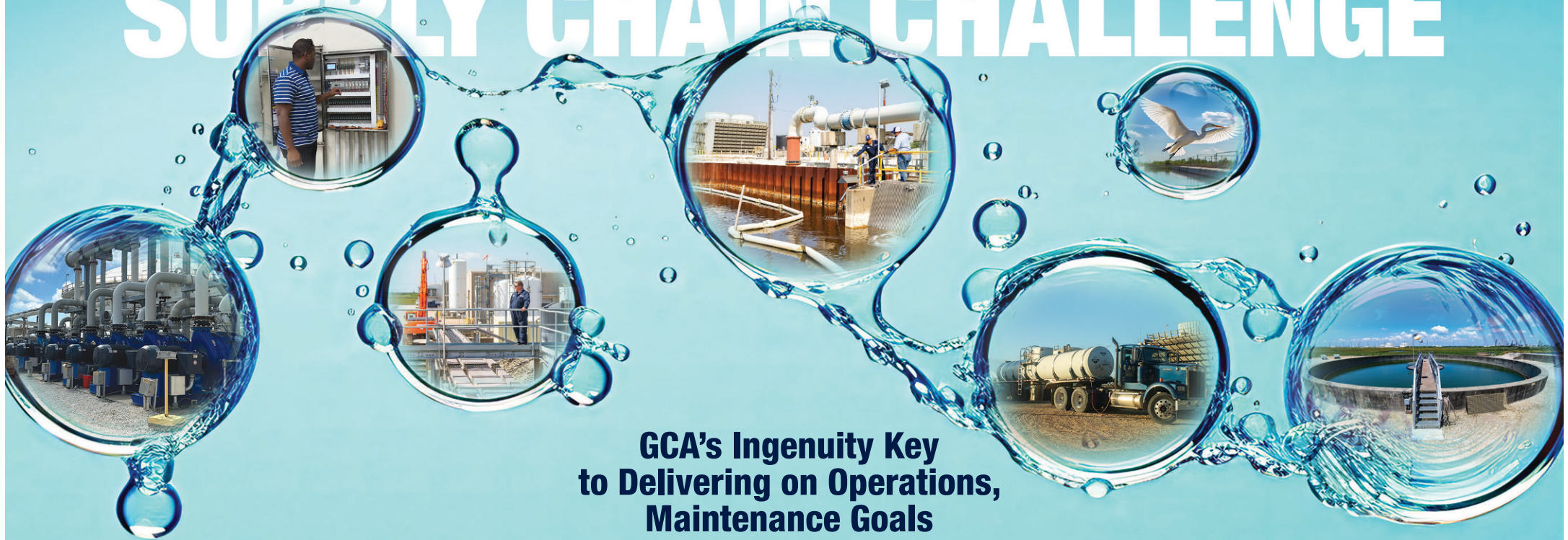


CLARIFIER

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F G U L F C O A S T A U T H O R I T Y

FALL 2023

SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGE



**GCA's Ingenuity Key
to Delivering on Operations,
Maintenance Goals**

COO Scott Harris: Our People Power our Mission

Conduit Financing Provides Clear Advantages

GCA Breaks Ground To Open New RailPort Facility



GCA Takes Home Awards

GCA Joins 'Fill the Bus' Campaign

'Water for People' Fundraiser Sets Record

CHAIR'S LETTER

As we head into the holiday season with the end of the year in sight, I want to celebrate all the progress we've made in 2023.

We have broken ground on Gulf Coast Authority's first new facility in 30 years – this is truly a milestone achieved by the hard work of our team over the past several years. Beyond the significance of the new facility itself, the project is a symbol of our renewed commitment to our mission. It demonstrates how we can take our experience and expertise to more regions, supporting economic development and protecting the waters of Texas in the often-overlooked, but critical wastewater and water management space.

In late summer, we demonstrated that experience and expertise by quickly handling a pipeline leak in a difficult-to-reach area. Our team is to be commended for their prompt response, collaborative approach, and efficient implementation of a long-term fix that improves overall system reliability while minimizing impacts to our customers and our community.

Delivering on the new facility, major repairs, and ongoing operations and maintenance needs have all been made more challenging by ongoing supply chain issues. The cover story showcases GCA's "can-do" spirit as the entire team continues to execute on goals despite the very real barriers supply chain snarls and rising costs represent.

