



Currents



Tasting Water

News and Developments for Customers of the Macon Water Authority

MWA mourns the loss of Chairman Frank C. Amerson, Jr.

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) has lost its long-time leader of more than 35 years with the passing of Chairman Frank C. Amerson, Jr. at the age of 83, on Friday, Sept. 14, following complications from surgery at The Medical Center of Central Georgia.

"We have lost not only our leader, but a close friend and mentor to all of us who have had the pleasure of working with him," says Tony Rojas, MWA Executive Director. "He was a giant in our industry, respected throughout the state of Georgia among water professionals, in addition to being one of the most influential and progressive public officials in Macon and Bibb County."

With a wealth of business experience from his career in the private sector as owner of Amerson Construction, the Authority Chairman understood the value of quality infrastructure and its correlation to quality growth and economic development.

During his 35 years on the MWA Board, Amerson helped to build not only the Authority's water and sewer system, which boasts the best tasting drinking water in North America, but to improve its fiscal position, by making sound



Frank Amerson, a giant in the industry of water professionals and as an advocate of local economic development, led the MWA as its Chairman for more than 35 years, until his death on Sept. 14, 2012.

business decisions and recommendations based on what was best for the Authority and community.

"Chairman Amerson always tried to steer the Authority to make business decisions, not political decisions," says MWA Vice-Chairman Javors Lucas.

According to those who worked with him and knew him best, Amerson's greatest passions were manifested in his leadership at the MWA and in economic development for his community. In addition to serving as the Authority's Chairman for more than 35 years, Amerson also served as Chairman of the Macon-Bibb Industrial Authority from 2005 to 2008, while continuing to serve there and on the Board of the Macon Economic Development

Commission until the time of his death. He also had past service on the State Board of Industry and Trade, now referred to as the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

MWA Board Member Frank Patterson notes that Amerson was entirely committed to his service as Chairman of the Water Authority, putting his "heart and soul" into his leadership post, helping the utility and its more than 200 employees become one of the best water and sewer systems in the state and nation.

"Whatever we needed to improve the Authority, its facilities or operations, for the betterment of our customers and employees, he provided," says Rojas. "Mr. Amerson and the Board have always been supportive of employees,

to help us advance in the profession."

Amerson's business and construction experience also proved invaluable in his role as a leader in local economic development. The MWA Chairman helped facilitate a change in the Authority's Charter that allows for its annual appropriation of \$704,000 into a revolving fund earmarked for land acquisition and infrastructure, to create industrial sites to attract business and industry to Macon and Bibb County.

The MWA Chairman also was a visionary who foresaw the need for the Authority to have an adequate, expandable and independent water supply and production capacity – manifested in the construction of Javors Lucas Lake, a 6 billion gallon

reservoir that was completed in 1994.

Then, following the flood of '94, which left Macon without water service for 19 days due to the damage to the Riverside Water Treatment Plant, Chairman Amerson spearheaded the effort to secure federal and state funds to the tune of more than \$100 million for the construction of a new state-of-the-art water treatment plant, which only required approximately \$5 million in Authority funds to complete. The new water plant was built next to the reservoir and appropriately bears Chairman Amerson's name.

Additional news and photos of Mr. Amerson are available on the Authority's Web site at www.maconwater.org.

MWA adopts 2013 Budget and revises some rates

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) Board of Directors unanimously adopted the utility's annual budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 during its September meeting, with the new fiscal year beginning in October. As a part of this year's budget, the MWA also adjusted some of its rates and fees, which will take effect in January.

Among the highlights of the

FY 2013 budget is an expected 3.2% increase in total operating revenues, as the Authority conservatively expects to eclipse the \$45 million mark this year. Total operating expenses are anticipated to be slightly above \$29 million, in addition to approximately \$10 million in non-operating expense, which includes the Authority's debt service on long-term financing through bond issues and loans

that are outstanding. Projected net income is expected to be a little more than \$6.5 million.

A reflection of the sound financial position of the Authority can be found in its bonded indebtedness ratio of 2.12. A typical debt coverage ratio for a water utility is considered to be 1.2 to 1.5 in most cases; thus, the Authority is well above the industry norm in this regard.

As for rate adjustments in 2013, the MWA budget included an increase of \$1.25 in the base sewer fee for 5/8-inch and 1-inch metered accounts, which are typical of all MWA residential customers. The Authority also adopted an increase of 10 cents in the variable rate/consumption charge for every 100 cubic feet of water and sewer service.

