

2021 Report to the Community

THE FUTURE IS
NOW



Columbus
Water
Works

*Serving our Community
Protecting the Environment*



Steve Davis



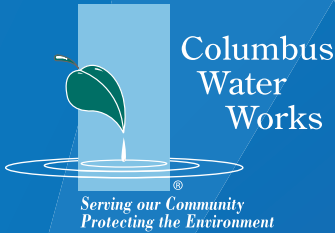
Reynolds Bickerstaff

The Future is Now. At Columbus Water Works (CWW), providing clean, safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater services to the community is our top priority. We rely on technological advances to improve our treatment techniques, delivery processes and more. CWW has a long-standing history of using technology to increase efficiency, ensure high-quality services and ensure the security of your drinking water supply.

In the 1990s, CWW was one of the first water utilities to automate its treatment plants. We also completed a state-of-the-art combined sewer treatment facility to meet new State regulations for combined sanitary and stormwater systems, which led to significant improvements in the Chattahoochee River water quality. In the 2000s, CWW added additional real-time water quality monitors at the water treatment plant improving the safety of our drinking water. This improvement resulted in CWW being recognized with the Partnership for Safe Drinking Water Award. Also during the 2000s, CWW digitalized our asset mapping systems making our infrastructure information available across the organization. Our culture of innovation continued into the 2010s with the utilization of sonar technology locating underground leaks and the installation of remote read water meters.

This past year, our organization upgraded several areas of our operations to improve our customer service, operational efficiency and environmental protection efforts. We are excited to share with you a few of these upgrades that are outlined in this year's Annual Report to the Community.

We invite you to see for yourself how technology can help you; simply visit cwwga.org and register for our online payment system. You will be able to view detailed account and usage information, sign up for paperless billing and autopay or make a one-time payment right from your cell phone. Will you join us and embrace the future?



Steve Davis
President

Reynolds Bickerstaff
Chairman of the Board



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

(L-R): Reynolds Bickerstaff, Chair; Sanders Griffith, Vice Chair; Mayor Skip Henderson; Rodney Close and Becky Rumer.



EXECUTIVE TEAM

(L-R): Gwen Ruff, SVP, Administration and Community Outreach; Steve Davis, President; Billy Cobb, Jr., Executive Vice-President; John Peebles, SVP, Water Resource Operations; Vic Burchfield, SVP, Information, Security, Environmental and Meter Services; Alex Hinton, SVP, Financial Services.

Keeping Our River Clean



2021 marked the 25th anniversary of the Columbus community and Columbus Water Works coming together to make a significant commitment to the restoration of our river that would forever change our quality of life.

Together we raised more than \$100 million in funding for the construction of our nationally recognized Combined Sewer Treatment System (CSS). This innovative technology, which won a National First Place Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has resulted in an 800-fold improvement in the river water quality.

Today this brilliantly engineered underground infrastructure is supporting a revitalized river life that is attracting thousands of visitors to our city each year.



Environmental Services

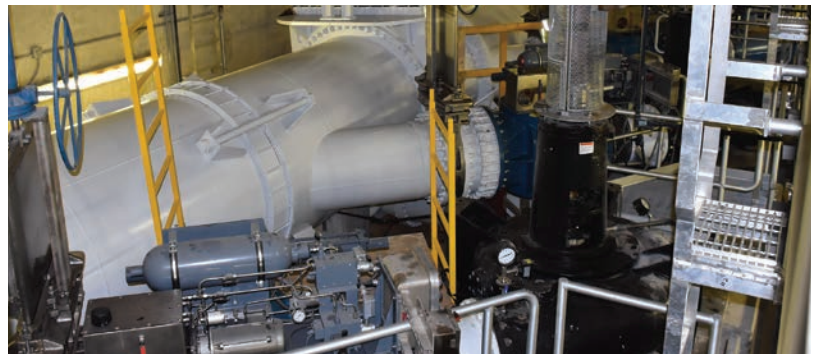
One of the Environmental Services department's primary responsibilities is monitoring the watershed, our source water quality and the health of our environment. In support of this work, we are focusing on improving our understanding and management of algae blooms. CWW has developed special treatment processes to prevent taste and odor issues in our drinking water that result from algae blooms in the environment.

Over the past year, we partnered with Auburn University to study the different species and develop a predictive model to identify when an algae bloom is happening. In addition to the study, CWW has also enhanced the surveillance of algae blooms with the use of an upgraded YSI EXO device that uses state-of-the-art sonde technology to measure blue-green algae cells.