Finally, I'd like to highlight our ongoing work to expand our financing capability to new customers who can leverage this lower-rate financing resource to help meet critical infrastructure needs.

This has been an extremely productive year as we execute on our vision and strategic plan. I salute all the GCA team members and thank our amazing board and leadership group for making it happen.



Franklin D.R. Jones, Jr.



CEO'S LETTER

At GCA, we are rounding out another year of hard work and accomplishments. Our many achievements are thanks to the creativity, ingenuity, and dedication of our staff who live our vision and mission every day.

As Board Chair Jones mentions, the groundbreaking of our GCA RailPort Facility in North Texas is an exciting development that lets us share our mission with other parts of the State of Texas. A true partnership with industry, RailPort exemplifies our ability to work quickly and in tandem with evolving regulatory and market challenges.

In this issue, we feature our supply chain challenges because they are so real. We wrestle with delays, out-of-stock notices, and backorders every day in all parts of our business while dealing with rising costs for almost everything we buy. Managing through it has required close coordination across the team, with our vendors, suppliers, and customers – and communication with regulators – to continue to meet our goals.

The message to our customers and those we hope to work with in the future is clear: GCA can deliver on your projects in a timely and cost-effective manner, but planning ahead and allowing lead time is absolutely essential in this environment. If you are looking at an expansion or new facility, the time to start working with us is *now*.

Beyond the visible successes highlighted in this issue is the less-visible, day-in and day-out work of our team in leading efforts to tackle and implement our Strategic Plan. Hats off to our Chief Operating Officer Scott Harris whose leadership supports GCA facilities, overseeing the operational teams

ensuring compliance, conducting technical troubleshooting, and implementing planned and unplanned maintenance. Much appreciation is also owed to Chief Technical Officer Phyllis Frank who is leading our new enterprise resource planning (ERP) process with the help of a GCA-wide group – a massive undertaking in itself and one that will pay dividends in years to come.

And to the broader GCA team: managers, directors, supervisors, officers, technicians, and all our incredible employees – thank you for your continued engagement in reviewing, commenting, and updating our policies and procedures. Thank you for working on master planning exercises to help us gauge where we are today, where we want to be in the future, and how we are going to work to fund and implement projects to make it all happen.

Looking ahead – in addition to the cooler weather! – I am excited about how we will build on this year's foundational work and go from strength to strength as we deliver on GCA's mission.



Elizabeth Fazio Hale





“New projects and major expansions are always a challenge, but when you layer in today’s supply chain situation, it ups the complexity and advanced planning needed by a factor of at least 10.”



SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES:

GCA’s Ingenuity Key to Delivering on Operations, Maintenance Goals

Tackling supply chain issues head on, Gulf Coast Authority continues to progress major maintenance and expansion projects, thanks to advance planning, flexibility, and innovative approaches.

With major supply chain challenges lingering post-pandemic, clean water agencies across the country are struggling with operation and construction project delays. Shortages, delays, and escalating costs of chemicals, equipment, pipes, technology, contracting, labor, etc. have combined to create major headaches for water and wastewater treatment authorities.

“We have been telling customers that if they are planning a future project, we can do it, but the time to start is now,” said Liz Fazio Hale, General Manager/CEO. “New projects and major expansions are always a challenge, but when you layer in today’s supply chain situation, it ups the

complexity and advanced planning needed by a factor of at least 10.”

Extended delivery times, backorders now the norm

Delays for vehicles; sewer and water appurtenances; and electrical components for pumps, pump control panels, and motor control centers are also presenting challenges for the Authority. Historically, electric panel lead times ranged from 9-12 months. This has doubled to between 18-24 months for projects today. The ability to quickly source electrical gear, machine parts, and off-the-shelf items no longer exists as it did before the pandemic.

And the list continues. Lead times for basic operation and maintenance items are now anywhere from 16-52 weeks, with glass-lined piping lead times at 32-52 weeks. Key items still experiencing supply chain issues include meters (2" and up), panels, breakers, and switchgears. Wire and cabling are also affected with basic coaxial cables for SCADA remote terminal unit modem antenna backordered for two months and metal clad cable backordered from the manufacturer for three to four months.

Vendors and supply houses have few electric motors in stock. While occasionally available from the manufacturer, delivery is one week minimum, and many motors are now at one-month backorder. This delivery contrasts with the typical 2-3 days for delivery for most motors under 30 HP pre-pandemic. Mechanical pump parts also have been affected with multiple types of mechanical seals on backorder for months on end.

