

TURNING CUSTOMERS INTO OWNERS

Brett McArdle
Communications Manager
[bmcardle@cudrc.com](mailto:bmcardle@ cudrc.com)



OVERVIEW



**MEETING YOUR CUSTOMERS
WHERE THEY ARE**



**FROM KNOWLEDGE TO A
FEELING OF OWNERSHIP**



CONSOLIDATED UTILITY DISTRICT
Rutherford County, Tennessee

VALUES AND A SHARED REALITY

01

Water is essential to life

02

Tennessee recently passed 7 million in population. We're popular.

03

We live in the richest and most powerful nation

04

Technology and treatment methods make our tap water desirable, safe, and inexpensive

05

Tap water is much more of a bargain than bottled

MEETING CUSTOMERS WHERE THEY ARE



CONCEPT 1

- Think about how people communicate
- Go to them – don't make them reach out to you



- Distracted
- Disinterested
- They make assumptions
- Busy and bombarded
- What's in it for me?



PUSH VS PULL

- Sending information vs making customers search
- Use all touchpoints at your disposal
- Teach customers about the work of your utility
- Provide a basic understanding of water
 - Messaging (verbal, online, printed)



PUSH VS PULL

- Available messaging space
 - phone calls
 - lobby
 - bills
 - e-communications
 - email signatures
 - website
 - social platforms
- These are all easy lifts

HOW MANY HATS DOES YOUR UTILITY WEAR?

To what extent do your customers recognize you're an essential workplace?

Engineering. Maintenance. Wastewater.
Leak Detection. Customer Service. Finance.
Administration. Water Treatment. Warehouse.
Human Resources. Information Technology. Operations.
Water Quality. Billing. Health & Safety. Inspections.
Geographic Information Systems. Meter Operations.

THANK YOU!



Employee Appreciation Day 2024





We look forward to providing your home and/or business with safe, reliable water. After account signup, you can expect to receive your first bill 15-45 days later.

Manage your account using the myCUD app -- now available in the iPhone App Store and the Google Play Store.

Need to pay your bill or register your account online? [It's easy.](#)

If you're a new CUD ratepayer or if you're new to the area, [here's a visual guide](#) to help you read your bill.

We offer advice about how to [check for a water leak](#) and data about [water quality](#).

If your neighborhood uses a [STEP system for wastewater disposal](#), our online flyer describes the importance and maintenance of this infrastructure.

For as little as \$1 per month, you can help people in Rutherford County who struggle to pay for their utilities. [That's our Neighbor-4-Neighbor program.](#)

Need to reach us? Call (615) 893-7225 or visit [our contact page](#).

We produce a quarterly newsletter for our ratepayers. [You can subscribe here.](#)



Welcome email to new customers

- Our logo and stats (legitimacy)
 - Links to our site
- How to contact us
 - Social feeds
- We track delivery



Why is an email address so important?

- Not as intrusive as a phone call
- Carries links
- Easier for receiver to digest data
- Your logo (legitimacy)
- You can tell your audience to expect a follow-up call
- You can explain things in better detail
- Providing messages related to value and accountability



1,404 responses

[View in Sheets](#)

Summary

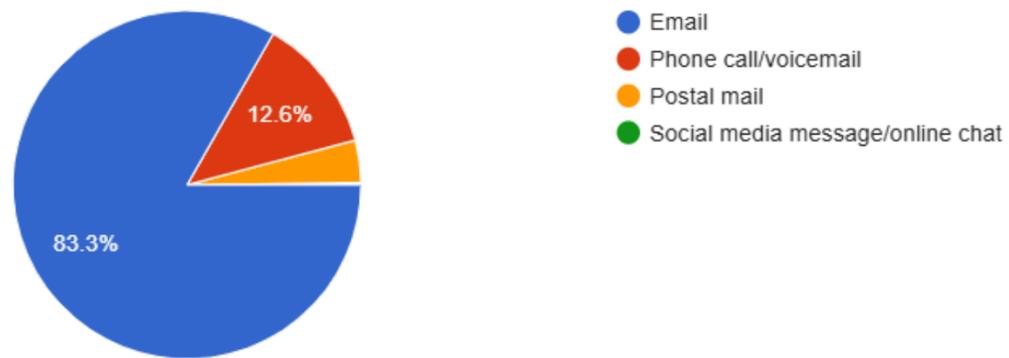
Question

Individual

[Copy chart](#)

