

INFO



Southwest Water
Company

THE EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER OF SOUTHWEST WATER COMPANY
SPECIAL HURRICANE KATRINA ISSUE

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2005

SWWC, employees quick to join Katrina relief efforts

Hurricane Katrina's omnivorous rain, wind and flooding left a swath of devastation not seen in the southern U.S. since possibly the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 or even the Civil War. There's almost nothing that **INFO** could add to the incomprehensible images and words from television, radio and newspapers about the storm.

Almost.

Joining the many stories of individual and institutional courage and compassion during the emergency was the rapid response by Southwest Water Company and its employees.

Of first concern were the ECO Resources and OpTech employees working in Long Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi, D'Iberville and Pascagoula in Mississippi. These Gulf Coast cities were directly in the path of the merciless storm, which devastated their water/wastewater facilities (or office, in Biloxi's case).

Not able to reach anyone by regular phone, cell phone or e-mail, the staffs of the company offices in Los Angeles and Houston feared the worst.

Meanwhile, ECO Resources in Colorado and Austin "saddled up" trucks with personnel, generators, food, water

and gasoline and drove them to Mississippi to help OpTech crews get the water and wastewater systems of their client cities working. Their cargo also included nearly eight tons of general relief supplies

generously donated by employees for people displaced by the storm—drinking water, medicine, baby supplies, food

(continued on page 4)



Praiseworthy—President George Bush praised the "heroic acts" of OpTech meter reading supervisor **Jerry Darden** during Hurricane Katrina. An article in the Southern Mississippi Sun Herald, whose photographer David Purdy snapped the photo above, told the story of Jerry and several of his neighbors in the low-lying Turkey Creek community braving swift flood waters during the storm to rescue more than 20 people trapped in their houses. The rescuers swam, clung to trees and at one point tied themselves together. They pulled people onto a small boat and rowed them to safety at a nearby church on higher ground.

"Dirty deeds done dirt cheap"

ECO Texas has MUDs, ECO New Mexico gets Tingley for Mudd



Playing wallowball for a good cause—It was not exactly a level playing field for local organizations in Albuquerque, including SWWC subsidiary New Mexico Utilities, who squared off to raise funds for the Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation.



ur ECO Resources coworkers at New Mexico Utilities in Albuquerque started their summer with a muddy Saturday, but a water break was not the reason.

Instead, they were playing in the 11th Annual Mudd Volleyball Tournament for the Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation. The philanthropy raises funds to help brighten the lives of special needs children and their families at the Albuquerque hospital.

The medical center specializes in long-term care for children and adolescents in areas such as the orthopedic and rehabilitative needs related to spina bifida, cerebral palsy and brain injuries. This year's tournament turnout was impressive, generating more than \$225,000 for the foundation.

But you want the real dirt, don't you? Every year (June 18 this year), a 100-acre hay field south of the city turns into the Wimbledon of Wet, with 88 mud volleyball pits for the 528 teams that participate. And it really is the pits, dug out and flooded for maximum slippage, minimum footage, optimum hilarity.

All in all, the ECO Albuquerque team had a good go, tallying four wins and one loss. The score really didn't matter; it was all for fun and a very worthy cause. The other teams played dirty anyway.

The Sarbox Box

Sarbanes-Oxley Update:

This year's work for the continuing Sarbanes-Oxley requirements ("SOX") officially began with the summer launch of the SOX Steering Committee. The focus is on ensuring that items corrected ("remediated" in SOX-speak) in 2004 are working. The committee has also been setting action items and timelines — steering, as it were — for the 2005 testing and certification process.

Testing for some IT controls and for Monarch Utilities in Texas began at the end of summer. Testing in other field operations is starting this fall.

The process will not consume as much time or expense as last year. We'll be able to take advantage of the extensive work we did to formalize policies, procedures and document processes.

Why didn't we labor on Labor Day?

The first Monday of September signaled the end of summer, the third day of a three-day weekend most used for a last blast of parties, picnics and pools.

Labor Day's century-plus history must have more to say than just 'summer's over.'

But why is it called Labor Day when most people don't spend it laboring (except, of course, retail workers, medical workers, commercial drivers and transit operators, flight crews, broadcasters, police and fire, the military, clergy, restaurant workers, workaholics, fishermen...)?