Raw material constraints are affecting other components too. Impellers, a machined part, now have a lead time of 22 weeks, casted pump parts about the same. Common bearings are taking up to two weeks.

Laboratory services are seeing the same effect. Glassware products such as beakers, flasks, and test tubes are frequently backordered, as are sensitive equipment parts. Obtaining the critical reagents and chemicals needed for permit-required tests presents challenges, too.

Costs have skyrocketed

"We have seen a tremendous fluctuation in chemical costs," said Jonathan Sandhu, Technical Director. "Couple this with extended delivery times and driver shortages, and the result is a lot of uncertainty in budgets and schedules."

On average, chemical costs are up 7-20 percent depending on the chemical and supplier. Some, such as sodium hypochlorite, have shot up as much as 100 percent due to supply scarcity. Lead times for some chemicals and odor media replacement can be 4-16 weeks.

"The unpredictability of supply availability and delivery schedules makes purchasing extremely difficult," Sandhu added. "We have to balance having enough supply on demand for peak events with over ordering, which can result in degradation of the materials before use."

As for major projects, quotes and bids are coming in significantly higher on many, especially those with longer project schedules. Contractors are struggling to price the risk of inflation and either are including significant risk dollars or not bidding at all. Projects for facilities designed only two to four years ago were expensive then at \$200 to \$400 million; now they are easily double that price.

Trucking costs continue to escalate, and labor availability and price adds to project challenges.



"We have to balance having enough supply on demand for peak events with over ordering, which can result in degradation of the materials before use."



“At GCA we are strengthening our strategic sourcing and purchasing capabilities and leveraging effective advance planning to help mitigate the risks associated with supply shortages.”

GCA takes on the challenge

So, how is GCA managing through these tough times to provide quality services to its customers?

“Former Texas Senator Buster Brown used to quote an old Chinese Proverb when talking about water planning,” said Liz Fazio Hale, GCA General Manager/CEO. ‘The best time to plant a tree was 20 to 40 years ago. The next best time is now.’ So at GCA we are strengthening our strategic sourcing and purchasing capabilities and leveraging effective advance planning to help mitigate the risks associated with supply shortages.”

To meet the challenge, GCA typically is asking participants to commit funds in advance, either in cash or via bond issuance, and placing advance orders to manage long lead times. At our newest facility – RailPort – while groundbreaking took place just last August, the team ordered some equipment in early 2023. This included shop drawing review and approval, as well as the ordering of the equipment


itself, and resulted in substantial schedule savings. For example, the motor control center had a 55-week lead time and this early ordering saved approximately 24 weeks off the schedule.

“We are keeping all options on the table,” said Sandhu. “We have learned that flexibility in planning and active project management are key to ensuring our operations, maintenance, and major projects succeed.”

Managing regulatory compliance around constraints

The EPA has provided a “Supply Chain Resilience Guide for Water and Wastewater Utilities” that outlines steps to prepare for, or respond to, equipment and water treatment chemical supply chain challenges. Through best practices, utility case studies, and EPA resources, the guide provides information that utilities can use to mitigate the impacts of supply chain disruption.





But the reality is that ongoing communication with regulators and elected officials is still needed to share information on growing costs and the amount of time needed to complete work. Even with federal and state resources, supply management and communication, local partnerships, and operational flexibilities, many challenges remain. GCA has joined with other clean water agencies to work with elected officials on finding solutions to supply shortages and manage their impacts on project delivery.

“Finally, water and wastewater infrastructure utilities must continue to work with our customers and our elected officials to get ‘front-of-the-line’ preference when ordering supplies for critical infrastructure,” said Phyllis Frank, Chief Technical Officer.

Building for tomorrow

Despite the many downsides, supply chain shortages also have had a positive impact, spurring the adoption of newer technology in the wastewater management industry. For example, authorities like GCA are implementing data-driven optimization to better manage demand using analytical devices.

“I couldn’t be prouder of the GCA team and their commitment to our mission,” said Amber Batson, GCA Board Economic Development Committee Chair. “When others might have been tempted to throw in the towel and say it can’t be done under these conditions, our professionals have buckled down and pushed ahead. We also appreciate the understanding and patience of our customers and regulators and their willingness to work with us to find ways to get it done.”

“When others might have been tempted to throw in the towel and say it can’t be done under these conditions, our professionals have buckled down and pushed ahead.”

