



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**FROM:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**DATE:** April 9, 2014  
**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*), and the Water Resource and the Annexation Activity Report (*Attachment C*) and the Web Usage and Social Media Report (*Attachment D*).

Also included in your agenda packet are press clippings from March 8 through April 8, 2014.



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Board of Directors  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** Scott Estes, Director of Engineering  
**BY:** Bill Hauck, Sr. Hydrologist  
**DATE:** April 7, 2014  
**SUBJECT:** **Operations Report for April 2014 Board Meeting**

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### (A) Water Supply

**Truckee River Flows** - Truckee River flows at the CA/NV state line are 500 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the moment. The required Floriston Rate is 500 cfs this time of year. Rates or “normal river flows” are projected to be met through August and into the month of September.

**Reservoir Storage** - The elevation of Lake Tahoe is now 6224.22 feet. This is a storage volume of 148,100 acre-feet (AF) and 20% of maximum storage capacity. Boca Reservoir has 14,700 acre-feet of water currently in storage, or 36% of its maximum capacity. Combined, Floriston Rate water storage is approximately 21% of maximum storage capacity. Donner Lake filling began early this year due to the below average runoff projections. Lake storage is currently 6,718 AF or 71% of maximum capacity. Independence Lake storage is currently 15,775 AF which is 90% of its maximum storage capacity (17,500 AF). Prosser Reservoir storage is currently 9,860 AF which is 33% of its maximum storage capacity of 29,800 acre-feet. Stampede Reservoir’s storage is currently 98,700 AF which is 44% of its maximum capacity of 226,000 acre-feet.

**Snowpack** – The official April 1<sup>st</sup> snowpack measurements made by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have been completed, and as no surprise were way below average. Official snowpack numbers for the Truckee River Basin were 35% of normal and 47% of normal for the Lake Tahoe Basin, respectively. This marks the third straight below average snowpack year in a row for the region. Notably, this year (2014) was also the driest of the last three.

**River Flows** – The required river flows at the CA/NV state line (Floriston Rates) of 500 CFS are being met. Based on the current elevation of Lake Tahoe and Boca Reservoir, and the projected runoff numbers for each basin (31% of average in the Truckee and 37% of average in the Tahoe), the Truckee River is expected to flow normally through the month of August and into early September.

**Outlook** – Despite the dismal season-ending snowpack numbers and runoff forecast for the Truckee River, TMWA is still in good shape this year from a surface water supply perspective. Normal Truckee River flows are anticipated through Labor Day and into early September getting us past our peak demand months of July and August. Customer demands begin dropping off noticeably in September so the outlook as far as TMWA’s water supply is positive despite a third straight dry winter. Once again, there will be just enough carry-over storage in Lake Tahoe to keep the Truckee River flowing normally through the peak demand summer months. The runoff projection for the Truckee River does assume a normal hydrology over the next several months and may vary depending on actual weather conditions.

**(B) Water Production**

**Demand** – Customer demands averaged 50 MGD last week reflecting average conditions for this time of year. Through the end of March, TMWA water demands were just slightly less than last year (98%) through the same point in time. The Chalk Bluff water treatment plant is the only source of supply on-line being used to meet customer demand. Aquifer storage and recovery efforts which began in November have continued. TMWA is currently recharging an average of 5 MGD at a dozen well sites located throughout our service territory.

**(C) Hydro Production**

**Generation** – Average Truckee River flow at Farad was 437 cubic feet per second (cfs) during the month of March. A total of 4,462 MW hours were generated. This yielded combined hydropower revenue from the three power plants of \$309,926 for the month, or an average of \$9,998/day. Generation at the Fleish plant averaged \$4,188/day. Generation at the Verdi plant averaged \$3,478/day, and generation at the Washoe plant averaged \$2,332/day. Opportunities for hydro generation are good at least for the short-term. It appears there will be enough water in the river to keep the plants on-line through at least the end of August and into the month of September.



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** Kim Mazeres, Customer Relations Director  
**DATE:** April 7, 2014  
**SUBJECT:** **Customer Service Report**

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

### Ombudsman

There were four (4) calls to the Ombudsman in March. They included: an 85 year old woman billing on the flat-rate, who would save money on the metered rate but refuses to go to it, complaining about the rate increase; a customer with no water – turned out to be a mistake made by their landscaper; a customer with a high bill caused by his contractor's mistake; and a customer who wanted his old refrigerator picked up who was referred to NV Energy.

