



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**FROM:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**DATE:** March 12, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** **General Manager's Report**

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Attached please find the written reports from the Management team including the Operations Report (*Attachment A*), the Customer Services Report (*Attachment B*), the Water Resource and the Annexation Activity Report (*Attachment C*), the Web Usage Report (*Attachment D*), and two Tell the Board submissions (*Attachment E*).

Also included in your agenda packet are press clippings from January 10, 2013 through March 13, 2013.



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** Scott Estes, Director of Engineering  
**BY:** Bill Hauck, Sr. Water Supply Coordinator  
**DATE:** March 11, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** Operations Report for March 2013 Board Meeting

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### (A) Water Supply

**Truckee River Flows** - Truckee River flows at the CA/NV state line are 450 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the moment. This is within the normal flow range for this time of the year. River flows will continue to hold steady until sometime later this month or in April when the springtime snowmelt runoff season begins. Once the runoff period begins Truckee River flows will become much higher with periods of unpredictable daily and weekly swings.

**Reservoir Storage** - Upstream reservoir storage is still just about half full right now. The elevation of Lake Tahoe is 6225.89 feet which equates to a storage volume of 351,400 acre-feet (AF) or 47% of maximum storage capacity. Boca Reservoir has approximately 15,900 acre-feet of water in storage at the moment. It is 39% of its maximum capacity. Combined, Floriston Rate water storage is approximately 367,300 AF or 47% of maximum storage capacity. Donner Lake is down to its typical wintertime operating elevation. Independence Lake is also down to its typical wintertime operating elevation. It currently has 14,500 AF in storage which is approximately 83% of its maximum storage capacity (17,500 AF). Prosser Reservoir's storage is approximately 9,200 AF which is 31% of its maximum storage capacity. Stampede Reservoir's storage is currently at 168,000 AF which is 74% of its maximum capacity.

**Snowpack** - Snowpack conditions have changed quite a bit since the beginning of the year where both the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River Basins were close to 200% of normal. January was an exceptionally dry month, followed by February which was even dryer. Together, January and February 2013 were the two driest ever recorded at Tahoe City with just 0.76" of measurable precipitation during that two month stretch. It was also the driest January and February ever recorded by the National Weather Service (NWS) in Reno. Without the major winter storms the Sierra Nevada typically receives over that two month period, snowpack conditions deteriorated accordingly. Snowpack in the Lake Tahoe Basin is currently 69% of average (as of March 11, 2013) and snowpack in the Truckee River Basin is 77% of average. Last year on this same date snowpack conditions in the Sierra Nevada range were much worse, at about 40% of average between both the Lake Tahoe and Truckee basins.

**Outlook** - The exceptionally bright start to the 2013 water year has completely slipped away from us. Now, instead of possibly experiencing a banner water year which could have replenished our upstream reservoirs (due to the dry 2012 water year), we are at this point wondering just how much below average the region's snowpack will really end up, and just how low the elevation of Lake Tahoe will be by the end of the year. Despite the very real prospect of facing consecutive below average snowpack and below to well below average spring runoff, normal Truckee River flows are anticipated for the rest of the year. Upstream reservoir storage on the Truckee River is on solid footing (at 47% of capacity) and will once again prove to be invaluable. After the spring runoff subsides the water stored in Lake Tahoe and Boca reservoirs will be used to provide river flows for the remainder of the year. There is enough upstream carry-over water in storage to ensure that we will have normal Truckee River flows through 2013. Note that a few really good winter storms over the next several weeks would really help to improve our mountain snowpack conditions and spring runoff projections, bringing us closer to normal, but that remains to be seen. NOAA models are currently showing the possibility of some big winter storms reaching the Sierra in the second half of March.

### **(B) Water Production**

**Demand** - Water demands averaged 32 MGD last week reflecting average conditions for this time of year. The Chalk Bluff Treatment plant fed by the Orr Ditch Pumping Station is the sole source of supply at the moment meeting all of TMWA's customer demand (100% surface water). TMWA continues to recharge at a number of key well sites throughout the Truckee Meadows and Lemmon Valley area. Water demands are roughly about the same as they were this same time last year.

### **(C) Hydro Production**

**Generation** - Average Truckee River flows at Farad were 425 cubic feet per second (cfs) during the month of February. A total of 4,076 MW hours were generated. This yielded combined hydropower revenues from the three power plants of \$280,345 for the month or an average of \$10,012/day. Generation at the Washoe plant averaged \$2,432/day. Generation at the Verdi plant averaged \$3,438/day, and the Fleish plant averaged \$4,143/day. The long range generation outlook remains very good as we anticipate having full Truckee River flows through 2013.



