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American Water Works Association

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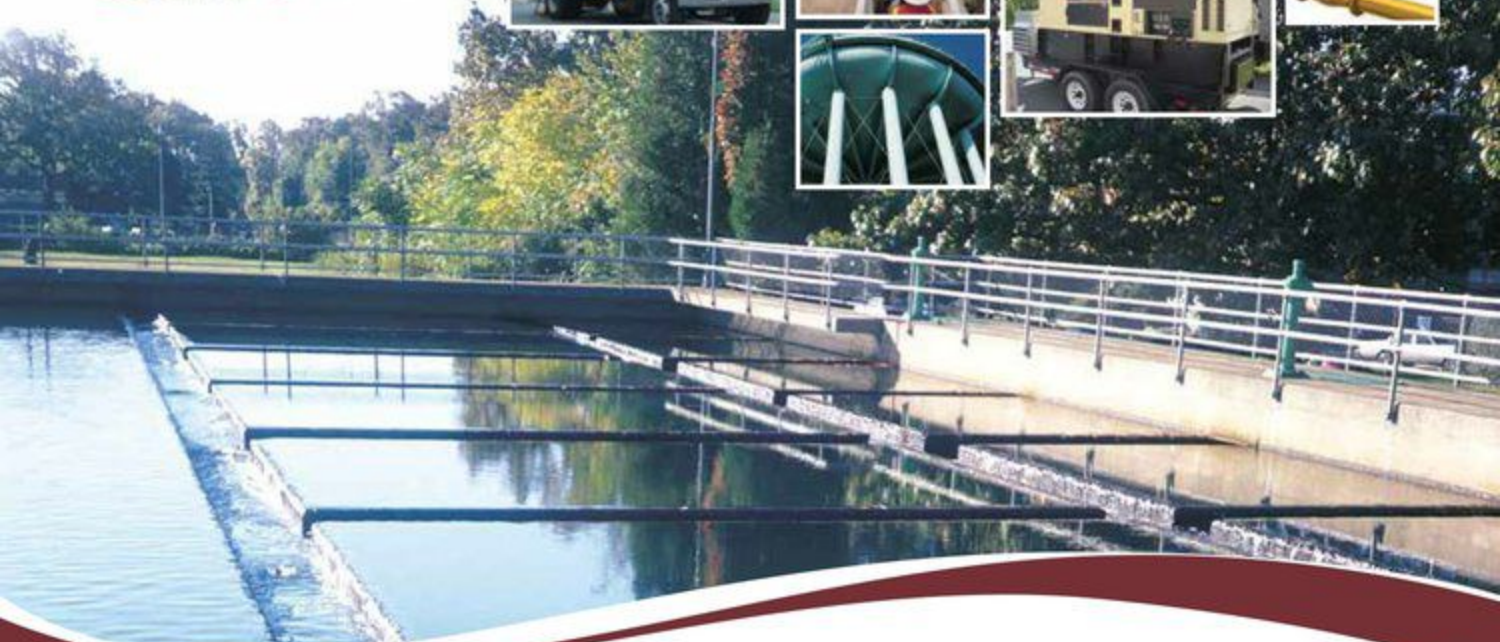
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New software provides real-time interface with PA1Call

By Dwight Hoare, Manager, St. Marys Area Water Authority

A telephone call for a survey from a PA1Call representative lead the St. Marys Area Water Authority in Elk County to consider innovative ways to handle 1calls when faxes from PA1Call were no longer an option.

The representative indicated that this indeed was the direction that PA1Call was heading. Individual AWWA member and manager of the Authority, Dwight Hoare, P.E. began looking for a solution that would not involve having PA1Call emails being sent to our generic email box. After searching for a solution it became clear very quickly that one did not exist.

The Authority decided to team up with a computer firm based out of Harrisburg, PA to see if a web-based solution could be developed. Breakthrough Concepts, LLC saw the need for this application to be developed and created 1Mark. Development of the software platform took about one year and the system was tested for six months at our Authority by running in parallel with our existing PA1Call account using a "ghost account" that was created by PA1Call. Building this platform would not have been possible without the incredible support that Breakthrough Concepts received from the staff at PA1Call.

The 1Mark software runs on any computer, laptop or mobile device with internet access and serves as a real-time, two-way communication interface with the PA1Call system. The user screens are simple and efficient for our staff to use. Staff training takes about 30 minutes (it really is that simple to use). Routing of the 1call tickets from PA1Call to our user account was accomplished by a simple email address change done by the staff at PA1Call.



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PA Water Law *Continued from page 6*


When is a municipal water system subject to regulation by the PUC?

