

CURRENTS

Digitizing the Past & What History Can Teach Us About Today

A good history can teach us a lot. And good record-keeping practices – including frameworks for collecting and organizing important pieces of information – are critical to the success of any organization. This is especially true for an organization like PWSA.

For starters, we're responsible for something critical: the delivery of life-sustaining water services to our community. Secondly, there's simply a lot of information and records to capture and store, going back more than 150 years, and long before the formal establishment of our Authority.

Just like many of our infrastructure assets, which are largely out of sight and mind, this work is too. But make no mistake, this is crucial work that benefits both PWSA and our customers. That's why we've embarked on a project to overhaul our records management process to better store and organize that information in one centralized, digital location.

PWSA has in its possession a wealth of informational records. This includes historical images (see historic photo of the Highland Park II Reservoir above) to accounts of the



infrastructure assets in our system to contemporary engineering schematics and recent construction work. It's important that this information is identified, recorded, and organized properly so we as an organization have at our fingertips the data we need to best deliver water services to our customers.

In 2020, PWSA began this important record management overhaul, with the goal of digitizing and finding a way to organize all this information in a centralized way. To support this effort, we brought on two new document management professionals, Neil Manganaro (Document Management Specialist) and Alicia Britton (Document Management Associate), to help lead the charge. They were later

supported by intern Ethan Ratz, who joined PWSA in the summer of 2022 and currently remains with us.

After vendor interviews, an enterprise document management software called DocuWare was selected, and work digitizing documents and identifying and implementing a viable way of organizing and indexing this information began.

To date, more than 140,000 important documents and records, primarily relating to our engineering and operations functions, have been digitized and set into our organizational indexing framework.

Practically speaking, PWSA employees needing access to these records – to help design a project, reference past work,

or discern the location of an asset like a water main – can now quickly and easily find them in the searchable central record system as opposed to searching through the physical records room. This means a fuller and more holistic understanding of the work we're embarking on and faster service to our customers.

Of course, this is only the beginning of this endeavor, and plenty of more work will continue to be done. Moving forward, PWSA will begin to digitize and organize other records and documents across our organization. Our document management team will also continue to work with PWSA employees using this system to identify ways to improve how they interact with it.

CEO Briefing by *Chief Executive Officer Will Pickering*

A focus on safety to protect our employees, customers, and infrastructure



When PWSA talks about safety – one of our **Core Values** – we mean it in a few ways: a safe working environment for employees, the safety of our infrastructure assets, and the safety of the millions of gallons of water delivered to our customers every day.

As a utility that works so heavily in the construction space, ensuring that our employees return home safely and in the same condition they arrived is an important part of our daily focus. That's why, in the past few years alone, we've ramped up our employee safety efforts, bringing onboard a Safety Team dedicated to this kind of work.

Through their efforts, we've implemented more robust safety training for our employees – both for our field and Water Treatment Plant staff and for those working in more traditional office environments – increased our staff to provide more safety oversight, enhanced safety equipment

to mitigate work hazards, and launched a Safety Incentive Program. This program rewards employees for practicing safe workplace behaviors, like completing daily stretching and using our near miss reporting program to report safety hazards.

To protect the infrastructure assets we rely on each day, PWSA is taking proactive approaches to renew key components of our water supply and distribution system via our nearly \$470 million slate of **Water Reliability Plan** projects.

And when it comes to the safety of our water, our dedicated staff at the Water Treatment Plant

and in our lab are constantly monitoring and measuring the quality of our drinking water to ensure that it meets all state and federal drinking water requirements.

Each year we release a Water Quality Report, the most recent of which I encourage you to read [here](#).

In other words, safety is top-of-mind here at PWSA. And only through a sustained focus on safety can we enact on our mission to support our region by protecting public health and the environment through the delivery of safe and reliable water services.

TEAM PGH20

Employee Spotlight: Alicia Britton

Document Management Associate Alicia Britton is responsible for implementing record management policies and improving record keeping practices. This includes organizing physical records and preparing them for digitization and storage, and helping employees locate the records they need to complete daily work and projects.

What made you decide to pursue a career in your field?

I've always been interested in history, and I really enjoy interacting with people and helping them find information, so a job in archives was a natural fit. Working as an archivist allows me to have hands-on interactions with historic materials while also

helping to educate the public about archives and how to care for priceless, essential information.

Why do you like working for PWSA?

Working for PWSA has given me the opportunity to expand my skillset in archives and records management. I've been able to help develop a records management program and a functioning archive from scratch, I frequently work with historic documents and practice my preservation skills, and I interact with coworkers who need help doing research. It's exciting that every day I can work on different projects and practice different skills.

What sort of impact do you hope to have at PWSA and in

our community? I hope to be part of a records management program that can make everyday work easier and more efficient for all employees. In turn, a more efficient records management program will also make it easier for PWSA to respond to the needs of the greater Pittsburgh community.

What are your favorite challenges to tackle? I like challenges that introduce me to new materials or new types of information. I often come across new document types in our record collection and I have to figure out what kind of information they present and who they might be useful to. Challenges like that allow me to learn more about PWSA and the information the organization



produces while also teaching me how to recognize various types of information in the future.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work? I enjoy cooking, reading, crafting, and – using my archival preservation expertise – helping people preserve old books and family mementos.