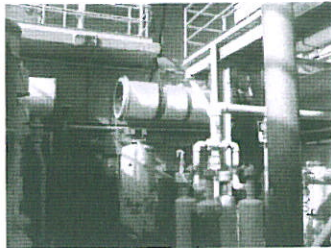
Its century-plus history must have more to say than just "summer's over."

The country really has the day off to commemorate the social and economic achievements of American workers. Proposed by labor unions, Labor Day was first celebrated in New York City in 1882 with a parade in honor of workers.

In the years following, more and more individual states celebrated the holiday until 1894, when the Congress made Labor Day—and honoring workers—a federal holiday.

ECO Santa Paula installs new unit for max mixer moxie

It was a dark and stormy night...” in March, when the ECO Resources dawn patrol, i.e., the staff that operates the city of Santa Paula, California’s wastewater facility, arrived at the plant before the sun rose. They’d come to remove and replace a tired old Fibreglas static mixer.



The good,the bad and the ugly.

The hour, one more familiar to owls, spies and OB nurses, was necessary because it was a low-flow period when most of the city would be sleeping.

A static mixer does exactly what its name says. It mixes—in this case, injected sodium hypochlorite for effluent disinfection. All of Santa Paula’s average 2.1 MGD flow must go through it before leaving the facility to

help prevent the growth of unwanted bacteria.

After the ECO crew saw its wear and corrosion, it was obvious their decision had been accurate. It was time for the 29-year-old mixer to go to mixer heaven—it had done about all the proper mixing it was going to do. A young whipper-snapper would be taking over now.

As in Santa Paula, wherever possible, ECO Resources makes a point of working with its clients to refurbish or replace their water infrastructure.

(Many thanks to ECO Santa Paula’s Gina Dorrington, regulatory compliance specialist, lab tech and operator, for being INFO’s embedded reporter in Santa Paula and sending this report and photos.)



Can you hear me now?*

* Southwest Water has two Employee Hotlines, each with its own special purpose.

Hotline #1: (800) 950-9097

For suggestions, questions, feedback, compliments, concerns, etc. Completely confidential, anonymous.

To leave your message: Call the number. When the automated voice asks for your ID number, use 918-1000. Leave your message just as you would for voice mail. Give your name *only* if you want someone to call you back to answer your questions or discuss the issue you called about. Spanish ok, too.

Hotline #2: (800) 630-0413, for financial or auditing issues only

Confidential, anonymous line for reporting your concerns about accounting or auditing matters you think are questionable. Staffed at all times by Message Pro, a professional call center that is not connected to Southwest Water.

To leave a message: Call the number and follow the operator’s instructions. Message Pro converts your message into text exactly as you said it and sends it to Southwest Water’s board of directors. *You will not be identified to anyone.*



P.S. Make a note of these two special ways you can have your suggestions, comments, concerns, compliments and questions about issues heard.

Swaps sky-based company for one based at ground level and below

Mike Abeles becomes SWWC director of financial planning

The financial group at Southwest Water’s Los Angeles office welcomes **Mike Abeles** to the position of director of financial planning and analysis. He reports to chief financial officer **Cheryl Clary**.

Mike’s role at Southwest Water? He’s responsible for annual and long-range financial planning for the company. Southwest’s senior management and Board of Directors will be relying on him to assist in the complex task of interpreting the company’s financial results and using them in planning and moving the

company forward. Making sure the company gets its piece of the pie is no piece of cake.

Financial planning and analysis is nothing new to Mike, a veteran of more than 20 years in the field. Before joining Southwest Water, he was director of planning and analysis at DeCrane Aircraft



Mike Abeles, Director of Financial Planning & Analysis

Holdings, an El Segundo, Calif., company that manufactures interiors for corporate jets.

Mike earned an MBA with emphasis in finance and marketing from California State University at Northridge. Bruins fans will appreciate that his undergraduate degree is from UCLA. He’s a native of Los Angeles, where he lives with his family. In his free time, Mike enjoys cycling, skiing and softball.

SWWC, employees step up to assist in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts—

Continued from first page

and clothing. Employees also came from ECO Resources in Texas and (SWWC subsidiary) Novus Utilities in Alabama to lend their electrical and mechanical expertise to repairing the disabled water and wastewater infrastructure along the Mississippi coast.