CWW is also identifying photic zones that identify how deep in the water algae will bloom. Pictured left is a High Potential Liquid Chromatograph HPLC machine that measures the amount of *Chlorophyll a* in the source water.

South Columbus Water Resources Facility

The wastewater treatment plant has been undergoing construction for nearly two years as upgrades and repairs are being made throughout the plant. One of the most notable improvements in 2021 was the installation of three new influent pumps. These pumps are more efficient, treating more wastewater with less cost. In fact, we are seeing nearly 50% improvement in pump efficiency, which is reducing the cost of operating the plant.



Customer Information System Implementation & Operational Changes

A customer information system (CIS) acts as a hub or “brain” of an organization and is responsible for managing all customer account data, service details, service history and more. The previous CIS system that housed all of CWW’s data was in service more than 27 years and became outdated and cumbersome. It was no longer able to provide the advanced functionality requested by customers and the technical support for the system would not be available much longer.

The process of replacing the system was extremely complex, requiring every customer-facing process of the organization to be outlined, reviewed and adjusted before setting up the new CIS Infinity system. Over 130 different processes were mapped out and evaluated as a result of the transition. Two primary teams worked on the implementation to ensure that the integration process ran smoothly. Together these employees ensured that all customer data was accurate and

properly organized in the new system, while a separate team worked directly with departments to provide training and assistance with the necessary operational changes in the departments directly impacted by the new CIS system. Several other team members worked to provide support along the way and helped to test and address errors before implementation.



CIS System Manages and Connects the following areas of the organization:

Customer Information

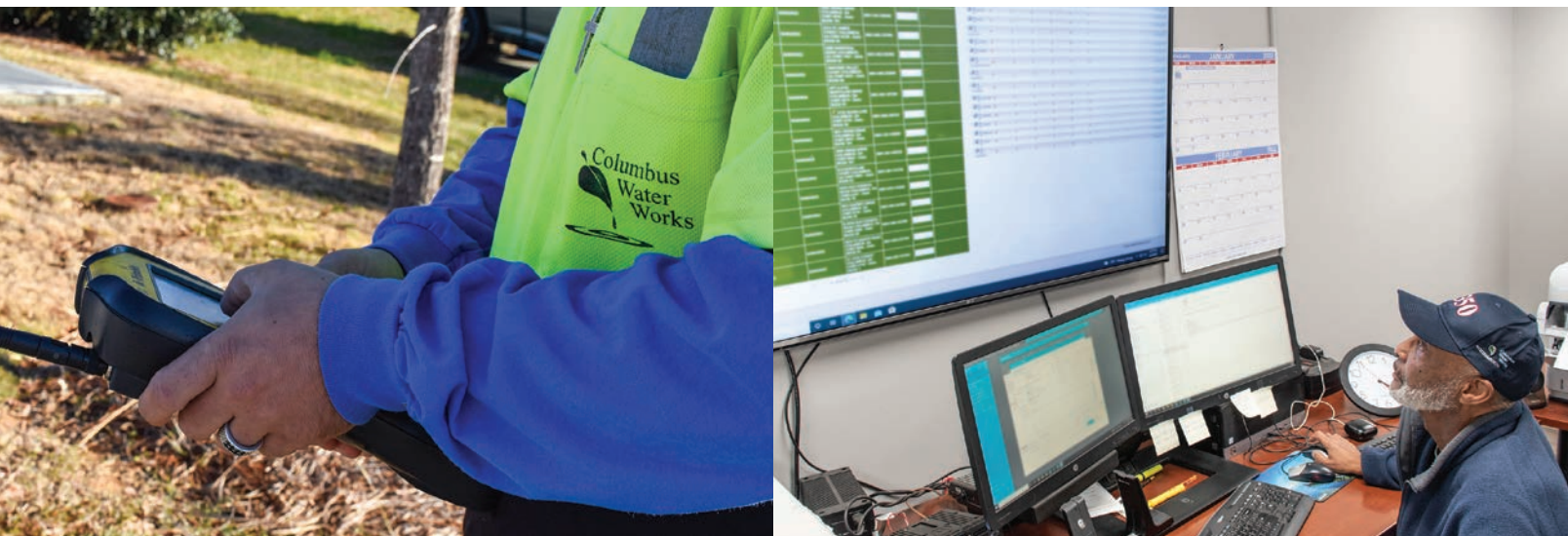
Meter Information

Connection Details
*(water/
wastewater)*

Service and Payment
History, Usage
and Billing

Service Requests,
Orders and
Status

Water Quality
Management



WHY THE SWITCH? With technology improving daily, we wanted to be sure our customers had the most sophisticated, up-to-date software available, specifically designed for utility customers. Our new technology minimizes the risk of a crash, helps keep your personal information confidential and provides an easy-to-use platform for all of our water customers.