\$2 Million Centre Ave. Sewer Investment Wraps

This August, PWSA completed an extensive infrastructure upgrade on Centre Avenue between Morewood Avenue and Devonshire Street in the Shadyside neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

Upon completion, this four-month-long project replaced an aging sewer main and water main, as well as any lead service lines found there during the work.

After crews televised the sewer main and determined there were structural deficiencies, they began to devise a plan for replacement. Upgrading the sewer pipe would mean moving the water main, which was installed above the sewer main, making construction access

difficult. Crews then built a new water main in a location that would not obstruct the sewer.

They then got to work replacing the portion of failing sewer pipe. The entire length of the sewer on the block was also lined using a trenchless lining process to further reinforce it from the inside.

This project was part of PWSA's Sewer Under Structures Program, which addresses aging sewers that are obstructed by structures like other utilities or buildings.

The project commences as PWSA celebrates Sewer Awareness Month, an annual recognition of PWSA's sewer system and all it does for us.



Crews prepare trench for sewer replacement on Centre Avenue

To learn more about the importance of our sewers and how you can play a part in protecting them, visit our [Sewer](#) webpage.

PGH2O IN THE COMMUNITY

Come Meet Us in the Community

In the coming weeks, Team PGH2O will be in attendance at a variety of community events.

- **What's the Point .5K (Oct. 1):** This half kilometer run/walk/crawl will raise money for the beautification of Westinghouse Park. Members of the PGH2O team will be leading fun and informative stormwater demonstrations, perfectly suited for curious kids and adults alike. We'll also have a guided tour of the nearby Thomas & McPherson Stormwater Project.
- **Riverview Park Day (Oct. 2):** Riverview Park Day, hosted by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, is a day dedicated to celebrating Riverview Park and raising

funds for continued preservation work and park improvements. This family-friendly event will include, music, food, a CycloCross race, guided hikes, activities for kids, and more. Stop by the PGH2O table to learn about our Customer Assistance Programs and bring the kids by to watch fun and informative stormwater and water treatment demonstrations!

- **Clean Water Festival (Oct. 15):** In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the Association of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Pittsburgh is holding this free, celebratory event, which is open to the public. Join the fun! Enjoy food trucks, free

swag, artists, a free t-shirt giveaway to the first 200 attendees, presentations from water experts, and water-related activities for all ages.

- **Representative Dan Deasy Senior Health Expos (Sept. 28 & Oct. 3):** These sessions will provide information on state and community programs for older Pennsylvanians. Stop by and chat with our PGH2O Cares team to learn about our Customer Assistance Programs. They can even sign you up on the spot!

Please visit our [Events & Meetings](#) webpage for more information.

PGH₂O

WATER WISE

Keep Leaves Out of Storm Drains!

Leaves and grass clippings left on the ground can clog storm drains and sewer pipes and, consequently, contribute to street flooding when it rains. Yard waste and most fertilizers can cause nutrient pollution and oxygen depletion in our streams and rivers when carried through storm drains and sewers. This hurts our waterways and the wildlife that rely on them.

Help protect our water and sewer resources by following these tips:

- Do not rake or blow leaves or grass clippings into the street.
- Do not dump yard waste or trash near or into storm drains.
- Place your leaves in a bag for curbside yard debris collection or compost them at home.
- If you have a mulching lawnmower, use it to recycle leaves and their nutrients into your lawn.
- Only apply fertilizers or pesticides if necessary and do not overapply.
- Use slow-release and organic fertilizers, which are less likely to wash away.
- Fertilize lawns in the fall to prevent nutrients washing away during spring rains.

If you see a clogged or broken storm drain, please call Dispatch at 412-255-2423 (Press 1) or contact us @pgh2o on Twitter.

Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their PGH2O bill. These programs are managed by our **PGH2O Cares team**, a group of education and outreach professionals dedicated to working directly with our most vulnerable customers to bolster enrollment in our Customer Assistance Programs and identify ways to reduce water usage.



For more information about our programs, including the **Winter Shut Off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Flexible Payment Plans, Hardship Grant, and Lead Line Reimbursements**, please visit our [Customer Assistance Program](#) page or call Dollar Energy Fund at 866.762.2348.

Additional Assistance Programs

Additional assistance programs are offered separately from PWSA's Customer Assistance Programs.

The **Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)** provides drinking water and wastewater assistance to eligible renters or homeowners who are experiencing a water crisis. Please visit this [website](#) or call 877-395-8930 for more information and to apply.

The **Pennsylvania Housing Assistance Fund (PAHAF)** provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners to help cover water and wastewater charges. Please visit their [website](#) or call 888-987-2423 for more information and to apply.

The **Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) Clean Water Assistance Fund** is available to eligible residential customers. It is also administered by Dollar Energy Fund. To learn more and apply for assistance, visit the [Clean Water Assistance Fund](#) page.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

If you can, consider donating to our [Hardship Grant Program](#).

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our online billing and payment portal ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

New enrollees who also enroll in the autopay feature on our [website](#) will receive a one-time \$5 discount on their bill.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages?

It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO:

**Call PWSA Customer Service:
412.255.2423 (Press 5)**

Visit our [Update Contact Information](#) portal.

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