

December 1994

Philadelphia
PWD
Water Department

Pipeline

Produced by the Public Affairs staff of the Philadelphia Water Department. For more information, please contact Editor Joan Anne Przybylowicz at 685-4900.

Photos: Bernie Rosenberg



Customer Service Chief George Fisher, Leak Detection Supervisor Kenneth Mobley, Water Distribution Superintendent William Cook, and Water Distribution Supervisor George Millard develop methods to improve how the Department tracks water leaks as part of the benchmarking case study.

BENCHMARKING

In response to a request for proposals from the American Water Works Association Research Foundation, the Water Research Center invited us to participate in a project to develop benchmarks for evaluating water utility performance. We agreed, contributing \$33,000 and hundreds of staff hours to the study.

For our benchmarking study, we are focusing on how our units respond to nonemergency leaks. "We identified ways for improving how we refer leaks reported by customers to various units for investigation and repairs, how long it takes us to repair them, and how units update our computerized information tracking system," says Charlie Zitomer, Chief of Water Conveyance. We are finding ways to improve the information system so that all the units that use it can get the most accurate details available about a specific leak. This will assist us in assigning appropriate crews.

Members of Water Distribution, Emergency Support Services, Customer Services, Customer Information, Load Control, and Water Conveyance Headquarters underwent a benchmarking training session in September. They now meet regularly to track how nonemergency leaks are handled. With their years of experience and wealth of knowledge, these employees can identify weaknesses in our current operations and recommend ways to improve our response record. These employees know what works and what doesn't. The benchmarking project is an excellent example of

cooperation and team work. "We believe that we'll get more back than we've put out in dollars and staff time. The results can only be positive, for the Water Department and for our customers," notes Zitomer.

Benchmarking is one facet of Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM is largely responsible for the success of Japanese industry and has caught on as a management style in the United States. Benchmarking is a technique used to improve performance. You identify another company that is the best in the industry and then compare your own performance to the top-rated company. You then map out ways to improve your performance, working towards making it as good as the best. For PWD, benchmarking aims us toward the highest level of achievement.

The Water Research Center is an international research and specialty consulting firm with extensive experience formulating and applying performance measures and systems, such as TQM and benchmarking.



Mary A. Allegra, General Manager of Administration and Human Resources and Lee Ticker, Systems Analyst for Water Conveyance, participate in a benchmarking training session.



Photo: Bernie Rosenberg



Southwest Water Pollution Control Plant employees are part of a team of Water Department employees responsible for bringing the Plant into compliance with its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

Southwest Improvements

As of October 31, the Southwest Water Pollution Control Plant, located at 8200 Enterprise Avenue, has successfully complied with its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for six consecutive months, completing five of the six major elements required by a 1990 Consent Decree. Previously, the Southwest Plant had difficulty complying with its permit requirements because of obsolete and damaged equipment, and not enough employees with the appropriate skills who could repair and maintain the highly complex equipment needed to run the Plant. Since the Plant was limited from operating at top performance, the quality of its effluent was compromised. Effluent is treated wastewater that is returned to the Delaware River.

In 1990 the City of Philadelphia, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources entered a Consent Decree issued by the United States District Court. The Consent Decree outlined the terms required to bring Southwest Plant into compliance. The Court issued the Consent Decree as a result of a complaint filed by the EPA alleging that the City of Philadelphia had violated the Clean Water Act and the conditions and limitations of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit for the Southwest Plant.

Since then, the Water Department has invested considerable funds to rehabilitate major processes at the Plant including primary sedimentation tanks, aeration tanks, sludge thickener and digestion systems, and final sedimentation tanks.

The Water Department was also required to hire an independent consultant to identify tasks that may have contributed to non-compliance and to develop corrective measures aimed at ensuring consistent, long-term compliance. Professional Services Group (PSG), a national wastewater treatment engineering and consulting firm, was chosen. They prepared a report which contained binding recommendations for a remedial action plan, staffing and maintenance. They recom-

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Photo: Bernie Rosenberg



James Clark and Ernie Poaches of the Meter Shop proudly display their awards from the Police Department for their efforts to make Philadelphia a drug-free city.

Ernie Poaches & James Clark
Philadelphia Water Department
Meter Shop

Dear Mr. Poaches and Mr. Clark:

On behalf of South Police Division, the below Commanding Officers would like to thank you for your outstanding contributions to the citizens and police in our war against drugs and crime in South Philadelphia.

Your unwavering support and effort in this battle are greatly appreciated by both the community and law enforcement personnel. Without your contributions in this ongoing struggle these problems would seem insurmountable. Any success we have had would not have been possible without your involvement in the South Philadelphia Service Support Group.

We look forward to your continued involvement in this group and its ongoing efforts in improving the quality of life for all residents in South Philadelphia.