1. What is your preferred method for CUD to contact you?

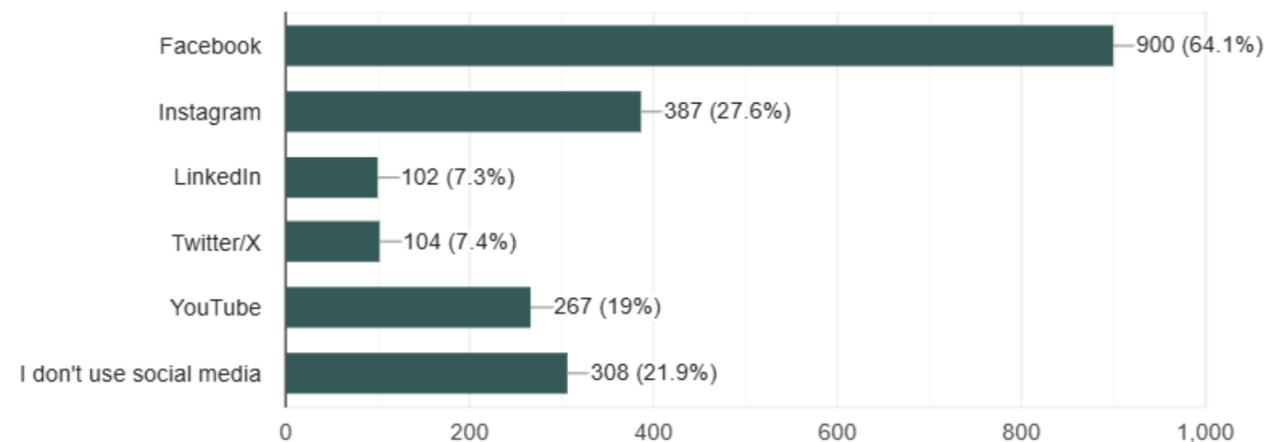
1,404 responses



2. If you use social media, which one or more of these platforms do you use most often? Choose all that apply.

[Copy chart](#)

1,404 responses



Value of customer surveys

- Do you have your customers' emails?
- Do you ask for their input?
- Do you act on the results?



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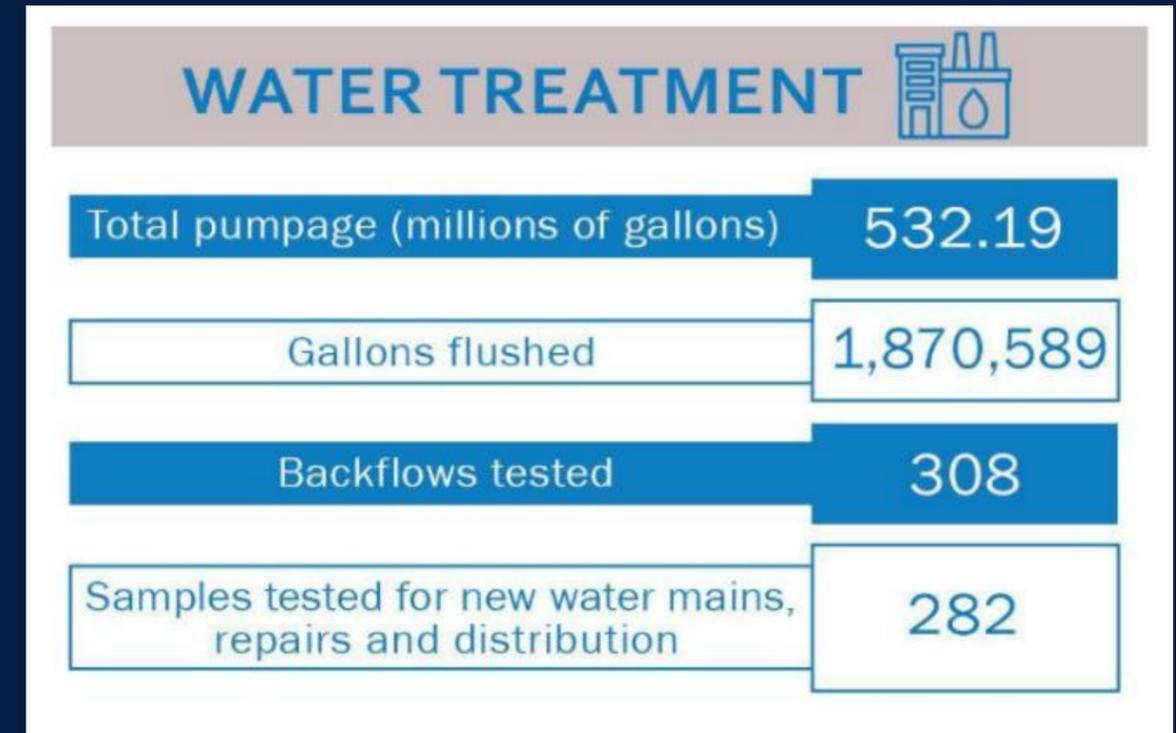
GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS THE BIG PICTURE