FEATURES



COO Scott Harris: Our

Scott Harris, Chief Operating Officer for Gulf Coast Authority, is responsible for the overall management, operation, maintenance, and capital improvements program for the Bayport, Washburn Tunnel, Vince Bayou, 40-Acre, Campbell Bayou, and Blackhawk teams, as well as the Central Office compliance team and GCA pretreatment program. He joined GCA in 2006 and was named COO in 2016. He previously managed GCA's Bayport Facility.

Harris began his 23-year wastewater industry career as an environmental engineer in the petrochemical industry at Sterling Chemicals after he was awarded a Mickey Leland Environmental Internship from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Over his career, he held positions as compliance coordinator, assistant facility manager and facility manager.

Harris earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science from the University of Houston - Clear Lake. He serves on the Board of Texas Water Conservation Association and was appointed by the Texas Water Development Board as a voting member for the Trinity River Flood Planning Group.

This outdoor enthusiast enjoys hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting as well as oil painting and family: wife Lanette and sons Brennan and Briggs.

What got you interested in compliance work and then wastewater and water management? How did your background prepare you for this role?

I grew up spending a lot of my childhood in the outdoors of Wyoming. I always enjoyed nature camping with my family, experiences as a Boy Scout, hiking, fishing, and hunting. From a young age, I paid attention to people's impact on the environment. Originally, I wanted to be a game warden, but the job market was stronger in the petrochemical industry. In grad school, I landed an internship at Sterling Chemicals,



People Power our Mission

which led to a full-time job with the company. The chemical industry requires employees to be routinely trained on the fundamental knowledge needed to operate safely, in compliance and cost effectively. This grounding in process knowledge prepared me for my role with GCA.

What is your favorite part about the role that you hold at the Authority today? What type of projects are you working to oversee at GCA today? Describe your leadership style.

My favorite part about the roles that I have served at GCA is working with all the great individuals on our team. It is so enjoyable to work with employees across the organization who are dedicated to their jobs, the mission, and being great people. When you work closely with a team to troubleshoot challenges or plan a future path, it makes the celebration of successes even sweeter.

The GCA team has been busy with launching implementation of an ERP (enterprise resource planning) system, policy review and update, master planning, strategic planning, and RailPort Facility development and design. I prefer to manage from a distance to give the others on my team the respect to lead, coaching and mentoring rather than directing. My goal is to build everyone on the GCA team by allowing them to demonstrate their skills and coaching them through their weaknesses. My brain is wired to be a troubleshooter. I am constantly trying to resolve challenges and find the most efficient solutions going forward.

What do you feel are GCA's greatest strengths?

GCA's greatest strengths will always be its employees and its mission.

What areas are you working to improve at GCA?

I will always be focused on improving all areas at the Authority, including myself. My current goals center on continued improvement of our safety programs and training, pretreatment program tools, and HR (Human Resources) training.

What do you wish more people knew about GCA and its mission?

In my mind, GCA is a very underutilized resource for Texas industries and communities. We have the specialized ability to treat industrial and municipal wastewater streams at regional facilities, making the treated water available for beneficial reuse. New GCA regional facilities could provide environmental, cost, and community efficiencies in areas where industry and communities are neighbors. This would be a tremendous win for all parties while helping protect the waters of Texas.

What are you most excited about for yourself and GCA in the future?

I get inspired when I can help our employees grow in their careers, gain new skills and knowledge, and achieve goals they had previously thought unobtainable. It is our employees that drive and fulfill our mission. As I continue to work on my own development, I hope that I help others with their growth paths.

GCA is more visible than ever statewide, and I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead such as building new facilities like RailPort and continually striving to better utilize existing facilities to serve our mission. Leveraging technology advancements and creating efficiency gains in our current operations are opening new doors for us at GCA.

Is there anything else that you would like to add about yourself, your team, GCA?

Quality, motivated, and dedicated people can achieve great things together and overcome challenging obstacles. I am appreciative to have people like this on all levels of my team and GCA is improved by them. I also believe that if we spend too much time looking back to learn, then we forget to look forward and grow, both individually and as an organization. GCA has an exciting team in place right now with new opportunities for the next chapter. We need to continue to channel this renewed energy to better serve our mission.

GCA Conduit Financing Provides Clear Advantages

Over the past year, the interest rate markets have witnessed a level of volatility not seen in more than a decade. This heightened turbulence is closely tied to the Federal Reserve's unwavering focus on taming inflation, leaving markets in a state of uncertainty as to when and at what level interest rates will peak.