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** Kim Mazeres, Customer Relations Director  
**DATE:** March 11, 2012  
**SUBJECT:** **Customer Service Report**

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The following is a summary of Customer Service activity since the January Board meeting.

### **Ombudsman**

There were seven (7) calls to the Ombudsman in January and February. They included: a customer inquiring about a property that was in Washoe County's service area; two calls from a customer complaining about a high bill in November; a customer who was angry over being charged a deposit; a customer who would like his credit union to be able to send their online payments to TMWA electronically; a customer who had been shut-off-for-non-payment after not paying us for over three months and not keeping four different promises to pay; and, a customer who was wondering why our payments are processed out-of-state. Customers were satisfied with the answers provided, except for the customer with a high bill (who said he was going to follow-up with Andy Gebhardt concerning the size of the credit adjustment we gave to him, but has yet to do so), the customer who was angry about the deposit (as he indicated he would address his concerns in the office, but never did so), and the customer who was shut-off-for-non-payment (as she was simply told she needed to pay her bill).

### **Communications**

Since the January Board meeting there were media articles and stories on: water supply and the lack of winter storms; water quality in the Truckee River and how TMWA treats for drinking water; recruitment for members for the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC); freezing temperatures and their impact on water pipes; cloud seeding; and, our selection of a new Financial software system.

Two (2) presentations were given since the last Board meeting, including: one on water conservation to the Environmental class at Sparks High School; and one on TMWA's water system and using water responsibly to a troop of 10 Brownies.

Three (3) tours of the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant were given since the last Board meeting to: over 50 people from UNR's Civil and Environmental Engineering program,

approximately 30 students from Reno High's Advance Placement Environmental Science class, and 6 Broadbent employees (an environmental, water resources, and civil engineering firm). Employees Will Raymond, Chris Struffert and Scott Benedict participated in Research and Development Interview Day at Dilworth STEM Academy.

**Customer Calls – January & February**

- 18,494 phone calls handled
- Average handling time of 4 minutes, 8 seconds a call
- Average speed of answer – 25 seconds

**Billing – January & February**

- 188,595 bills issued
- 440 (.2%) corrected bills

**Service Orders – January & February**

- 11,603 service orders taken
- 5,636 (49%) move-ins / move-outs
- 1,471 (13%) cut-out-for-non-payment and cut-in after receiving payments, including deposits and checks for tamper
- 1,031 (9%) zero consumption meter checks
- 941 (8%) new meter sets and meter/register/ERT exchanges and equipment checks
- 622 (5%) re-read meters
- 503 (4%) problems / emergencies, including cut-out for customer repairs, dirty water, no water, leaks, pressure complaints, safety issues, installing water meter blankets, etc.
- 294 (3%) various collection actions, including hanging 48-hour notices for elderly and disabled customers, returned mail and/or unpaid deposits, and handling of additional deposits
- 211 (2%) meter retrofit, including billing and non-billing meter sets, requests to go to the metered rate and mandatory conversions to the metered rate for new tenants
- 190 (2%) high-bill complaints / audit and water usage review requests

**Remittance – January & February**

- 60,391 mail-in payments
- 33,438 electronically via Check-Free
- 26,416 payments via RapidPay (EFT)
- 18,242 one-time bank account payments
- 9,299 store payments
- 7,316 payments via drop box or at front desk
- 3,494 credit card payments
- As of January, TMWA payments are being processed in Prescott, Arizona rather than San Antonio, Texas, due to a change in remittance vendors initiated by our outsourced provider, Vertex Business Services. Customers began seeing this change of address on their bills in

March. Due to problems with the postal service forwarding mail improperly, some customers experienced delays in posting their payments – all customers who contacted us about these delays were satisfied with the explanation and the waiving of any late charges.