- 💧 **Automation:** Tasks can be created for routine events that will automatically execute an action, limiting the manual processing. For example, if unusually high water consumption is detected, the system can automatically create a service order to have the meter reread by a technician.
- 💧 **Customer Number & Account Number:** A Customer Number is assigned to a customer name and remains the same to maintain historical data. An Account Number is assigned to a location and is unique to each service address. It is important to have both numbers to ensure payments are not credited to an outdated address or the wrong property, especially if multiple properties are owned.
- 💧 **Email Notifications:** The new system provides email notifications to customers when their e-Bill is available and confirms requests for other services.
- 💧 **Payment Options:** Customers have access to multiple payment options including e-Bills, online quick pay, Pay-by-Phone and AutoPay.

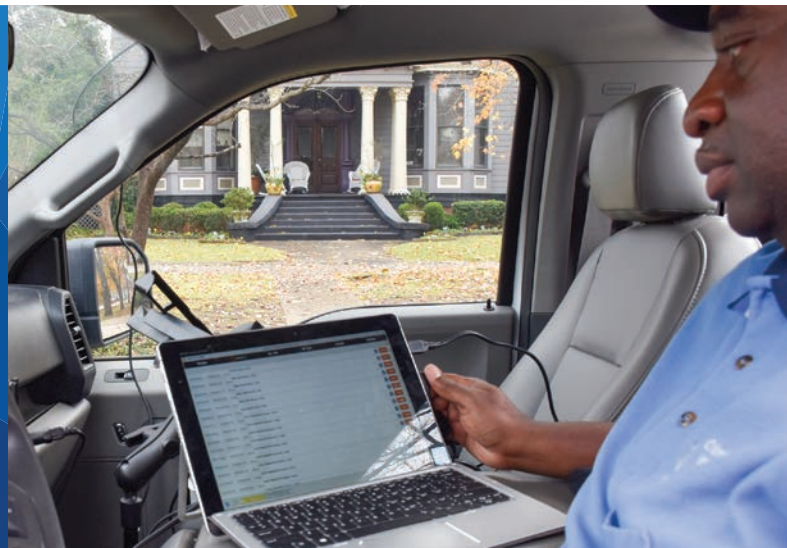


- 💧 **E-Billing:** The new system allows users to opt in to receive bills electronically and avoid receiving a paper bill. The electronic bill is available through the online customer portal, known as Link in a PDF format. Now customers may access real-time information on the account(s), opt in/out of paperless billing, sign up for autopay and print billing history.
- 💧 **Mobile Technology:** CWW Field Technicians have tablet computers that allow them to access information about their work orders and to update the status, in real-time, making field response times more efficient.
- 💧 **Phone Notifications:** Customers will receive a courtesy call from our new automated telephone calling system that notifies them of past due amounts.



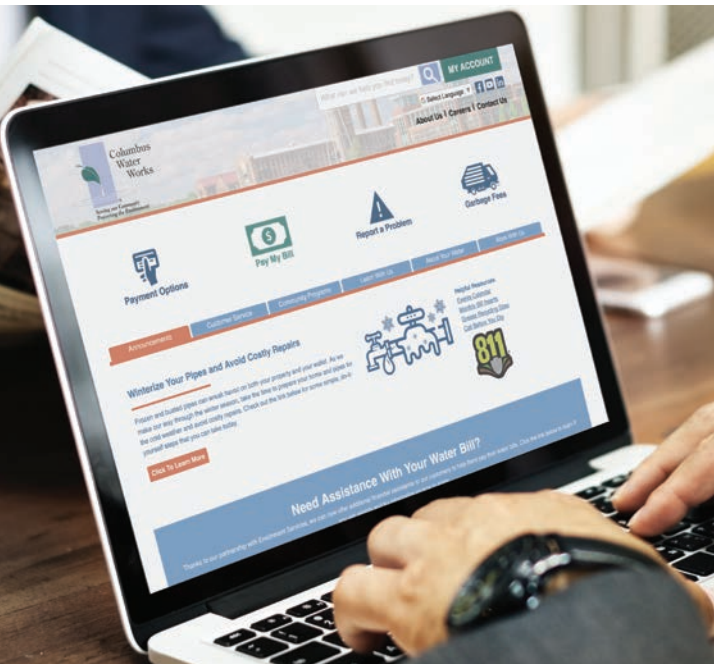
- ▶ Never miss a payment
- ▶ No more late fees
- ▶ Monthly payment reminders by email or text
- ▶ Save on postage
- ▶ Reduce paper waste
- ▶ Get your bill directly to your email inbox
- ▶ Make payments from anywhere
- ▶ Access past billing statements
- ▶ Return to receiving paper bills at any time