End-of-year email blast to customers:
dashboards and updates about projects and
costs involved



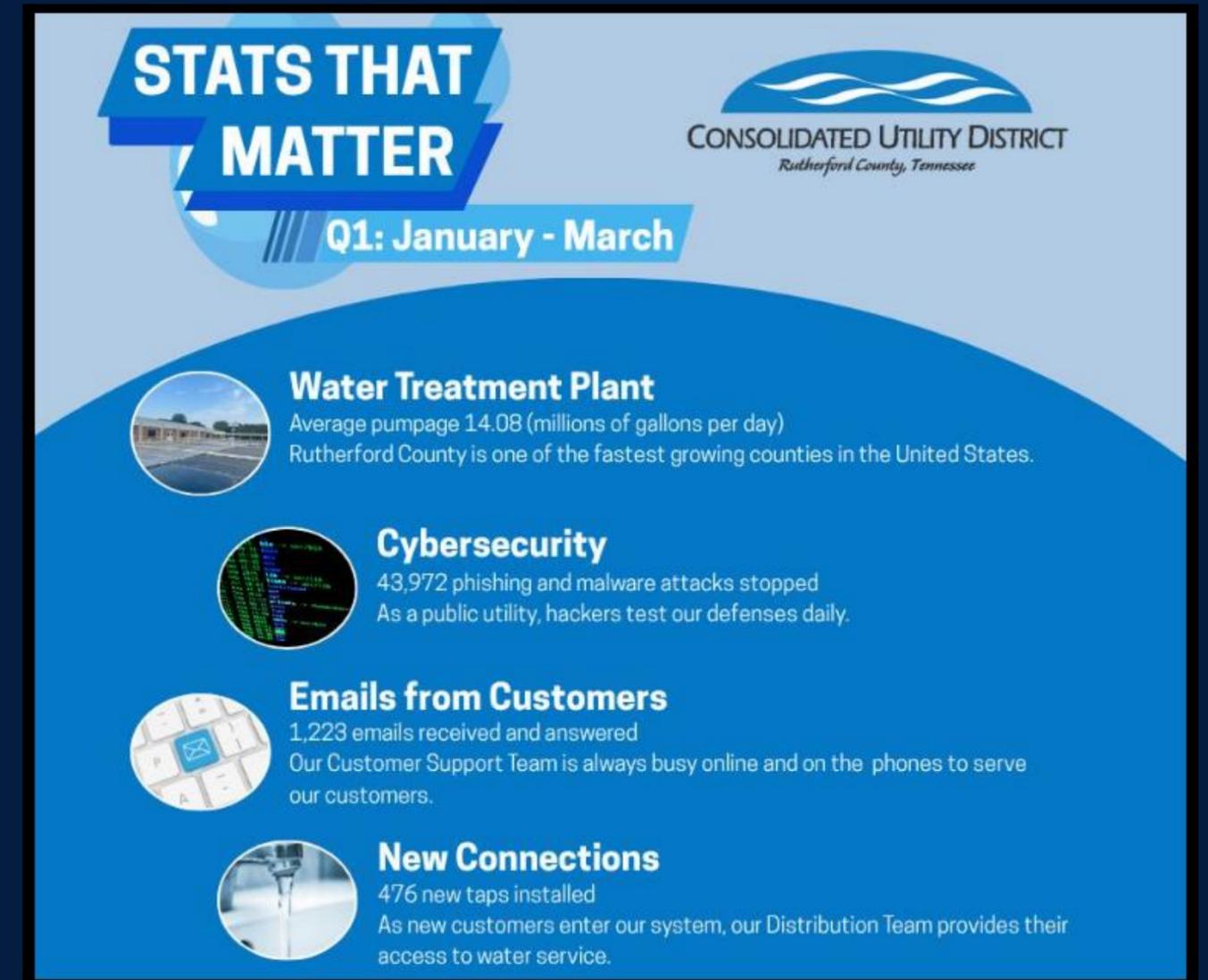
DASHBOARDS

- For internal and external use
- Metrics based on survey information
- Credibility, accountability, transparency, and achievements



DASHBOARDS BECOME SOCIAL CONTENT

- Metrics based on survey information
- Credibility, accountability, transparency, and achievements



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man



FACES OF YOUR WORKFORCE

- Use your social platform to spotlight an employee of the month (or week)
- Their friends and family will appreciate this (morale/team spirit)

the most
work?
rgeest project
n.

you
our culture



Swipe for
Dustin's ansy

ANOTHER FORM OF PUSH

- Junior Achievement or Career Days at schools
- You can influence the students and impress the teachers
- Keep your message local



FROM KNOWLEDGE TO OWNERSHIP



CONCEPT 2

Empowering customers with information shows inclusion and that you care



CONSOLIDATED UTILITY DISTRICT
Rutherford County, Tennessee

COMMUNICATE YOUR CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT (CCR)

Don't underestimate this report



2023 Annual
CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

#1 Through Excellence and Innovation
Winner of the 2023 Award for Excellence – Large Water Treatment
Plant Category – KY/TN Section of AWWA



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www.cudrc.com • (615) 893-7225

HOW YOUR CCR CAN HAVE MULTIPLE LIVES

▶ SOCIAL POSTS

Break out the highlights. What's the must-read information?

▶ PRESS RELEASE

ChatGPT can help

▶ LINKS IN E-BILLS, ETC

Make it easy for customers to locate

NO TIME TO BUILD A PRESS RELEASE?

Build a press release celebrating a year of safe, reliable water. The story should include references to a public water utility's consumer confidence report.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Utility Name] Celebrates a Year of Safe, Reliable Water Service