Only two days after the trailing edge of the storm had passed through, OpTech president **Bob Monette** and an OpTech crew were first “under the wire” to check on the company’s employees and the conditions of the facilities they operated. After a day or so “in country,” Bob wisely distributed tee shirts that said Emergency Response Team in big, bold letters. These gave many their first clean shirt in several days, created a sense of teamwork among several different agencies, and above all, helped prevent the clean-up crews from being mistaken for looters by armed shopkeepers and residents.

[See sidebar, page 5, for Bob’s account of his first few days in the disaster zone. Note that he wrote it more than a month ago; considerable progress has been made since then. It’s included for the way it captures the intensity of the emergency.]

All of Southwest Water was relieved when the employees in the disaster area were all confirmed to be safe. In fact, many in the most damaged locales still made it in to work, though most could not even get to their own homes and belongings.

In the weeks since Katrina steamrolled through the Gulf Coast, employees within the stricken region and those who came in from other locations have restored vital water and wastewater services to more than

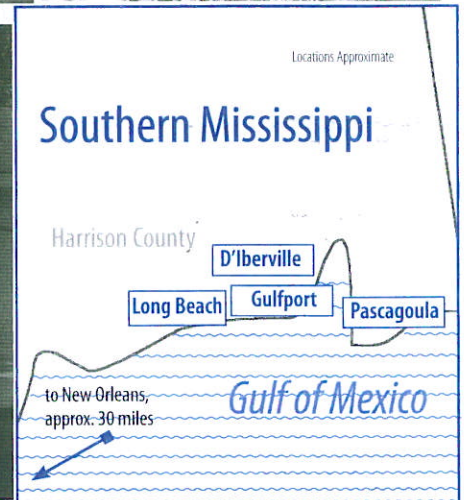


Generosity by the truckload—Joey Sifuentes of ECO Austin begins the trip to Mississippi with a truckload of relief supplies donated by his coworkers for the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.



250,000 residents, as well as rendered basic human aid and comfort.

Human Resources department representatives from Mississippi, Texas and California have assisted more than 300 employees receive aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA.



Southwest Water has donated \$25,000 to the Red Cross for general hurricane relief efforts.

The company also will match employee contributions to the charitable organization of their choice up to that amount. There’s a form to use for listing your personal contribution so Southwest Water can make the matching donation.

DISPATCH FROM THE FRONT...

BOB MONETTE IN MISSISSIPPI, 8/31/05

I have been on the Coast since Wednesday [8/31, two days after the storm passed through], just found a friend with charged laptop to check e-mails...

Devastation enormous, much worse than Camille in 1969. We did not have the tidal wave damage then, just rising water. Houses that just got 4 feet of water with Camille are GONE this time around... no structures within 200 feet of Hwy 90 survived the storm. Staff finding bodies daily. Fuel shortage, no cell phone towers for communication our biggest problems. We also need electricians and grab-all trucks. Tony and Pete have lined up some folks from ECO... and I hear that people will be coming today from Austin and Denver.

Barry Walker, Bobby Knesal and Derrel Wilson have led the charge for Public Works in Pascagoula, Gulfport and Long Beach. **Bobby Berry**, staff fighting to get facilities operating. Several employees at the Keegan Bayou WWTP barely made it to safety by hanging on to the handrails and eventually sitting on the roof at the plant during the storm. A 30-foot storm surge.

130 sewage pumping stations out in Gulfport, all 65 out in Long Beach... water pressure just recovering... the 500K-gallon elevated tank in Long Beach was just filled last night and put back into service. Since the storm went thru on Monday, **Herb, Bogie** and the guys in Long Beach have not been home trying to get water pressure back up. They have slept at the City Barn and not even checked on their own homes.

Greg Bishop, Ryan Monette, Paige Monette and I delivered 50 cases of water, generators, ice, clean underwear, tee shirts, socks, medical supplies, baby diapers, pet food and chain saws to Gulfport, Long Beach and Pascagoula on Wednesday. Will and Ryan have arranged with their wives' help for their churches in Atlanta to donate two tanker truckloads of drinking water to be sent down in the next few days.