### Communications

Since the March Board meeting there were media articles and stories on: water supply, snowpack, and the fact that river flows will be normal this summer with no additional conservation requested of customers even though it has been another low snowpack year; watering your trees during dry weather conditions; fix-a-leak week; Fitch affirming our AA-credit rating; an article on utilities, including TMWA, in the Nevada Business Journal; and, several Truckee River Fund projects. In addition, KOLO Channel 8 news spent half a day at the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant filming a story about the water treatment process; this story is scheduled to run during May sweeps.

There were two presentations given: one to a group of twelve (12) individuals from the Middle East and Northern Africa sponsored by the Northern Nevada International Center and here to learn about water resources; and, one by Ron Penrose about the Glendale Water Supply Improvement Project at a recent American Water Works Association Conference.

There was one tour given of the Verdi Hydroelectric Generation Plant for eight people, primarily Washoe County employees.

**Customer Calls – March**

- 7,238 phone calls handled
- Average handling time of 3 minutes, 59 seconds a call
- Average speed of answer – 24 seconds

**Billing – March**

- 95,370 bills issued
- 200 (.2%) corrected bills

**Service Orders – March**

- 5,736 service orders taken
- 3,294 (57%) move-ins / move-outs
- 589 (10%) new meter sets and meter/register/ERT exchanges and equipment checks
- 497 (9%) cut-out-for-non-payment and cut-in after receiving payments, including deposits and checks for tamper
- 490 (9%) zero consumption meter checks
- 191 (3%) problems / emergencies, including cut-out for customer repairs, dirty water, no water, leaks, pressure complaints, safety issues, installing water meter blankets, etc.
- 179 (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
- 146 (3%) re-read meters
- 97 (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
- 66 (1%) high-bill complaints / audit and water usage review requests

**Remittance – March**

- 31,534 mail-in payments
- 17,992 electronically
- 15,087 payments via RapidPay (EFT)
- 9,870 one-time bank account payments
- 4,638 store payments
- 2,748 payments via drop box or at front desk
- 2,480 credit card payments

**Collections – March**

- 11,252 accounts received a late charge
- Mailed 5,180 10-day delinquent notices, 5.5% of accounts
- Mailed 772 48-hour delinquent notices, .8% of accounts
- 121 accounts eligible for disconnect
- 107 accounts actually disconnected
- 0.21% write-off to revenue

**New business / New Construction – March**

- 29 active jobs currently in process
- Nearly \$80,000 in new business fees/facility charges collected

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

- No meter retrofits completed
- 276 meters yet to be installed on flat-rate accounts
- 362 meter exchanges completed
- 400 new business meter sets completed
- 94,150 total meters installed (billing and non-billing)
- 4,571 total non-billing meters currently installed



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** John Erwin, Natural Resources  
**DATE:** 9 April 2014  
**SUBJECT:** Water Resources and Annexation

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### RULE 7

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

Beginning Balance		7,747.90 AF
Purchases of water rights	0.00 AF	
Refunds	0.00 AF	
Sales	-5.76 AF	
Adjustment	0.00 AF	
Ending Balance		7,742.14 AF
Price per acre foot at report date:		\$7,700

### ANNEXATIONS

No annexations to report.



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## STAFF REPORT – Web & Social Media

**TO:** Chairman and Board Members  
**THRU:** Mark Foree, General Manager  
**FROM:** Robert Charpentier  
**DATE:** April 9, 2014  
**SUBJECT:** April 2014 Web Report-www.tmwa.com and additional TMWA websites

### tmwa.com — Website Overview – Trends Over the Last Five Years

The growth in user traffic to the tmwa.com website over the last five years has more than doubled, going from 157,724 visitors to 342,275. Given the concurrent economic difficulties and negligible growth in our area, this result points to a significant improvement in the site’s performance among TMWA’s established customers. This conclusion is supported by an increasing shift from returning visitors to new visitors and a significant drop in the bounce rate. Further, once bounce rates are factored in, the number of retained visitors rose from **55,204 in 2009 to 254,550 in 2013 – a 361% increase.**

Other trends worth noting are a 20% decrease in the number of pages visited per user and a 51% increase in the duration of the average visit – an outcome suggesting users are having an easier time finding what they are looking for and are more deeply engaged with the content they find.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Visits</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Returning</u>	<u>Pages/Visit</u>	<u>Avg Visit Duration</u>	<u>Bounce Rate</u>
2009	157,724	47%	53%	2.04	1:22 min	64.5%
2010	231,539	48.4%	51.6%	2.16	1:36 min	65.6%
2011	278,583	50.4%	49.6%	2.02	1:24 min	69.7%
2012	313,891	54.9%	45.1%	1.73	1:53 min	35.7%
2013	342,275	55.4%	44.6%	1.63	2:04 min	25.6%

### Growth in Mobile Traffic 2009 - 2014

There has been a profound growth in the number of users who are accessing tmwa.com via mobile devices – from less than half a percent in 2009 to nearly a quarter of all users in 2014.