Annual Consumer Confidence Report Confirms High Water Quality Standards

[City, State] — [Date] — [Utility Name] today announced the release of its annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), highlighting a full year of delivering safe, reliable, and high-quality drinking water to the community. The CCR—sometimes called a Water Quality Report—shows that the utility met or exceeded all state and federal drinking water standards over the past year.

“Providing safe, clean water is our top priority every single day,” said [Utility Spokesperson/Title]. “This year’s Consumer Confidence Report reflects the dedication of our operations teams, water quality experts, and field crews who work around the clock to ensure every drop meets the highest standards.”

Key Highlights from This Year’s Consumer Confidence Report

- **Full Compliance:** All monitored substances were within the limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state regulatory agencies.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** Routine sampling and laboratory testing throughout the year confirmed consistently safe drinking water.
- **System Reliability:** Despite challenges such as seasonal weather impacts, infrastructure demands, and regional growth, the water system maintained strong reliability and performance.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The CCR provides clear, accessible information about water sources, treatment processes, and monitoring results—empowering customers to stay informed about their drinking water.

A Year of Investment and Preparedness

In addition to providing safe water, [Utility Name] continued its long-term commitment to infrastructure reliability. Over the past year, the utility completed projects such as line replacements, pump station upgrades, and expanded system monitoring. These efforts reduce leaks, improve pressure, and strengthen resilience during emergencies.