This implementation was full of challenges for both our staff and customers. During the week of launching the new system, our customer service team was impacted by COVID-19 and relied on the support of staff members throughout the company to provide vital customer support. Our organization came together to help each other during this unexpected challenge and showed a real dedication to serving this community. We are very thankful to our customers for being patient and understanding during this transition and look forward to being able to provide more upgrades in the future.



Community Partnership & Engagement

In October 2021, Columbus Water Works (CWW) was presented with the Utility of the Future Award in the activity area of Community Partnership and Engagement. The Utility of the Future program is designed to engage like-minded utilities working toward industry advancements and establishing resilient, sustainable and livable communities. It is a great honor to be recognized among other outstanding utilities in this activity area and can be attributed to one of our organization's core values: *Being a trusted community partner.*



New Customer-Focused Website

CWW's online presence was greatly improved with the launch of our new external website. With an innovative site organized with our customers in mind, information is now easier than ever to find with updated quick links, and the most searched for content is easily accessed from our homepage. Along with an updated look and feel, the new site also includes exciting new features such as full mobile compatibility and Google translate integration. CWW now has the perfect platform to continue serving and educating our customers for many years to come.

Implementation of ADP Applications FOR BOTH PAYROLL PROCESSING & RECRUITMENT

Over the past year, CWW has implemented several technology upgrades to our operational systems. Among these changes was the implementation of ADP Workforce Now. ADP Workforce Now includes modules for Payroll, Human Resources Management, Benefits and Talent. By transitioning to ADP's Workforce Now we created a seamless flow between recruitment, hiring and payroll management. In addition, employees are now able to manage their tax withholdings and deposit information on their own through a self-service portal. CWW continues to review and make technology improvements to improve efficiency.



CONDENSED STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION

For FY ended June 25,	2020	2021	\$ Change	% Change
Operating Revenues				
Water Sales	\$27,853,864	\$28,187,697	\$351,833	1.26%
Sewer Charges	28,145,593	28,679,338	553,745	1.90%
Fort Benning Water and Sewer Charges	8,289,251	8,497,371	208,120	2.51%
Fort Benning CM100 O&M Services	6,830,562	7,105,164	274,602	4.02%
Tapping, CSO Fees and Miscellaneous Charges	3,982,382	3,453,691	(528,691)	-13.28%
Total Operating Revenue	75,083,652	75,923,261	839,609	1.12%
Total Operating Expenses	71,234,490	77,766,591	6,532,101	9.17%
Operating Income	3,849,162	(1,843,330)	(5,692,492)	-147.89%
Total Non-Operating Revenue (expenses)	(5,001,262)	(1,890,041)	3,111,221	-62.21%
Loss Before Capital Grants and Contributions	(1,152,100)	(3,733,371)	(2,581,271)	-224.05%
Capital Grants and Contributions	5,084,330	15,433,471	10,349,141	203.55%
Change in Net Position	3,932,230	11,700,100	7,767,870	197.54%
Net Position at Beginning of Year	418,483,964	422,416,194	3,932,230	0.94%
Ending Net Position	\$422,416,194	\$434,116,294	\$11,700,100	2.77%

Financial Summary

The Columbus Water Works financial condition remained strong at year end with reliable plants and systems to meet demands. A solid liquidity position, conservative budgeting and programmed annual rate increases continue. Projected rate increases over the next five years are projected to be below the national average. Columbus Water Works maintains one of the lowest rates among Southeast cities.