**Collections – January & February**

- 37,303 accounts received a late charge
- Mailed 15,207 10-day delinquent notices, 8.1% of accounts
- Mailed 2,651 48-hour delinquent notices, 1.4% of accounts
- 455 accounts eligible for disconnect
- 375 accounts actually disconnected (includes accounts re-cut out because of bouncing a check to be reconnected from previous disconnection for non-payment)
- 0.25% write-off to revenue

**New business / New Construction – January & February**

- 45 active jobs currently in process
- Nearly \$139,500 in new business fees/facility charges collected

**Meter Statistics – Fiscal Year to Date (thru February)**

- 6 meter retrofits completed
- 315 meter exchanges completed
- 227 new business meter sets completed
- 93,650 total meters installed (billing and non-billing)
- 5,046 total non-billing meters currently installed
- 280 meters yet to be installed on flat-rate accounts

## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** John Erwin, Dir. Natural Resources  
**DATE:** 11 March 2013  
**SUBJECT:** Report Water Resource and Annexation Activity

### RULE 7

Rule 7 water resource purchases and will-serve commitment sales against purchased water resources through this reporting period:

Beginning Balance		6,124.18 AF
Purchases of water rights	0.00 AF	
Refunds	0.00 AF	
Sales	2.32 AF	
Adjustment <sup>1</sup>	711.73 AF	
Ending Balance		6,833.59 AF
Price per acre foot at report date:		\$8,740

### ANNEXATIONS

No annexations to report.

<sup>1</sup> Beginning Spring 2005, the price of water rights escalated from about \$5,000/acre foot to over \$30,000/acre foot by year-end. At its May 2005 meeting, the Board discussed several ideas in response to the rapidly changing price of water rights. Besides directing staff to continue to actively purchase water rights for sale of will-serve commitments, staff worked to complete filings with the State Engineer applications to perfect water rights previously dedicated to the utility but not permitted due to errors in ownership (title), use, or yield problems before the rights would be available for commitment. Similar adjustments to Rule 7 occurred in 2009, 2010 and 2011 as a result of perfecting the faulty surface water rights deeds or permits; the current adjustment results from perfecting some surface (207.72 af) and other groundwater (504.01 af) resources held by TMWA.

## STAFF REPORT – Web & Social Media

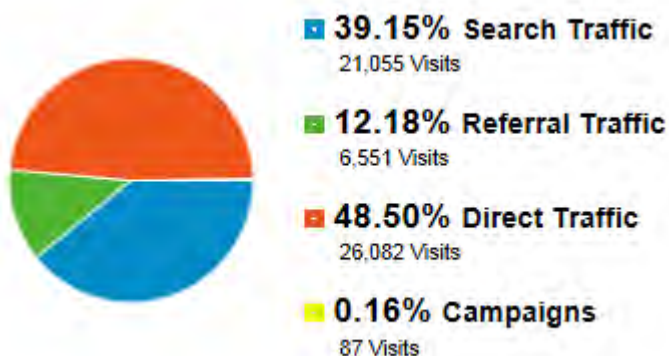
**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** Robert Charpentier  
**DATE:** March 20, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** March 2013 Web Report-www.tmwa.com and additional TMWA websites

### tmwa.com — January-February, 2013 Website Overview

In the first two months of 2013, the TMWA website has seen a significant increase in traffic over the same period in 2012. Visitor numbers have jumped 19.3% — from 45,064 to 53,777. Of this number, 57% were returning visitors and 43% came to tmwa.com for the first time ever. The average visit duration increased 55%, from 01:21 to 02:06. These numbers are very strong but it remains to be seen if they reflect a seasonal bump that may flatten out as the year progresses.

Though the total number of pages visited on tmwa.com dropped significantly, -15%, the bounce rate fell by nearly 68% and the average time spent on a page increased by 55%. These results indicate a significant improvement in tmwa.com's effectiveness in both directing users to needed content and retaining their interest.

**Traffic to tmwa.com is coming from the following sources:**



### **Top Content for Jan-Feb 2013 Period**

The most visited pages on tmwa.com (listed below) are similar to those on many corporate and organizational websites; 'home,' 'employment' and 'contact us' pages nearly always rank at the top. An ongoing review of session paths and exit pages will be conducted to identify opportunities to improve the navigation, structure and content on the tmwa.com site.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Pageviews</b>	<b>%Pageviews</b>
1.....	Homepage .....	44,349.....	50.88%
2.....	Employment.....	6,106.....	7.01%
3.....	Contact Us.....	5,562.....	6.38%
4.....	Residential/Payment Options.....	4,077.....	4.68%
5.....	Doing Business With TMWA.....	3,035.....	3.48%

### **Website Update and Consolidation Project**

In 2013, work on an updated tmwa.com website will commence. Currently, content management system (CMS) options are being explored. The CMS is the foundational technology upon which a website is built. TMWA has partnered with Noble Studios (Web Design and Development Company) for a Discovery Project that fosters collaborative decision making while trying to consolidate the numerous websites TMWA manages. This Discovery was completed in August of 2012. Its findings contain feedback from both internal and external stakeholders as well as a complete analysis of tmwa.com, its constituent sites. This information will be used during planning for, and production of, the new site.