“Our customers deserve to have confidence in the water they use every day,” said [Leadership Title]. “This report demonstrates not only compliance but a culture of stewardship and continuous improvement.”

Accessing the Report

Customers can access the full Consumer Confidence Report at [Website Link], or request a printed copy by calling [Phone Number].

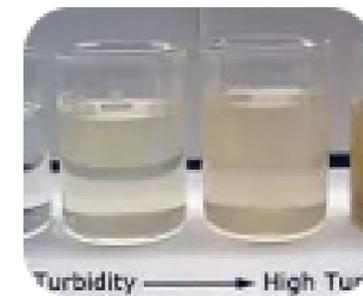


THE TURBIDITY EXAMPLE

- Define the term
- Why does it matter?
- This can apply to multiple criteria found in your CCR

✦ AI Overview

Turbidity is the measure of water clarity, indicating the presence of suspended particles that make water appear cloudy or murky. These particles can include soil, silt, algae, and other organic or inorganic matter that scatters light. High turbidity often suggests lower water quality and can negatively impact aquatic life and human health. @





BASICS OF WATER QUALITY

Do you use messaging to explain the data and science behind water treatment?

- chlorine (kills almost all bacteria and viruses, including Covid)
- number of miles of water pipe
- PFAs
- source water





COMMON TASTE CONCERNS

- Customer may have a garden hose connected to an outside spigot
- Water softener or whole house filter needs servicing
- Possible lake turnover or algae bloom
- Certain medications can leave a metallic aftertaste (advise customer to consult with their physician)
- Again, some medications are sulphur-based
- Customer may be cross connected with a well



QUESTIONS ABOUT CHLORINE

- Strong chlorine smell is due to the lack of chlorine residual in the water
- Odor when the chlorine residual is below 0.5 ppm
- Solution: Flush main line and customer's plumbing to restore chlorine residual to normal levels
- Utilities are required to maintain a 0.2 ppm chlorine residual per TDEC regulation



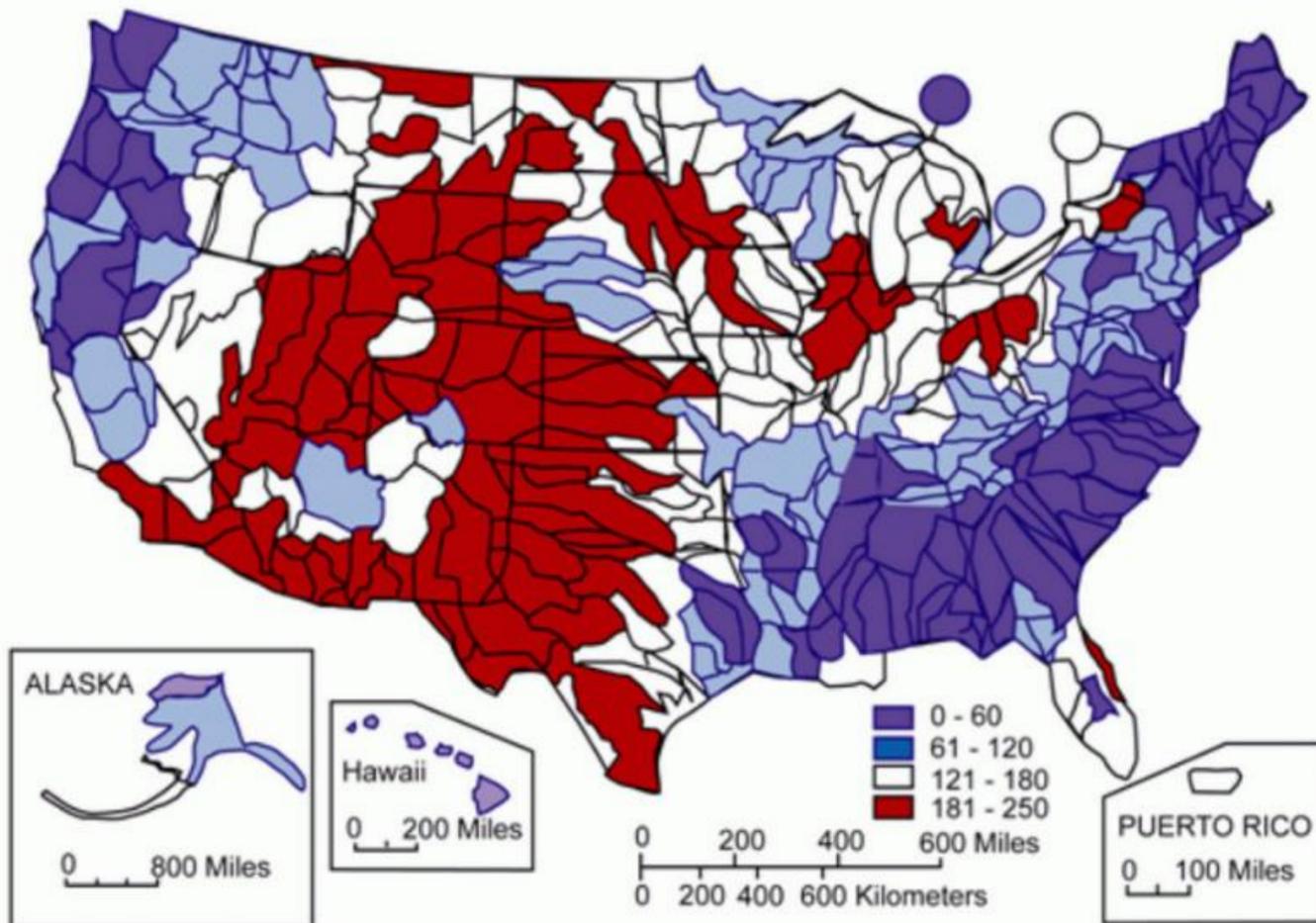
The image shows two tall, clear glass tumblers. The glass on the left contains clear, sparkling water with many small bubbles. The glass on the right contains water that is significantly discolored, appearing a murky brownish-gold color. There are also bubbles in this water, and some sediment is visible at the bottom. The background is a light blue gradient with a dark blue geometric shape on the right side.