Total combined Columbus and Fort Benning operating revenues were \$75.92 million, an increase from Fiscal Year 2020 of \$800,000. Columbus Water Works continued to waive delinquent fees and postponed the 2021 rate increase by a quarter in an effort to ensure the financial stability of our customers during the pandemic.

Operating expenses before depreciation and amortization increased by \$4.7 million compared to Fiscal Year 2020. For the years ended June 25, 2021 and 2020, Columbus Water Works recognized Other Post-employment Benefits expense of \$2,999,825 and \$947,410 respectively. Operating revenue for the year was a loss of \$1.8 million as compared to income of 3.5 million for Fiscal Year 2020. This amount includes activities related to Fort Benning contractual operations.

Total Assets at year-end were \$659 million. Reserves were maintained within established goals of 90 to 120 days for operational and coverage of capital improvements/depreciation for capital reserves.

The 2021 Report to the Community is a condensed version of what may be found in our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which is located on our website at cwwga.org.

CONDENSED STATEMENTS OF NET POSITION

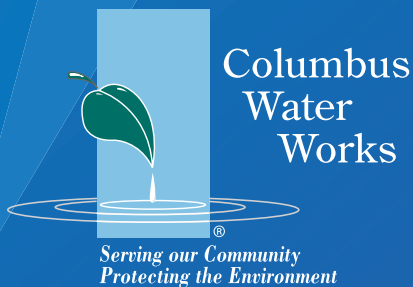
FISCAL YEAR 2020 TO 2021 COMPARISON

For FY ended June 25,	2020	2021	\$ Change	% Change
ASSETS				
Current Assets And Other Assets	\$96,443,974	\$102,747,400	\$6,303,426	6.54%
Capital Assets	562,500,722	556,922,821	(5,577,901)	-0.99%
TOTAL ASSETS	658,944,696	659,670,221	725,525	0.11%
DEFERRED OUTFLOWS				
Deferred amount of bond refunding	3,954,807	4,047,100	92,293	2.33%
Deferred amount from pensions and post retirement benefits	8,299,657	20,391,077	12,091,420	145.69%
TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS	12,254,464	24,438,177	12,183,713	99.42%
LIABILITIES				
Other Liabilities	22,315,312	21,305,426	(1,009,886)	-4.53%
Long-Term Liabilities	218,328,357	221,743,080	3,414,723	1.56%
TOTAL LIABILITIES	240,643,669	243,048,506	2,404,837	1.00%
DEFERRED INFLOWS				
Deferred from post retirement benefits and pension plan investments	8,139,297	6,943,598	(1,195,699)	-14.69%
NET POSITION				
Net Investments In Capital Assets	378,885,562	387,366,672	8,481,110	2.24%
Restricted For Capital Activities and Debt Service	28,354,466	35,984,375	7,629,909	26.91%
Unrestricted	15,176,166	10,765,247	(4,410,919)	-29.06%
TOTAL NET POSITION	\$422,416,194	\$434,116,294	\$11,700,100	2.77%

Culture of Innovation Earns Recognition

In the 1990s, Columbus Water Works created a culture of innovation and embraced the use of technological advancements to transform our operations to better serve the Chattahoochee Valley. It is due in part to this focus that CWW achieved the EPA 20-Year Directors Level Certificate with the Partnership for Safe Drinking Water! There are only 150 water utilities out of approximately 51,000 community water utilities in the U.S. that have earned this recognition.

The Partnership for Safe Water is a voluntary utility program created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American Water Works Association (AWWA) and other industry organizations focused on improving the quality and safety of the drinking water of local communities by optimizing operations. One of CWW's most notable improvements was the addition of real-time source water monitoring devices that allows for early detection of possibly harmful pollutants. Being able to identify and solve potential issues early allows us to continue to protect and provide the community with the cleanest and safest drinking water possible.



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Our Purpose

We protect our neighbors by providing essential water—the fuel of life.

Our Vision

Columbus Water Works is recognized by our customers and employees as providing the most caring experiences.

Our Strategic Initiatives

- Customer Experience
- Employee Experience
- Environmental Focus

Our Core Values

Wow Customers by listening, caring and responding to their concerns and ideas.

Act with Integrity by being honest and sincere in everything we do.

Trusted Community Partner by being engaged to improve the quality of life.

Energize Employees by celebrating, encouraging, developing and rewarding their diverse capabilities and contributions.

Resource Protection by being an innovative leader in watershed management, protection and education.