2009	0.43%	2012	12.97%
2010	3.23%	2013	20.72%
2011	7.08%	2014 (YTD)	23.22%

**Top Content for 2014 YTD (Jan 1 – March 31)**

The most visited pages on tmwa.com (listed below) for the beginning of 2014 are similar what we have seen in the past. After the homepage, traffic went mostly to our employment, online payment, and “contact us” pages. We are also seeing an expected rise in visits to the “Doing Business With TMWA” page – which is consistent with annual business cycles.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Pageviews</b>	<b>%Pageviews</b>
1.....	Homepage .....	65,558.....	45%
2.....	Employment.....	13,893.....	9.5%
4.....	Residential/Payment Options.....	10,798.....	7.4%
3.....	Contact Us.....	7,374.....	5%
5.....	Doing Business With TMWA.....	3,704.....	2.5%

**Traffic to tmwa.com is coming from the following sources (YTD 2014):**

1.	(direct) / (none)	40,460	45.13%
2.	google / organic	31,239	34.84%
3.	bing / organic	4,822	5.38%
4.	reno.gov / referral	4,285	4.78%
5.	yahoo / organic	2,637	2.94%
6.	r.search.yahoo.com / referral	858	0.96%
7.	cityofreno.com / referral	329	0.37%
8.	us-mg205.mail.yahoo.com / referral	321	0.36%
9.	tmwa.com / referral	297	0.33%
10.	aol / organic	229	0.26%

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

Assessment work on an updated tmwa.com website continues with a rigorous review of the existing “discovery process” that assesses TMWA’s changing Web requirements. **Mobile use of tmwa.com has increased 79% for smartphones and 109% for tablets – this represents a growth from 12.9% 2012 to 23.2% today.** With the trend towards mobile devices expected to continue, the Web Team is looking hard at a mobile-specific solution to be sure our site and its content are presented in a both appealing and accessible manner for all of our users.

### **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

Given the ongoing issue with false water-quality information from the 2009 [EWG](#) report being circulated via social media, we have instructed Nobel Studios to investigate how TMWA might improve its performance in search engine results – particularly regarding searches on local water quality. Better search performance will improve the likelihood our customers will find accurate information on water quality and other topics important to TMWA. Nobel Studios evaluated TMWA’s website, social media pages and aggregate web presence, identifying numerous tactics that can be used to improve search performance. These tactics include:

- Correct technical site errors such as bad metadata, broken links, missing pages and redundant content.
- Optimize site content for keywords such as “conservation” and “Reno water quality.”
- Replace search-engine-invisible content, such as PDFs, with search-friendly formats.
- Improve linking and visibility between social sites and web content.
- Create additional, sharable content such as infographics, blogs, videos, slideshows ... all of which are highly discoverable and should rank prominently in search engine results.
- Optimize business listings and respond to negative reviews – ie Yelp

TMWA Staff will work in conjunctions with Nobel Studios to both optimize site structure and develop the additional content required to improve our search rankings.

### **TMWA Social Media**



Currently TMWA has **928 Twitter followers** and **309 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.

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



The fifth video in the “**TMWA How-To**” series has gone live with the launch of “[Spring Sprinkler System Start-Up](#).” This video is performing very well with over 250 views in its first week of distribution. As predicted, the how-to videos are generally performing better than the “**TMWA at Work**” series, with view counts rising more quickly. We have also added our seventh “**TMWA at Work**” video, “[Stead Water Tank Rehabilitation](#).” We expect to make additions to both the “How to” and “At Work” series throughout the year.

**Current “TMWA How-to” videos:**

- [Spring Sprinkler System Start-Up](#) (new)
- [How to Shut off Your Home's Water in an Emergency](#)
- [How to Use Your Water Meter to Determine if you have a Leak](#)
- [How to Test for and Fix a Leaky Toilet Flapper](#)
- [How to Make an Online Bill Payment from Your Checking Account](#)

**Current “TMWA at Work” videos:**

- [Stead Water Tank Rehabilitation](#) (new)
- [Partnership For Safe Water Award](#)
- [Idlewild Pump Station Improvements](#)
- [Steamboat Spillway, Flume Repair](#)
- [Fleish 'Railcar Bridge](#)
- [Water Main Repair on Haskell St.](#)
- [Highland Canal Improvement Project](#)
- [Ice Fighting](#)

**Pending Videos:**

- Understanding Backflow
- Tunnel/Flume Project
- Winterization

The idea behind the production of TMWA videos is to provide useful, hands-on tips and information to our customers while also informing them about the various projects we have in progress. The latter demonstrates 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):