... heading home this weekend to pick up some rental RV's to take back on Monday to give our people a place to sleep. No hotels available within 250 miles of the Coast. We slept in our trucks this week... Greg stayed with his mother, her house was flooded. Bobby Berry, other staff [e.g., South Miss. Reg. Mgr. John Jefcoat] and relatives have lost their homes.

"You loot, we shoot"

Looting still a problem, gunshots heard every night. People have posted signs in their front yards: "you loot, we shoot!" People beat on Ryan's truck and threw things at him trying to get him to stop as he drove thru Long Beach when they saw generators, water and gasoline in the truck bed.



"Pray that we be given the strength to live through others."

—U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt in his 1939 New Year's Eve radio message to the country

If you didn't receive a form or would like another, check with your human resources representative.

Update, Sept. 15:

PASCAGOULA

The reverse osmosis water plants are back on line. The water distribution system was pressurized and passed bacteriological testing. The city lifted its "boil water" requirement Sept. 9.



Of 34 sewage pumping stations, 33 are operating (97% of the system). Street and drainage crew members have cleared city roads so traffic can pass.

(Continued on page 7)

Water icon is gone, but will never be forgotten

Suburban Water Systems dedicates facility in memory of Reg Stone

He spent two-thirds of his life as an employee of Suburban Water Systems. On September 13, Suburban said thank you by immortalizing his name and image in a sign welcoming visitors to the **Reginald A. Stone Facility** in West Covina.

More than 170 of Reg's colleagues and friends attended the event at the facility where two new reservoirs hold up to three million gallons of water.

When Reg passed away, we didn't fill his position. The reason is simple: Reg can't be replaced.

"On this lot we have a new well that represents Reg's work with the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and the San Gabriel Valley Water Association," said **Paul Carver**, Suburban's vice president, engineering. "We have new water tanks, to be filled with treated groundwater, that are testaments to Reg's work in



Stone mugs handed out at the dedication can be used to have a cup of coffee in honor of a water industry legend.

making facility improvements during his career and the 20-plus years he worked with the EPA and other local agencies in completing an agreement



Judy Stone speaks to the audience Sept. 13, seemingly under the approving gaze of Reg Stone, in whose memory the water facility was being dedicated and renamed.

to clean up groundwater in the San Gabriel Valley. We couldn't think of a more fitting tribute than renaming this important facility after Reg."

Reg passed away Nov. 12, 2003, after a 43-year career with Suburban. He was due to retire only two months later.

From a career that began with meter reading in 1960, Reg ascended the ranks quickly, becoming senior vice president in the mid-80s. His list of accomplishments and affiliations was staggering. He was a member of the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, whose board he chaired for nine years. He served on the executive committees and the boards of directors of the Central Basin Association and the San Gabriel Valley Water Association.

In addition to membership in the American Water Works Association and the National Ground Water Association, he served on the boards of the Underground Service Alert of

Southern California and Water for People.

When it came to water, it was a wash—there were few things he couldn't do.

At the dedication, Southwest CEO and chairman of the board **Tony Garnier** shared with the audience the time he told Reg of a river rafting trip he planned to take.

"I told Reg that the river was running too low, and we wouldn't be able to take the trip. He said, 'Don't worry, I'll take care of it.' He never told me how he did it, but the river ran mighty high that day."

He was special indeed, and one of a kind, as **Dan Evans**, Suburban's chief administrative officer, explained: "When Reg passed away, his position went unfilled. The reason for that is simple. Reg can't be replaced. He was expert, not only



For the audience, including the Stone family in the first two rows, Southwest Water Company CEO and chairman **Tony Garnier** recalled anecdotes about the late Suburban senior vice president.

about Suburban, but the California water industry in general. He was politically astute, a voice of reason and a great friend. I'm proud to have known him, and I'm proud that today we're dedicating this facility in his honor."