With the market uncertainty and the steady uptick in interest rates, financing professionals have seen a significant divergence between tax-exempt and taxable interest rates. This translates to historically substantial savings in interest costs for those able to secure funds at tax-exempt rates, compared to borrowing at taxable rates.

In this volatile environment, Gulf Coast Authority can provide an excellent financing option for infrastructure developers. GCA is a governmental entity with the ability to support conduit financings for public and private entities as well as sustainable upgrades through Texas' Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program.

In this era of rising interest rates, lenders are incentivized to make PACE loans at lower interest rates as the savings realized by the improvements offset the cost of financing. A recent policy change has expanded access to PACE funding by allowing program financing for projects on unimproved greenfield sites.

The GCA advantage is clear: GCA and its industrial development authority, the Gulf Coast Industrial Development Authority (GCIDA), have the privilege of accessing capital funds for projects at rates approximately 30 percent lower than what a similarly rated private entity could obtain. This substantial cost advantage

underscores the fiscal prudence of utilizing tax-exempt financing for capital endeavors, offering a clear benefit in a landscape characterized by fluctuating and uncertain interest rate dynamics.

GCA also has the dynamic ability to offer conduit financing for PACE projects. In the case of PACE financing, which can make up to 25 percent of a user's capital stack, not only is there the ability to diversify and fill a capital gap, since the projects are promoting a cleaner environment and lower carbon footprints, owners sometimes see electrical savings upwards of 75 percent.

"GCA and GCIDA are committed to providing a robust bond financing program that supports public and private governmental financing services," said Carrie Latimer, GCA Financial Director. "And in the case of PACE conduit financings, GCA is able to support water- and energy-saving investments."

In furtherance of that commitment, GCA/GCIDA also recently adjusted conduit financing program fees to better align with project users' needs.

"Being flexible in a changing market is key to providing the best services to industry and users," Latimer added.

Since GCA's inception in 1969, many industrial partners have used its governmental conduit bond services through PABs to finance projects, with funding totaling \$3.9 billion. Projects have included solid waste disposal, environmental improvements, and pollution control.



GCA Origination Fees	
Authority	GCA
Website	gcatx.org
Types of Financing Available/Programs (areas of focus)	Private Activity Bonds, Industrial Development Bonds, Exempt Facilities, Solid Waste, Municipal, PACE
Application Fee (including Bond Inducement, if necessary)	\$2,500 non-refundable
Origination Fee	New Issue: 0.20% for the first \$150M; 0.10% for any amount after \$150M; 0.05% for any amount after \$400M; Refunding: 0.05% for any refunding.
Annual Admin Fee	\$0.10 /\$1,000 outstanding issue
Underwriters	TBD; UW fees generally determined between the Investment Bank and the Client
Bond Counsel Legal Fee*	1st \$1M 1.0% of principal amount; Next \$4M 3/4 of 1.0% of principal amount; Next \$5M 1/2 of 1.0% of principal amount; Next \$10M 1/4 of 1.0% of principal amount; Next >\$20M <\$100M 1/8 of 1.0% of principal amount; and Over >\$100M 1/10 of 1.0% of principal amount.
	The Minimum fee for any series or installment of Bonds shall be \$25,000.
Issuer's Counsel Legal Fee^	\$1.00 per bond (\$1,000) of such principal amount; The minimum fee for any series or installment of Bonds shall be \$20,000; and the maximum fee for any series or installment of Bonds shall be \$50,000. For PACE financings, financings outside the State of Texas, financing utilizing project finance or unusual credit support or structure, as the case may be, counsel reserves the right to negotiate with the obligated entity for an appropriate premium to be paid to counsel, as the case may be, in addition to the fees specified above.
Financial Advisor Fee for Conduit Debt	\$2.00 /\$1,000 (\$10,000 Minimum; \$125,000 Maximum)
All fees may be negotiated for unusually large, complex, or taxable financings.	
In addition, the borrower is responsible for all fees of any federal or local regulatory agencies, including, without limitation, such as the following estimated:	
Texas Dept. of Economic Development and Tourism Office	0.1% of principal amount, not exceeding \$25,000
Texas Attorney General	0.1% of principal amount, not exceeding \$9,500
Also, in all instances, expenses are in addition to fees.	
* Where User does not have their own Bond Counsel and/or project is contemplated whereby GCA is the Owner.	
^ This is the Issuer's Legal Fee for review of the transaction. This assumes the User has their own Bond Counsel.	