DISCOLORATION IN WATER

- Black coloring: charcoal filter
- Brown coloring: Possible leak
 - Galvanized pipe
 - Tuberculation build up
 - Water heater temperature too low
 - Anode rod deteriorating
- White coloring: air in the water
- Blue water: siphonage from a toilet with blue tablets

WATER HARDNESS

CONCENTRATION OF HARDNESS AS CALCIUM CARBONATE,
IN MILLIGRAMS PER LITER



- Hard water moves through deposits of calcium and magnesium-containing minerals
- White film on dishes
Adjust water heater temperature between 125 and 130 degrees and flush water heater annually. Use Lemi-Shine in dishwashers to eliminate the white film. White vinegar works also.
- Sand or granular substance in the water
Calcium deposits (blue, green, brown and white) form in water heater. Flush water heater and check temperature setting.

A close-up photograph of a chrome water faucet with water flowing from it. The background is dark and out of focus. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue geometric shape on the right side of the slide.

ABOUT WATER PRESSURE ...

- Utilities are required to deliver water at 20 psi or greater per AWWA & TDEC
- American National Standards Institute, the American Society for Testing & Materials, the International Residential Code, and the Uniform Plumbing Code have all set 80 psi as the maximum pressure for residential
- Where pressure exceeds 80 psi both a pressure reducing valve (PRV) and an expansion tank are required



EVERGREEN CONTENT



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FOGS



While cooking, FOG is hot and in liquid form, moving down the drain easily

As FOG cools, it hardens and may not allow water to pass through plumbing pipes

FOG blockages in the sewer main can cause costly back-up into homes

PREVENT THE CLOG
TRASH THE FOG
(FATS, OILS, & GREASE)

COOL IT > CAN IT > TRASH IT

Sewer main

Manhole

FOG/sewer blockage

SEWER CLOGS IMPACT EVERYONE!