### **Jan-Feb 2013, Web & Social Media Report**

The monthly web Board reports focus on traffic and usage trends at [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com); however, there are several other TMWA-managed websites that are now tracked and reported. Social media has continued to gain ground and is incorporated within several of the additional websites.

#### **TMWA Social Media**



Currently TMWA has **678 Twitter followers** and **242 Facebook fans**. There is a current Twitter feed on the *tmwa.com* homepage that is updated daily to reflect current topics. Social media: The analytics for both *tmwa.com* as well as Truckee Meadows Community Forestry Coalition indicate a growing trend in social media and its value. Social media will be incorporated in the overall strategy of consolidation for all these websites. Interactions with followers on Facebook increased over this time period.



*Quality. Delivered.*

**TMWA's YouTube Channel:** <http://www.youtube.com/user/truckeemeadowswater>



In early March we kicked off our "TMWA at Work" video series with two new videos:

"Ice Fighting" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n0IT9aRmp4> and

"Highland Canal Improvement Project" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6q-Y87YB-uM>

The idea behind the "TMWA at Work" videos is to inform our customers about the various projects in progress and demonstrate TMWA's expertise in planning and executing plant operations and infrastructure improvements. Given TMWA's excellent track record in both these categories, these videos should provide valuable reinforcement of our key value proposition: "*Quality. Delivered.*"

**TMWA also manages the following informational websites:**

- [www.communityforestry.org](http://www.communityforestry.org):
- [www.howdoyousave.org](http://www.howdoyousave.org):
- [www.tmwastorage.com](http://www.tmwastorage.com):
- [www.tmwaacademy.com](http://www.tmwaacademy.com):
- [www.tmwandscapeguide.com](http://www.tmwandscapeguide.com):
- [www.truckeeriverfund.org](http://www.truckeeriverfund.org):

**TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY**  
www.tmwa.com

Winter E-Newsletter February 14, 2013

**Welcome to the TMWA E-Newsletter**  
From: Mark Forec, TMWA General Manager

**TMWA Welcomes New Board Members**  
Recent elections have resulted in a few new faces on TMWA's Board of Directors and I'd like to welcome them and introduce them to you. As a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by officials representing Reno, Sparks and Washoe County, our Board is an important voice for TMWA customers and they are the decision makers on a number of critical water issues in our community.

The new Board members are the City of Reno's Neoma Jordan from Ward 5 and Sharon Zadra from Ward 2; they replace Reno Mayor Bob Cashell and Council member Dave Abuzzi, respectively. Washoe County Commissioner Vaughn Hartung from District 4 replaces Washoe County Commissioner Robert Larkin. The other four members of TMWA's Board are Councilman Mike Carrigan and Mayor Gene Martini from the City of Sparks, City of Reno appointee Mike Cate, and Washoe County Commissioner Kitty Jung.

Since the new members were seated, the Board has taken action on several important items including deferring a rate increase scheduled for implementation this month until February of 2014. TMWA's Board meetings are open to the public and held at the Sparks City Council's chambers.

[To learn more and view meeting schedules, visit tmwa.com's Board page >>](#)

**Standing Advisory Committee: Accepting Applications for Alternate Members**  
Our Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) is an oversight panel appointed by TMWA's Board of Directors. The committee is made up of TMWA customers and provides input into many aspects of TMWA operations. SAC is currently

**TMWA LINKS**

- [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com)
- [TMWA Events Calendar](#)
- [TMWA Workshop Series](#)
- [Track Labor Levels](#)
- [Customer Service](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [You: Water](#)
- [TMWA Contamination](#)

**Consolidation Update**  
TMWA's Board of Directors has asked TMWA's staff to conduct a due diligence process with South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District (STMGID) regarding the option of merging STMGID into TMWA at the time of the pending Washoe County Department of Water Resources and TMWA merger. When completed, the results of this due diligence and analysis will be provided in this e-newsletter. All other merger activities are pending until this analysis is completed.

[Learn More >>](#)

**Storing Water for Emergencies**  
Recently, a customer responded to this e-newsletter with a request for more information regarding proper, household water storage for emergencies. Though TMWA prepares for potential emergencies through scientific and

## TMWA E-Newsletter

TMWA rolled out a complete redesign of the E-Newsletter for the winter, 2013 edition. These changes are meant to make the newsletter graphically more appealing and easier for our customers to read.