Effective June 1, 2023

FACILITY UPDATES

GCA Breaks Ground On New RailPort Facility in North Texas

Gulf Coast Authority broke ground on its first new facility in 30 years, the GCA RailPort Facility of North Texas, August 17. Located in Midlothian, the facility will treat industrial wastewater for reuse. Construction is expected to take 18 months, with start-up projected for Spring 2025.

The facility is designed to treat half a million gallons a day of wastewater, initially for industry expanding in the area, and it will have the ability to serve additional customers in the future.

By employing new technology, including dechlorination and pH adjustment to treat cooling water blowdown, 90 percent of the treated water is expected to be reused. The treated effluent will be discharged through an approximately three-mile pipeline. Other innovations include the use of carbon dioxide to control pH instead of harsher chemicals like sulfuric acid. This creates safer working conditions for GCA staff, removes the risk of a chemical spill, and allows GCA to reduce its carbon footprint.

GCA Board members and project team leaders celebrate the Railport Facility groundbreaking.

“It has been a pleasure to work collaboratively with the Trinity River Authority of Texas and the City of Midlothian on this project, which supports their commitment to clean water for the community and the region,” said Liz Fazio Hale, General Manager/CEO. “GCA has the authority to cooperate with local entities to own and operate regional industrial and municipal wastewater treatment plants, water

systems, and solid waste facilities statewide. We look forward to similar opportunities where we can use our expertise in this complex wastewater/water reuse field to help meet the state’s growing needs for clean water.”

Consultant/contractor partners on the project are Brown and Caldwell and PLW Waterworks.



Blackhawk Team Reacts Quickly to Repair Leak

A pipeline leak under a major Houston roadway saw the Gulf Coast Authority team swing into action.

A call on April 30 alerted GCA staff at its Blackhawk facility to a potential leak under Bay Area Boulevard. Personnel investigated the area and found the 24-inch force main associated with Lift Station (LS) 142-2 was the culprit. The line is located underneath three large concrete stormwater water box culverts and more than 20 feet below street level, a location which posed significant engineering challenges.

Blackhawk staff members immediately worked to stop the leak and clean up the affected area. They worked with local law enforcement to safely divert traffic and then broke through concrete to excavate under the road to install a temporary bypass pipeline. Blackhawk operations worked around the clock, monitoring the site and safely transferring flow to the bypass pipeline. Emergency repairs took two days.

Once the immediate leak was addressed, the GCA team began working on a long-term solution.

“This took a real team effort in planning and communication, with GCA staff and outside parties working diligently together,” said Blackhawk Facility Manager Shannon Miftari. “Senior Compliance Coordinator Jo Wilson was vital in notifying the TCEQ and communicating with outside organizations while Technical Director Jonathan Sandhu played a vital role in the design phase of our long-term fix under the roadway. The City of Friendswood, Harris County MUD 55, and the City of Houston worked in unison to provide expertise and guidance to design and implement permanent repairs.”

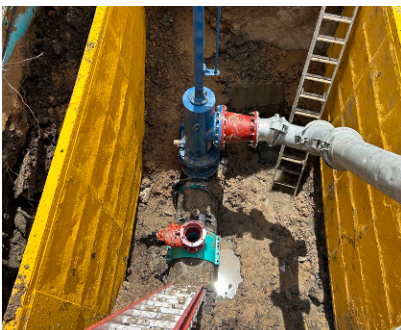
Using cameras to assess the damaged piping, the crew found that the line was compromised beyond repair as the pipe had separated below the stormwater culverts more than 25 feet below grade. A secondary 800-foot bypass was installed to replace the original 180-foot bypass so that more permanent repairs could be made.

Installing the new 550-foot permanent line required open cutting the road and included concrete

demolition and removal, six pit excavations, vacuum boxes for removal of water on site and in pits, procurement of materials, and work with the City of Friendswood for easement extensions and design standards.

Once the permanent line was in place in late August, with an upgraded design improving reliability for the facility, GCA began road repairs.

“Real kudos to all Blackhawk and GCA team members for going above and beyond to work this issue, keeping our customer and community needs in mind,” said Chief Operating Officer Scott Harris. “I couldn’t be prouder of their team effort. They took ownership of the problem and showed true ingenuity and leadership in balancing environmental impacts, community concerns, cost implications, and engineering challenges. This also was an amazingly quick turnaround, particularly in the face of severe supply chain challenges.”



