

# Currents



NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE MACON WATER AUTHORITY

## MWA Acquiring B&G Water Company

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) has acquired B&G Water Company, which will result in approximately 450 new accounts from South Macon-Bibb County joining the utility's customer base. The transaction closed on Monday March 25, for a price of \$300,000.

With the owners of B&G Water Company set to retire, they approached the MWA about acquiring their privately-owned water system. B&G Water Company was founded to serve the residential neighborhoods constructed by the owners' development company.

"We believe this is best for everyone involved, and the Macon Water Authority will serve our customers with commitment and excellence," says B&G's Evelyn Gibson. "We want to thank each one of our customers for their loyalty, patience, and understanding over many years of service, and during this transition."

**"We believe this is best for everyone involved, and the Macon Water Authority will serve our customers with commitment and excellence."**

— Evelyn Gibson, B&G Water Company

The first order of business for the MWA will be to connect the seven smaller water systems operated by B&G Water Company to the MWA water distribution system, thus eliminating these customers' reliance on wells for their daily drinking water needs.

The new customers will be able to enjoy the Authority's additional resources and capabilities, such as various billing and payment options, 24/7 on-call support, protection

against the adverse effects of drought, and the expertise of 222 employees at an award-winning system.

In addition, B&G customers will gain the benefit of having enhanced fire protection and subsequent lower fire insurance premiums, once the Authority's water distribution infrastructure has been extended to their neighborhoods.



## Popular MWA Fishing Derby Returns for the 14th Year

**Save The Date: June 1st at Javors Lucas Lake**

Hundreds of kids and parents are expected at Javors Lucas Lake on Saturday June 1, when the Macon Water Authority (MWA) hosts the 14th Annual Kids Fishing Derby.

Javors Lucas Lake is the Authority's pristine 589-acre drinking water reservoir, and the Fishing Derby site is located at 150 Broach Lane, off of Upper River Road. Participants and their adult guests will be able to fish for free, and refreshments will be provided.

Registration for the event begins at 6:00 a.m., with the fishing tournament

starting at 7:00 a.m. The official weigh-in, which will be held at 10:30 a.m., will determine the prizes to be awarded for the winner of the biggest catch of the day, as well as first, second and third place winners in four age group categories.

### What to Know:

**Kids Fishing Derby**  
**Saturday June 1, 2019**  
**6:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**  
**Javors Lucas Lake**  
**150 Broach Lane**  
**Phone: 478-464-5650**

The MWA Kids Fishing Derby is an event sponsored by the Macon Water Alliance, a Georgia 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation and subsidiary of the MWA dedicated to providing environmental education and water resource-focused assistance for citizens in Middle Georgia.

For more information on the MWA Kids Fishing Derby, check out our website at [www.maconwater.org](http://www.maconwater.org), or contact our Water Operations Department at 478-464-5650.



Contact 811 before you dig.

As a utility that promotes safety in all aspects of its operations, the MWA encourages customers to "Call Before You Dig" around the house, to assure that you complete your household projects without damaging underground utilities.

Georgia 811, a non-profit corporation dedicated to preventing damage to Georgia's underground utilities while promoting public safety, has designated April as Safe Digging Month in Georgia.

Remember, 811 is the number to dial before you conduct any digging, so you can assure your project is completed safely and without incident.



Georgia 811 can help you with locating and identifying any underground utilities, prior to: planting trees, shrubs, or other landscaping activities, or installing fences, decks, swing sets, mail boxes, and more.

For any questions or assistance, contact Georgia 811 by calling 811 or 1-800-282-7411 at least 48 hours, but no more than 10 working days, in advance so utility lines can be properly marked.

## MWA Executive Director Honored for Public Service

The MWA contributes in a number of ways to the quality of water provided by utilities all across the state of Georgia.

As an example, MWA Executive Director and President Tony Rojas has provided service to the State Board of Examiners for Certification of Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators and Laboratory Analysts. Mr. Rojas served on this Board for nine years, and he was honored recently by his peers for the expertise he offered this critically important group of water industry leaders.

The State Water and Wastewater Certification Board is responsible for issuing all of the water, wastewater, distribution, collections, and laboratory licenses for the water and wastewater utilities and related industries in Georgia.

This Board determines the official courses that can be used for basic, advanced, and continuing



Tony Rojas (left), MWA Executive Director and President, was honored recently for nine years of service on the State Board of Examiners for Certification of Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators and Laboratory Analysts.

education of water and wastewater plant operators and laboratory analysts, while making changes to testing protocol as needed. Members also oversee the process for licensing water professionals, and the renewal of licenses every two years.

Board Members serve at the appointment of the Governor, and the group consists of six members who include a water operator, a wastewater operator, one member in training or consulting, one member from Georgia EPD, one consumer advocate, and one utility manager, which is the position Mr. Rojas held since 2009.