SWWC meets Katrina, continued from page 5

GULFPORT

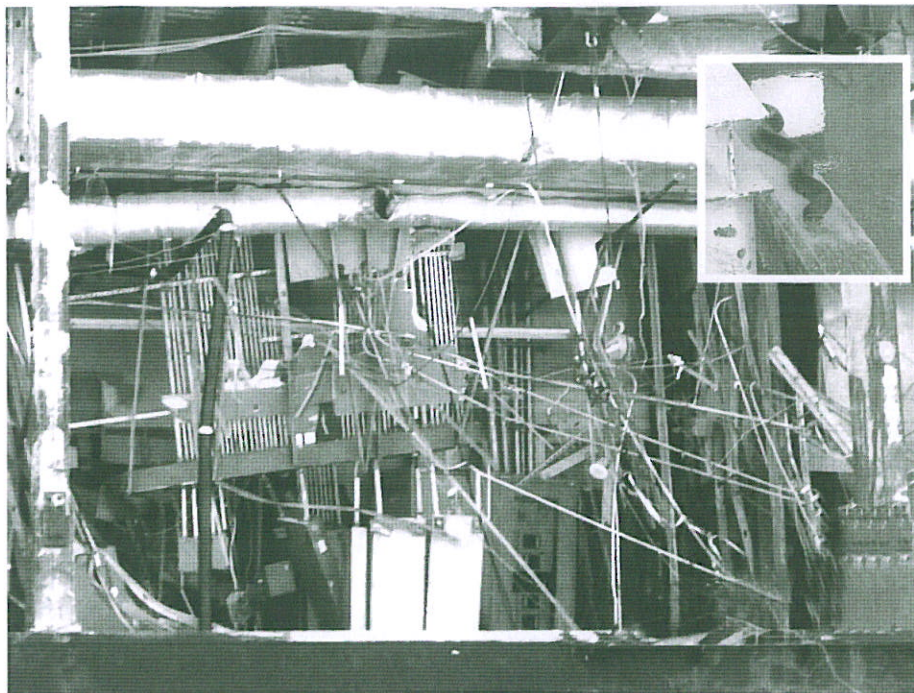
All water wells are back on line with disinfection systems working. The distribution system is pressurized and the "boil water" demand has been lifted. Of the 144 affected sewage pump stations, more than 130 are back in service. The remainder are being repaired. More than 92% of the city's wastewater is again flowing to treatment plants. OpTech street and drainage crews have cleared debris from streets to enable normal traffic flow.

LONG BEACH

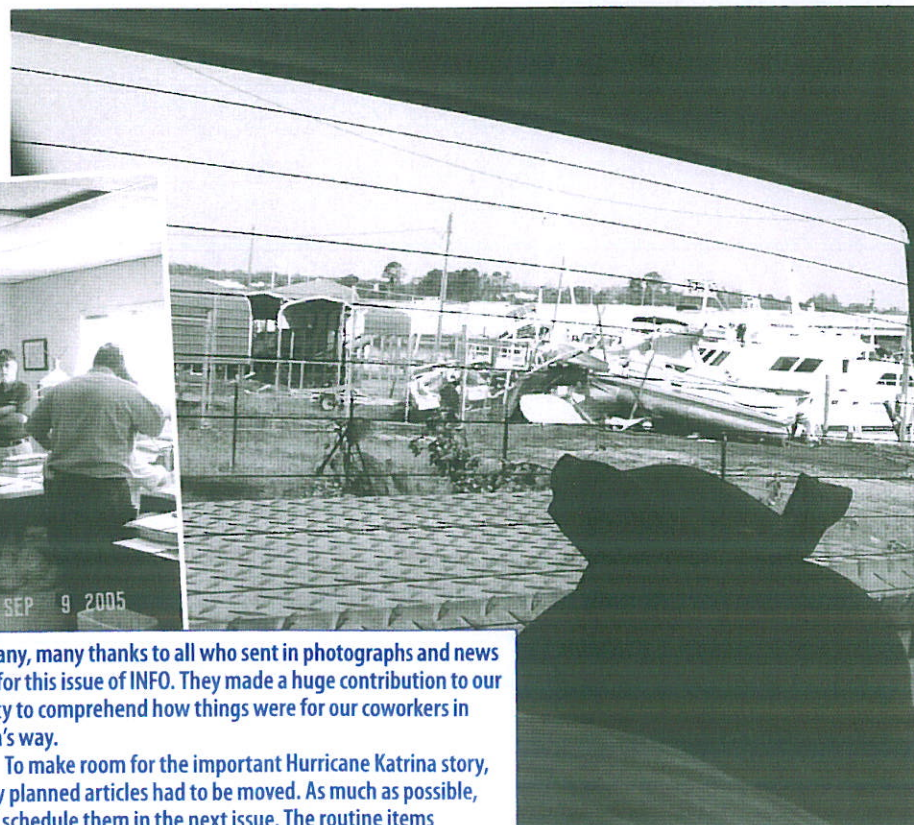
All water wells are operating, the system is pressurized, the "boil water" demand is over. All but one of the 70 sewage pump stations are back in service. Traffic is back to normal, thanks to the OpTech crews that cleared debris from the streets.