Original 180' Bypass



Secondary 800' bypass



Bypass lines, 180' metal (L) & 800' HDPE



Extensive trenching for the new line

AWARDS

GCA Takes Home 4 NACWA Environmental Awards

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) recognized four GCA facilities earning the Gold or Silver Peak Performance Awards for consistently outstanding work. The Gold Award celebrates facilities with no permit violations for the entire year and the Silver Award celebrates facilities having no more than five violations within a calendar year.

In recognition of their complete and consistent permit compliance during the calendar year 2022, the Odessa South Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility was awarded a Gold Peak Performance Award and the Bayport Facility, Blackhawk Regional Treatment Facility, and Washburn Tunnel Facility were awarded Silver Peak Performance Awards.

According to the group, these outstanding accomplishments signify NACWA members' commitment to environmental protection. They also are a tribute to the diligence and hard work of GCA's dedicated employees.

"The Authority is honored to be a part of this level of excellence in environmental protection," said Phyllis Frank, Chief Technical Officer. "Our folks are laser focused on protecting the waters of the state and that includes ensuring regulatory compliance. Congrats to all the teams!"

Scott Harris shows off the plaque commemorating Odessa South's gold medal award for environmental excellence from NACWA, celebrating with board members (from left) Mark Schultz, Lamot Meaux, Jackie Peden, Kevin Scott, Chair Frank Jones, General Manager/CEO Liz Fazio Hale, Stephanie Farner and Bob Swanson. The Board also recognized the managers of Bayport, Blackhawk and Washburn Tunnel facilities for their silver awards.



Miftari Honored for Texas Water 2023 Support

Shannon Miftari, Blackhawk Facility Manager, earned special recognition from the Water Environment Association of Texas and Texas Water Works Association for his exemplary effort to support this year's recording-breaking Texas Water 2023 conference and exhibition held in Houston this spring.

General Manager/CEO Liz Fazio Hale co-chaired the event. "Texas Water was an overwhelming success," she said, "thanks in large part to the work of diligent volunteers like Shannon whose unflagging efforts made it an amazing educational experience for so many in the industry. Thank you, Shannon."



Shannon Miftari with Julie Nahrgang, WEAT Executive Director, and Mike Howe, TAWWA Executive Director.



Odessa South Receives Two Awards

The GCA Odessa South Facility was recognized by the Water Environment Association of Texas as the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility of the Year. This award was presented to the Odessa South Facility at Texas Water 2023 in Houston and acknowledges as an industrial wastewater treatment plant in Texas that has consistently exhibited outstanding performance of daily activities beyond the normal call of duty. The facility was also recognized by the Water Reuse Association with the Excellence in Action award for innovative use of recycled water.

Contributing to Industry Knowledge

Jevonne Bass, Central Lab's Quality Assurance Officer, co-wrote "The Municipal Laboratory and Operations: Bridging the Gaps to Meet Treatment Goals" published in TexasWET. She currently is writing another paper examining the differences in innovation among the generations.

As an active member of a Water Environment Association of Texas lab committee, Bass is part of the team developing WEAT's first bi-annual laboratory workshop to debut in San Antonio in 2024.



COMMUNITY

GCA Joins 'Fill the Bus' Campaign to Support Students in Need

For the second year in a row, GCA's Bayport, Washburn Tunnel and Central Office participated in the "Fill the Bus" school supply drive for the Pasadena and La Porte communities.

"GCA is proud to participate in this school supply drive and support the education of the next generation of students," said Denise Ehrlich, Washburn Tunnel and Vince Bayou Facility Manager, who organized the event for GCA.

The event aims to give local students and families a helpful start to the new school year by providing them with essential supplies.

"Our employees are more than happy to support the communities in which they live," Ehrlich added. "Plus, it is a fun way for us to contribute as a team."

Many GCA employees have children who attend local schools and understand the importance of having adequate resources for learning. This event was a testament to the power of community collaboration and the spirit of giving and has helped thousands of students and families.

GCA comes though with school supplies. Denise Ehrlich (right) with Valerie Hawker pack them up for delivery.



‘Water for People’ Fundraiser Sets Record

In late September, GCA staff led efforts to raise more than \$22,000 for Water For People. The international organization assists communities in developing countries with implementing safe drinking water and sanitation projects.