SECOND FRONT

Setting the bar high for industry performance standards

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) has set the bar high in terms of industry standards it attempts to meet on a daily basis. Recent industry awards won by the Authority provide evidence the utility has exceeded even those expectations.

Earlier this year, the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) honored the MWA Amerson Water Treatment Plant with the state's 2012 Plant of the Year Award, in addition to awarding the facility with Gold status for having 100 percent permit compliance last year. The

GAWP also honored the Authority's Rocky

Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant with its

Platinum Award for the plant's 14 straight years

of 100 percent permit compliance.

This year, the MWA achieved a rare feat when two separate individuals were selected as the best water treatment plant operator for the region and in the state. Dave Blackwell won the GAWP Top Op Award for District 5, while Chuck Mixon, lead operator at the Amerson Plant, won the Operators Meritorious Service Award, which is the equivalent of being the top water plant operator in the state, as awarded by the Georgia section of the American Water Works Association (GAWWA).



Left: Chuck Mixon (left), lead operator at the Amerson Water Treatment Plant, won the 2012 Operator's Meritorious Service Award. Executive Director Tony Rojas, Past President of GAWP, presented Mixon with the award at the Association's annual conference.



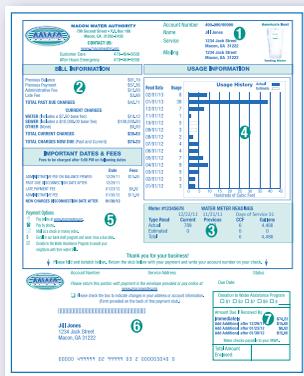
Right: The MWA Board celebrated four awards from GAWP this spring, including the Plant of the Year Award for the Amerson Water Treatment Facility, a Gold Award for 100% permit compliance at the Amerson Plant, a Platinum Award for 100% permit compliance at the Rocky Creek Plant for 14 straight years, and the District's Top Water Plant Operator Award for the Authority's Dave Blackwell (sixth from left).

MWA redesigns customer bill

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) has completely redesigned its customer bill. The new design of your bill is intended to make it easier for you to read and understand the charges and fees billed for water and sewer services.

The newly designed MWA bills provide an overview of the month's billing information of current and past charges, a chart of monthly water usage – which is a popular and helpful feature among customers – and reminders of important due dates and applicable fees. The Authority's policies and fee descriptions are listed on the back of the bill, where a graphic of the new bill appears to help guide customers through the new layout (see the new bill graphic above right).

Prior to redesigning its customer bill, the Authority conducted in-depth interviews with randomly selected residential and commercial customers to receive their feedback on design



ideas and templates for a new customer bill. That customer feedback contributed to the design of the new bill that will be distributed to MWA customers during the next billing cycle.

For questions about the new customer bill, payment methods, or any other customer service issues, contact the Authority's Customer Care Department at 478-464-5600 during normal office hours, or at 478-464-5656 after hours; or, log onto our Web site at www.maconwater.org.

You can help prevent sewer spills, overflows, and backups at your property

Improper disposal of household fats, oils, and grease (FOG) is one of the leading causes of sewer line clogs and subsequent sewer spills, overflows, and backups into customer homes. Thus, MWA officials encourage you to "think, before pouring grease down the sink."

When grease is poured down the drain, it can damage a home's plumbing and the MWA sewer system, where it can coagulate, harden and clog sewer lines.

To protect sewer infrastructure, the environment, and residential plumbing, customers should not pour grease down the drain. Instead, consider these tips to properly dispose of fats, oils, and grease:

- Let grease cool and pour it into a sealed container.
- Throw that container in the trash.
- Also, wipe food scraps from plates and dishes into the trash prior to washing.

The MWA has a limited number of grease can covers available to customers for free at the Authority headquarters, to make it easier to dispose of

grease properly.

Rags and similar objects, when illegally discarded into the MWA system through opened manholes, toilets and drains, also contribute to sewer spills and overflows. In addition, these objects can clog and damage the Authority's pumps and interfere with the wastewater treatment process as well. Those items that should be disposed of in the trash and not in the MWA sewer system include:

- Rags and towels
- Cleaning wipes
- Feminine hygiene products
- Dental floss
- Other non-paper products

MWA officials take sewer spills and overflows very seriously. To report sewer spills/overflows or sewage backup, customers can call the Authority at 478-464-5600 during normal business hours, or at 478-464-5656 during weekends, holidays, or after hours. To report problems that are less serious, customers can log onto our Web site at www.maconwater.org.



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