COLOR CODING SYSTEM OF FIRE HYDRANT TOPS
IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY



BLUE TOP

1,501 gallons or more per minute



GREEN TOP

1,001 - 1,500 gallons per minute



ORANGE TOP

501 - 1,000 gallons per minute



RED TOP

500 gallons per minute or less

TEACH A SECRET LANGUAGE

Offer insider knowledge

CYBERSECURITY

- October – but the need is continual
- Offer tips
- Explain terms (phishing, malware, etc)





The following was written by our Maintenance Manager and earned nearly 7,000 page views.

3:35 PM: We received a call about a leak on One Mile Lane

3:50 PM: Leak was located

4:00-5:15 PM: Roughly 9 valves were shut down to isolate the leak

6:30 PM: TN One call was complete

6:45 PM: Digging started at site of One Mile Lane leak

7:45 – 10:15 PM: A 23-foot section of 12" PVC pipe was replaced with 12" ductile iron pipe

10:30 PM: Valves were slowly turned back on to begin flushing

10:40 PM: During the backfilling of the hole, a rock fell on the existing PVC line, which caused a separate break

10:45 PM: Valves were shut down

11:00 PM: Started excavating ditch to repair other broken pipe

12:00 AM: A 5.5-foot section of 12" PVC pipe was replaced with 12" ductile iron pipe

12:35 AM: Valves were slowly turned back on to start flushing

1:45 AM: Flushing completed and sample taken

1:50 AM: Remaining valves turned back on

2:15 AM: Service restored to complete area

PULL BACK THE CURTAIN

- From January 2020
- Went viral (thousands of views, scores of shares)
- Play by play of repair
- Demonstrates your utility's workforce and effort

Tap vs bottled

What \$2 will buy



One 20-ounce bottle

Single-use plastic

400+ years
in a landfill
(6,400 years for a
case of bottles)

Source water is
often tap water with
adjusted pH value



300+ gallons

No bottle needed

No impact
to a landfill

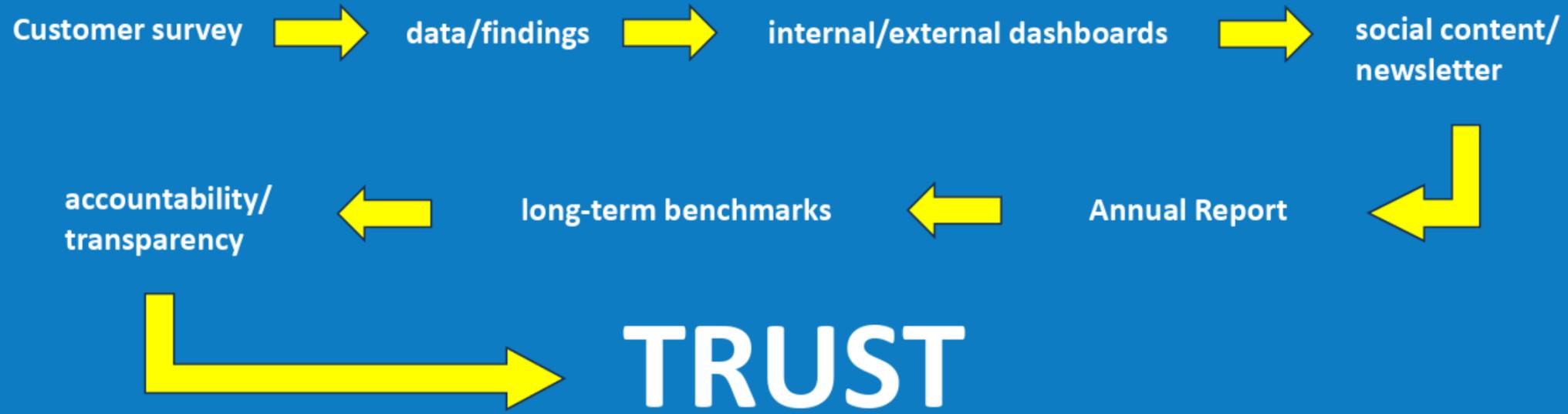
Tested continuously
for safety and quality

You're competing against bottled water companies. If not in reality, then at least in perception.

- Ongoing testing
 - Greater accountability
 - Much, much cheaper
 - Eco-friendly product
-
- You know this. Do your ratepayers?



Chain reaction of data



TURNING CUSTOMERS INTO OWNERS

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