrative Officer in May. He is responsible for human resources, information technology, loss prevention, and public affairs. Ken began working for BJWSA in 2001, and has over 18 years' experience in the fields of environmental health and loss prevention. He holds a Bachelor of Science in biology from the College of Charleston, a Master of Science in occupational health and safety from East Carolina, and a Master of Business Administration from Kennesaw State.



**Dottie Hofmann** came to BJWSA in 2008 and has been BJWSA's Chief Financial Officer since 2009. Dottie is responsible for all finance and accounting functions, along with billing and customer service. Ms. Hofmann has 19 years of experience in financial management and has been a resident of Beaufort County for 42 years. She attended Clemson University where she obtained a Bachelor of Science in accounting.



**Chris Petry** began working for BJWSA in 1993 as the Lab Manager. He was the Director of Treatment Operations for several years prior to being promoted to Chief Administrative Officer in 2012. In spring of 2013, Chris was named Chief Operating Officer, responsible for the operation and maintenance of all BJWSA physical infrastructure, including water and wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, pipelines, and storage facilities. He has a Bachelor's degree in biology from Transylvania University, and holds the highest level Water and Wastewater operations license offered by the state of South Carolina.



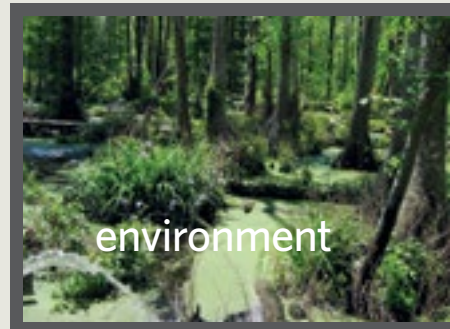
**Charles Sexton** is a Beaufort native and began his career at BJWSA in 2003. He is BJWSA's Chief Technical Services Officer responsible for Engineering, Capital Planning, Mapping and Asset Management. Prior to joining BJWSA, he worked at Exxon Mobil Pipeline in Houston, TX. Charles holds a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from Clemson and is a licensed Professional Engineer in SC.

## BJWSA's strategic planning effort

Under the direction of the Board of Directors, BJWSA's staff is developing a Strategic Focus Plan (SFP) to guide our efforts for the next four years. The Plan is customer focused, and designed to maximize the use of our capabilities as we strive to protect our precious water environment for the future.

Early in the planning process, we looked at BJWSA's core purpose. We asked ourselves what influence do we have on public health and the environment, and what importance does the Authority have to our community. We recognize the need for our customers to have the ability to engage with us and to influence our activities. To that end, BJWSA wants to work with our customers, establishing community-based partnerships to guide what we do. We have a passion for safe and reliable water and for stewardship of our unique environment. We want to involve our customers in pursuit of that passion.

We created a new mission statement that reflects our shared purpose and dedication to our customers. BJWSA's mission is to Inspire Trust and Enhance Public Health. This simple statement articulates our core purpose, provides direction to our employees, and engages the customers and community we serve.



**BJWSA's mission is to Inspire  
Trust and Enhance Public Health**



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## Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

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843.987.9292 | [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org)

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**Ed Saxon** General Manager

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### Need More Information?

Contact our Communications Manager at 843.987.9213 or visit [www.bjwsa.org](http://www.bjwsa.org).

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## Some people can't afford water services...you can help

BJWSA's Thad Coleman Fund, named after a beloved former BJWSA Board member, financially assists less fortunate families who need to connect to BJWSA's system.

**Helping is Easy!** To contribute, please send a donation by check to Thad Coleman Fund, BJWSA, 6 Snake Road, Okatie, SC 29909.

You can also participate in our "round up" program which simply rounds up your monthly

bill to the next highest dollar amount. For example, \$26.62 would be rounded up to \$27.00, the extra 38 cents would be deposited into the fund.

Sign up online at [www.bjwsa.org/info/thad-coleman.html](http://www.bjwsa.org/info/thad-coleman.html) or call customer service at 987-9200 to set up your automatic contribution!



## CONNECT WITH US

There are a lot of ways to connect with us and learn more about BJWSA...

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