HARRISON COUNTY

All seven of the wastewater treatment facilities are back on-line and employees are working to restore complete treatment processes at all plants.

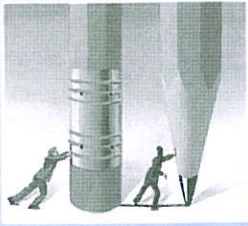


Inset, rescue workers found they had some competition for dry ground. Above, the condition returning water and wastewater crews were likely to find their facilities in. Below, devastation was everywhere.



Many, many thanks to all who sent in photographs and news for this issue of INFO. They made a huge contribution to our ability to comprehend how things were for our coworkers in harm's way.

To make room for the important Hurricane Katrina story, many planned articles had to be moved. As much as possible, we'll schedule them in the next issue. The routine items — Milestones, H2O Quiz, etc. — will be back next time.



info

is published for the employees of the Southwest Water group of companies.

Got news?

Oh yes you do!



info seeks info:

The **info** newsletter relies on information **you** send in for most of its articles about each subsidiary.

Please send us your news about:

- ◆ new contracts or renewals,
- ◆ commendations, awards, positive letters from customers,
- ◆ innovative solutions (technical and non-technical) that might be helpful to other facilities,
- ◆ employee achievements,
- ◆ company events,
- ◆ community outreach programs, and occasionally,
- ◆ unique employee interests.

Getting news to the newsletter:

Send as much basic information as possible: the news, names, job titles, location, dates. The **info** staff will write the article and call with any questions.

Photographs and other images (e.g., copy of an award letter, newspaper clip) are especially helpful.

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ECO Resources western region gets 10 more years in Taft federal prison, city contract renewals

Knowing a good thing when they see it, the Taft (California) City Council has renewed its ECO Resources contract for another 10 years. ECO has provided operations and maintenance services for the Taft and the Taft Federal Prison wastewater treatment facilities owned by the city since 1995.

"Our staff has worked hard to provide excellent service to the city and each has been instrumental in obtaining the 10-year contract renewal," said **James Hampton**, Taft facility manager, with lead operator **Donnie Harlan** and operator **Freddie Ferguson** concurring.

For Taft, ECO operates a 1.5 MGD aerated pond treatment process and a 0.46 MGD extended aeration treatment plant owned by the city to treat the wastewater from a federal prison facility located about six miles south. The prison plant effluent is discharged to an ephemeral creek under a special permit.

The city itself will celebrate its 95th birthday in October. At first a home only for its native jackrabbits and rattlesnakes, the discovery of oil saw the city grow within three years of its birth to the third largest hub in railway freight shipments in the state of California, behind Los Angeles and San Francisco. Taft grew like its earliest residents, the rabbits, to supply the needs of an oil industry in the area that drills more than 3,000 new oil wells each year and works on thousands more.



During World War II, the Air Force located a pilot training base at Taft. Gardner Field gave the country many great pilots, in-



Masters of the craft in Taft **Donnie Harlan**, **James Hampton** and **Freddie Ferguson** are pumped up about the vote of confidence ECO Resources received from the California oil city in the form of a 10-year contract renewal.

cluding Chuck Yeager, Tom Harmon (father of the actor Mark Harmon) and fighter ace Richard Bong.

Ironically, the oil that created Taft's early growth has also held it back, as the surrounding oil leases have prevented it from expanding. Gradually, though, the leases are sold off and replaced by housing development. Planning already includes 2,000 to 3,000 homes.

And with growth and development comes the need for wastewater operation and maintenance services, which James Hampton and his ECO Resources crew will be providing for another 10 years, thanks to the City of Taft's acknowledgement of their hard work.

*Speaking of hard work, many thanks to Taft facility manager **James Hampton** for providing this article and photograph.*