"Without the Certification Board, there would be no standards in our industry and

no way to ensure that qualified folks are operating water facilities in the public's interest in all of the capacities that we regulate," says Eric Osborne, Board Vice Chairman.

# SECOND FRONT

## Macon-Bibb County Asks for MWA to Create Stormwater Utility

Since 2008, the MWA has provided technical support and program management services to Macon-Bibb County Government for projects to rehabilitate portions of the local stormwater infrastructure.

More than a decade later, the consolidated government is asking the Authority to create a comprehensive Stormwater Program and Utility, with the autonomy to establish utility fees for services provided, to run day-to-day operations, and to invest in long-term capital projects to meet the needs of the community.

In March, the two sides began negotiations that could culminate in an intergovernmental agreement that turns the full-time management of stormwater programming over to the MWA.



One reason Macon-Bibb County appears to be seeking the MWA's assistance is due to notification from U.S. EPA of 21 possible violations of the Clean Water Act as it relates to stormwater and Macon-

Bibb County's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

In addition, Commissioners have noted in the past that the MWA is experienced in handling stormwater related issues and projects, with expertise that includes compliance with NPDES permitting. The Authority maintains its own NPDES permits for the operation of its wastewater collection, conveyance system, and treatment facilities.

Whether the proposed intergovernmental agreement takes shape or not, one thing is for certain according to officials on both sides – the stormwater infrastructure needs in Macon-Bibb County far outweigh the current source(s) of funding, even with dollars allocated from the most recent SPLOST passed in November of 2016.

## Macon Water Alliance Assists Habitat for Humanity

The Macon Water Alliance is continuing its mission to work with relevant partners to provide plumbing assistance for underserved Macon-Bibb County residents, by presenting two checks totaling \$3,300 to homeowners and officials with Habitat for Humanity.

The donations, which were

divided into contributions of \$1,650 per home, will provide water and sewer tap services for Habitat homes constructed at 4342 and 4352 Worsham Avenue, within the Lynmore Estates Subdivision.

Contributions to the Macon Water Alliance such as these come in a variety of ways:

- Sponsors who support special events, such as the MWA Kids Fishing Derby (see related story in this issue) and Ocmulgee Alive!

- Customers who contribute through our "Round Up" program and/or from monthly donations added to their water bill payments.

- MWA Employees and Board Members who donate annually or periodically.

- MWA Employees who offer in-kind services, such as their skills for plumbing repairs or home improvements.

The Macon Water Alliance established an Employee Advisory Board, which provides input on key causes or organizations they believe can benefit from the Alliance's support; but, the Macon Water Alliance Board of Directors approves what funding is appropriated to deserving organizations, charities, and events.



Board Members of the Macon Water Alliance present homeowners and officials from Habitat for Humanity with one of two checks totaling \$3,300, to cover the cost of water and sewer tap service at homes being built in the Lynmore Estates Subdivision.

## Be Prepared for a Natural Disaster

This spring is an ideal time for MWA customers to prepare for emergencies, such as natural disasters.

First, prepare a Family Emergency Plan that designates meeting places and contact information for all family members, including names, dates of birth, social security numbers, and important medical information. In addition, write down information on the places and times each family member spends the majority of their day – where they will be and when.

As for a Basic Ready Kit, store at least a three-day supply of bottled water, a can opener and non-perishable food. Additional items may include a radio, flash lights with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a whistle to signal for help, a face mask for filtering contaminated air, tarps and duct tape for shelter repairs, moist wipes, garbage bags and plastic bags for hygiene, tools (or at least a wrench and pliers to turn off utilities), and local maps.

More information on emergency preparedness is available online at [www.gema.ga.gov](http://www.gema.ga.gov) or [www.ready.ga.gov](http://www.ready.ga.gov).



## Roundtop Building Open for Business

The MWA Human Resources (HR) and Engineering Departments, including the GIS Staff, have moved into new offices in the renovated "Roundtop Building" located across the parking lot from the Albert Billingslea Administrative Building on the campus of the Authority's Headquarters.

These offices were previously located on the second floor of the Billingslea Building, and the move was

completed in March, with employees and customers now enjoying the added resources and amenities that more than 11,000 square feet provide.

Some of the Roundtop Building features include: a large training facility, a conference style meeting room, an outdoor green space area, supplemental parking, and more.

The next time you're on the MWA campus, come take a look!



## Riverkeeper Rally Coming May 11

The Altamaha Riverkeeper, in partnership with the Macon Water Authority, will host the annual Riverkeeper Rally on Saturday May 11, 2019, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Amerson River Park in Macon.

The public is invited to come and enjoy bluegrass, boats, and barbecue!



The annual rally includes a two-hour float down the Ocmulgee, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., with a free shuttle provided. The afternoon float will be followed by live music provided by the "Recycled Grass Band." Barbecue is on the menu for supper, and there is no cost to attend.

For more information, call 912-441-3908.

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