“Water for People is such an outstanding organization with a technical mission to fight poverty and disease through sustainable water management strategies,” said Shannon Miftari, Blackhawk Facility Manager.

Jonathan Sandhu, Technical Director, has participated in Water for People events for more than a decade. “This is a mission that I have been passionate about and I am happy to share it with my colleagues at GCA,” he said.

The 2023 Water For People event took place at St. Arnold’s Brewery. Special guests were Dan Hilderbrandt, San Jacinto River Authority; Tina Petersen, Harris County Flood Control District; Venus Price, City of Houston; and GCA’s Sandhu. Funds were raised through sponsorships and individual donations. This year’s event set a record in attendance and fundraising.



The GCA team spearheaded a successful fundraiser, pictured (from left) Drew Castillo, Haley Ramos, Shannon Miftari, Jonathan Sandhu, and Gerardo Ramos.

TRASH BASH KICKS OFF 2024 PLANNING

As a part of our commitment to community engagement, the GCA team is helping prepare for the 2024 Trash Bash® slated for March 23rd. The event is the largest single-day waterway cleanup in Texas and traditionally includes educational material about the importance of properly managing waste so that it does not enter our waterways. Although varying by location, the five types of litter commonly found along the Texas coast are food wrappers and containers; fishing lines, nets, and lures; plastic bags; beverage containers (including plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass bottles); and trash fragments. While the cleanup is once a year, properly disposing or recycling of waste is a year-long activity.



SCRIPTS: Going Above and Beyond

Peers and supervisors nominate team members who go above and beyond in demonstrating Gulf Coast Authority's core values: **Safety, Communication, Reliability, Integrity, Planning, Teamwork, and Stewardship**, for SCRIPTS awards.



His colleagues at Washburn Tunnel say Jaime Valdez is a pleasant teammate and hard worker, always going the extra mile. He takes great pride in his work and his dedication is evident to his teammates. The SCRIPTS award recognizes Valdez for exemplifying Teamwork. Congratulations and thank you, Jaime! Facility Manager Denise Ehrlich presented Valdez with his award.

A SCRIPTS award was presented to Faith Dimas (right), Chemist, by Darla Fogie, Central Lab Manager. Dimas goes above and beyond in recognizing potential nonconforming work. She excels at special handling of samples when needed and sets the bar for packet documentation.



Supporting GCA's Mission: Legislative Recap

During the 88th Texas Legislative Session Representative Dennis Paul and Senators Mayes Middleton and Brandon Creighton worked hard to support the Gulf Coast Authority by filing or sponsoring legislation to advance GCA's mission. This included bills allowing remote Board meeting attendance and expanding the Authority's conduit financing capability.

While the proposed legislation (HB 4993 and HB 3893) made it through the House, the bills were caught up in the Senate's procedural backlog and did not reach a vote before the session expired.

"We owe a special thanks to those elected officials who worked with us during the 88th Legislative Session to fine tune these bills and move them through the legislative process," said Liz Fazio Hale, General Manager/CEO. "We look forward to once more earning their trust and support when the next regular legislative session convenes in January of 2025."

Providing Board members with more flexibility in attending meetings remains a priority for the next session. With extensive population growth and often unpredictable coastal weather over the last few decades, it has become challenging for Board members to travel great distances to attend regular, committee, and emergency meetings. Legislative authority would give members the option to attend via telephone or video conference for the purposes of establishing a quorum, for voting, or for any other meeting purpose as long as GCA meets notice, public access, and recording of meeting requirements.

The second proposed legislation would have allowed GCA to provide conduit financing for a greater variety of projects that benefit public needs. HB 4993 would have expanded and better defined the type of projects that a development corporation created by GCA could finance and streamlined various approvals for out-of-state financings.

"We believe these changes to GCA's authorizing legislation will streamline our operations and allow us to provide an important service to the state, furthering our mission to support economic development while protecting Texas waters," Fazio Hale added. "We do appreciate our elected representatives' support and look forward to the opportunity to revisit these issues in the next session."

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Harris County



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Member,
Harris County

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Elizabeth Fazio Hale
Chief Executive Officer/
General Manager



Scott Harris
Chief Operating Officer



Phyllis Frank
Chief Technical Officer

CORE VALUES

S	SAFETY
C	COMMUNICATION
R	RELIABILITY
I	INTEGRITY
P	PLANNING
T	TEAMWORK
S	STEWARDSHIP



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