Emailed to a distribution list of 42,529, the E-Newsletter enjoyed a **25.8% open rate**. Given that average email newsletter open rates are about 16%, this is an outstanding result, indicating excellent brand recognition and equity among our customers.

**To view the winter, 2013 E-Newsletter online, go to:**

<http://us4.campaign-archive1.com/?u=6e960630fe56b21cab55e4c21&id=686c511710&e=9a989b678d>

-----Original Message-----

From: Marlene Olsen  
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 3:45 PM  
To: 'Tell the Board'  
Subject: RE: Tell the Board Submission

John:

Thanks for your email. We would like to look into your last payment receipt, if needed. Do you need any further help with that? If so, we need your account number.

TMWA has done extensive research regarding your observations and at the time, there were no local or Nevada companies that had the background or experience to comply with stringent billing and customer service requirements. After in-depth research and investigations, TMWA selected companies that had proven track records of processing high volumes cost effectively, while adhering to high-quality customer service standards. At the time, a contracted vendor was more cost efficient than an in-house department. Costs of this contract have not increased since the original contract was approved in 2002. As far as your comparison regarding NV Energy, they have gas and electric and a much bigger territory and customer base, making in-house remittance cost effective. But, you might like to know that the current contract with the outsourced provider will expire in 2016, at which time TMWA will again go through research and a public process. This process will include research on all options, including local solutions, and review by TMWA's Board and opportunities for the public to provide input. In the meantime, we at TMWA will continue to focus our attention on delivering high-quality water reliably and cost effectively to all our customers.

Since this did go to Tell the Board, we will include your comments in the next Board of Directors agenda packet.

If you can help you further, please let me know.

Marlene Olsen  
TMWA Communications

-----Original Message-----

From: Tell the Board [<mailto:yamavman@yahoo.com>]  
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 1:45 PM  
To: Marlene Olsen; L Richards  
Subject: Tell the Board Submission

Name: John D'Amato  
Email: [yamavman@yahoo.com](mailto:yamavman@yahoo.com)

Comments: My last payment never made it from point A to B. Don't know if it is the PO's fault or in your accounting dept. in Texas. And why not have it local (accounting) like NV Energy does? I really don't like mailing my Sparks water bill to Texas?? Employee local people. I know it is probably on a bid basis, but try, I mean REALLY try to have it local, and employee local people. A win/win proposition..John D'Amato

-----Original Message-----

From: Aaron Silverman [<mailto:ajsfoam@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 6:22 AM

To: [tmwaboard@tmwa.com](mailto:tmwaboard@tmwa.com)

Subject: Turning water off

Currently raising our 4th generation of northern Nevadan in our house. We have lived and worked in northern Nevada our whole lives. We own business we own homes we own commercial properties.

We apparently last year had a few late payments. We are human we make mistakes and we corrected them. We moved this year our residential home and was shocked to find out after paying every bill we would be required to give you a deposit after 13 years at the last house. So when we established our service at the new location we agreed to pay the deposit in two bill payments.

Unfortunately when we setup our electronic bill pay we made a mistake on the address for billing. Our banks website confused my wife and she thought she was putting in the billing address for the credit card not the location where the water is being used.

Our payment went to our old address and not To TMWA. A simple mistake. Well we did not know we made a mistake until you turned off our water. We had no notice you had not received our payment nor did we know we were not current.

I am shocked that you turned our water off and in fact it was all I could do not to cut your lock off the meter. Now I can deal without water but our child and my wife need water. My wife is a high level corporate executive in charge of a major ski resort and my daughter is 3 and she needs a bath and her lunch box containers cleaned daily.

Your staff is rude your policy of not notifying the customer that payment has not been received is indicative of piss poor government management through out our state and country. Really you turn off people's water who have paid you every penny you are owed. It is our right to water not a privilege. ( no I'm not some bleeding heart entitlement liberal) You were owed less than 160 dollars including the deposit. So while my wife makes here way to work un showered my daughter is off to school dirty you have your money now and your deposit.

Consider the possibility your policy of just turning off people's water who have no idea that they are not current or their payment was not received is bad business.

I look forward to my next move to our new home with a well. I will do everything we can to minimize our expenses to TMWA. Did I mention I need to take a crap and can't use a toilet here because I don't have water to flush the toilet? So I will end this with a giant **FUCK YOU ((Redacted))** TMWA and have a good day.

Aaron Silverman.  
3670 Ranch Crest Dr.  
Reno, NV 89509