Lawrence J. McShane, Inspector
Commanding Officer
South Police Division

Michael Cooney, Captain
Commanding Officer
3rd Police District

Joseph O'Brien, Captain
Commanding Officer
17th Police District

Michael McMahon, Captain
Commanding Officer
1st Police District

John Collins, Captain
Commanding Officer
4th Police District

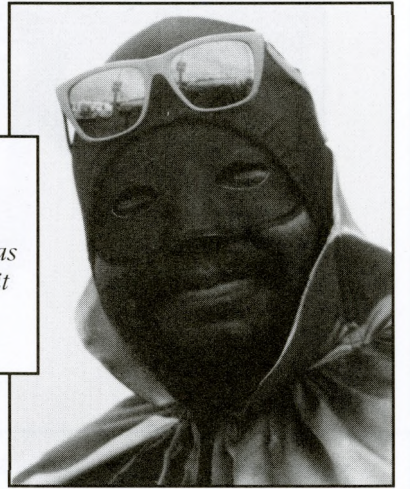
Albert DiGiacomo, Captain
Commanding Officer
South Detective Division

Ernie Poaches, Manager of the Meter Shop, and James Clark, Water Meter Service Worker, have been providing a valuable service to the City and the Police Department. As part of the clean and seal operation, Poaches and Clark have gone into crack houses and turned off water services.

"The police go in first," notes Poaches, "to seal off the area and make arrests. The utilities wait eight blocks away until we're told it's safe. We all move in at the same time, turning off the services and removing utility equipment such as water meters. I've never felt that I've been in danger from any of the drug dealers or users because the police make the area safe before we go in."

Thanks to Ernie Poaches and James Clark for their efforts to make Philadelphia a safer city.

CAPTAIN SEWER GETS \$25,000 GRANT



Captain Sewer reminds us that, "Throwing trash down an inlet is as bad as throwing it straight into the Delaware River."

The Delaware Estuary Program recently awarded \$25,000 to our Public Education Unit's Captain Sewer Club to create a program that teaches the public about the importance of Philadelphia's stormwater inlets and their role in reducing pollution to the Delaware River.

As part of the public education program, block captains throughout the city will be invited to join the "Captain Sewer Club" and become guardians of Philadelphia's stormwater inlets. The captains will get informative posters, educational brochures, and "Captain Sewer tools" to get the job done — brooms, rakes and bags to help keep their neighborhoods clean and to keep trash out of the inlets. They will also get Captain Sewer hats and T-shirts to reinforce Captain Sewer's message.

Our infamous mascot, Captain Sewer, will also go on the radio, using 15-30 second public service announcements to explain why nothing but stormwater should go down an inlet.

While inlets may seem like unremarkable street fixtures, they are the front-line in our defense against the pollution of natural water resources, such as the Delaware River.

Automatic Meter Reading Research

The future is here for the Philadelphia Water Department. Members of our Automatic Meter Reading Committee, which includes representatives of Planning and Research, Water Revenue Bureau, Meter Shop, Operations Administration and Materials Testing, are developing plans to bring automatic meter reading to the Department. They are involved in conducting a Beta test for a manufacturer of a new automatic meter reader. The reader, using radio frequencies, can take water meter readings from a van driving down the street.

The automatic meter reader was developed by ITRON, Inc. ITRON asked us if we would install 252 residential meters for on-site tests. ITRON supplied us with the meters, computer software, computerized handheld equipment, a computerized mobile van and training for staff to use it all. Our Meter Shop employees installed the meters and Water Revenue employees are taking frequent readings with the new readers supplied by ITRON. They are also taking readings the "old fashioned" way, by going into homes and looking at the numbers to check the accuracy of the new readers.

"The tests are going very well," says Jim Bolno, Beta Test Project Manager for Planning and Research. "This is the Water Department's first significant test of a product for automatic water readings. If it works, it will lead to lots of improvements for the Department, including more accurate water bills, greater customer satisfaction, improved resolutions of disputed water bills, and improved revenue collections."

A Beta test is conducted prior to releasing a product for full scale production. It is designed to identify problems not found during the original, or Alpha testing. Beta tests are conducted at customer locations and expose the product to the various environments it will see under normal operations.



Photo: Tom Love, Engineering Aide I, Survey Unit

Before trenches can be dug, Survey Unit employees must layout distances for the installation of new water main and sewer pipes. Here, Ed Brown, Engineering Aide II, and Alex Faulk, Surveyor I, determine a property line near Mechanicsville Road in Northeast Philadelphia using a reflector instrument for a \$1.5 million construction project.

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mended hiring more skilled employees, auditing jobs, training sessions to provide employees with necessary skills, fixing a variety of equipment, purchasing a computerized maintenance management program, developing a work order system for preventive maintenance rather than corrective maintenance, keeping an inventory of spare parts on site, establishing procedures to receive septage trucked to the Plant from independent septage haulers, and formalizing procedures for testing influent (wastewater that enters the Plant for treatment) and effluent. In June 1994, the Water Department fulfilled the obligations of the Consent Decree which stipulated that each element of PSG's final report be substantially complied with for four of five consecutive quarters.

1995 Holidays

New Year's Day, (Observed)
Monday, January 2

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day,
Monday, January 16

Washington's Birthday,
(Observed)
Monday, February 20

Good Friday,
April 14

Memorial Day, (Observed)
Monday, May 29

Independence Day,
Tuesday, July 4

Labor Day,
Monday, September 4

Columbus Day,
(Observed)
Monday, October 9

Thanksgiving Day,
Thursday, November 23

Christmas Day,
Monday, December 25