As a general rule, in Pennsylvania, municipal authorities that operate public water systems are not subject to regulation by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC). However, municipalities may, under certain circumstances, be subject to regulation by the PUC. On August 11, 2016 the PUC issued a decision in *Petition of the Borough of Cornwall for a Declaratory Order that the Provision of Water Service to Isolated Customers Adjoining its Boundaries Does Not Constitute Provision of Public Utility Service Under 66 Pa. § C.S. 102*, P-2015-2476211. That decision contains a thorough discussion of the state of the law on the subject of PUC regulation of municipal water systems. We begin with another general rule, i.e., water service provided by a municipal water system to the public inside its corporate limits is not subject to regulation by the PUC. As for the furnishing of water service to the public beyond its corporate limits, the Public Utility Code provides that a municipal corporation is required to obtain a Certificate in order "to acquire, construct, or begin to operate, any plant, equipment, or other facilities for


the rendering or furnishing to the public of any public utility service beyond its corporate limits." 66 Pa. § C.S. 1102(a)(5). As the PUC has stated many times, the test is whether a municipality's provision of water service to extraterritorial customers constitutes "public utility service."

The PUC does not make its decision based on the number of customers served. The decision is instead based upon whether or not service is open to all members of the public who may require the offered service. The PUC, citing court precedent has framed the test as follows: "Whether or not such person [municipality] holds himself out, expressly or impliedly, as engaged in the business of supplying his product or service to the public, as a class, or to any limited portion of it, as contradistinguished from holding himself out as serving or ready to serve only a particular individual." (p. 33 of Borough of Cornwall).

In determining that the Borough of Cornwall would not be subject to PUC regulation, although it would be serving customers outside its boundaries, the PUC reasoned: (1) the Borough would be providing extraterritorial service to a limited number of customers who are geographically contiguous to the Borough; (2) The customers amount to only 5.25% of the total customers; (3) all of the extraterritorial customers are located within 1000 feet from the Borough's boundaries and within defined locations or developments in which most of the development is within the Borough's boundaries; (4) the Borough stated that it would not solicit new customers beyond its boundaries or provide service to any additional outside customers in the future; and (5) the Borough stated it would charge the same rates to customers within and outside of its boundaries. In finding that the Borough would not be subject to PUC regulation, the PUC conditioned its determination upon the Borough's compliance with Clauses (4) and (5). The Borough adopted Resolutions which in effect incorporate clauses (4) and (5).



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Software *Continued from page 7*

PA1Call reports that 99% of its roughly 3,500 users are currently using fax or email and only 1% use XML data. 1Mark will allow every utility doing work in Pennsylvania access to PA1Call's XML data interface and our sense is that PA1Call is ready to see this transition take place.

Our incorporating municipality (City of St. Marys) also became interested in this project and ran the same test. The City's GIS department was instrumental in suggesting the mapping functions that were built into the software. The City is now able to clear approximately 30% of their tickets without leaving the office because the mapping feature allows them to overlay their GIS mapping onto the 1call ticket and see potential conflicts, or, if their facilities are clear from the proposed excavation. If a conflict exists, the information is electronically dispatched through 1Mark to field employees on their mobile devices.

What the Authority particularly finds useful is the ability to check the status of our emergency dig ticket in real-time on our mobile devices to see who has and who has not responded. This ability allows us to get our repairs done faster without calling into the office to see if the gas, electric or telephone companies have responded to our 1call.

The emergency tickets we receive are now automatically sent from PA1Call to our field staff's mobile device via a text message. There is no lag time waiting for our office staff to pull the emergency ticket off of the fax and call our field staff to respond. This improvement has allowed us to better protect

our facilities by being able to respond faster to emergency 1calls and avoid damage to our facilities when others are making emergency repairs to theirs.

Now that we are well into our first construction season with the 1Mark system up and running, the Authority is also beginning to notice the reduction of trips back to the office by our field staff because they can now close tickets in the field using their mobile devices. Our field staff has also begun taking pictures and videos of our marked sites. These videos and pictures are automatically dated and time-stamped, attached to the individual 1call ticket and stored in the Google Cloud for easy retrieval should our markings ever be called into question in a legal dispute.

The developer of the software platform is providing the 1Mark service on a monthly, subscription basis. In the case of our Authority, the cost savings that we realized by moving from the fax to email (this saves \$0.45 per ticket from your PA1Call invoice) basically pays for the 1Mark service, plus we get all the functionality that the software provides. Because the service is web-based, we never have to purchase any software or be bothered by software updates. We are quite pleased with the way this project turned out and how it has allowed us to use modern technology to streamline the processing of our 1call tickets.

Anyone that would like to learn more about how this product works can contact Dwight Hoare, P.E. via email at stwater@windstream.net.

Take the Pennsylvania Section AWWA Strategic Plan Survey 2016-2021

We are currently working on the Section's strategic plan and would like input from our members.

You can find the survey at www.paawwa.org/about-us/mission-strategic-plan-bylaws

Please send the survey to Patty Chila at pchila@paawwa.org by October 28, 2016.

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