



WHAT IS OWASA?

OWASA is the community-owned, non-profit agency which provides public drinking water and sanitary sewer or "wastewater" services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.

In 2009, we will begin operating a "reclaimed water" system funded by the University that will provide highly treated wastewater for certain non-drinking uses on the campus.



At our Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant, we monitor operations with a computerized data acquisition and control system.

makes policy decisions such as adopting the annual budget, 15-year capital program, rates and fees; approving resolutions and ordinances regarding our services, plans and water/sewer regulations; and decisions to sell revenue bonds to fund capital projects.

The Chapel Hill Town Council appoints five OWASA Board Members. The Carrboro Board of Aldermen and Orange County Commissioners each appoint two OWASA Board Members.



We test our drinking water each day.

Who owns OWASA?

Our community owns the public water and sewer systems operated by OWASA in the same way that local public streets, municipal buildings, etc. are owned by the citizens.

How is OWASA funded?

Our services are funded with fees and charges for the services we provide. Most of our revenue comes from our monthly bills for water and sewer service.

We do not receive property taxes, sales taxes, etc. We occasionally receive State or Federal grants for special purposes such as purchase of watershed properties to help protect our lakes.

Does OWASA make a profit?

No. We have "cost-of-service" rates and fees, which are set to cover the costs of our service operations, maintenance and capital improvements to protect and enhance the community's water and sewer infrastructure assets.

We also set aside some revenues to maintain adequate financial reserves, which are a factor in our credit ratings in the revenue bond market. Good ratings translate to lower interest costs.

How is OWASA governed?

Our 9-member Board of Directors

Does OWASA subsidize new development?

No. Our policy is that "growth pays for growth." Developers are required to fund, design and build water and sewer lines and related facilities for new development, and to pay "service availability" fees for the cost of the basic OWASA system capacities needed for the development.



Maintenance work is a daily priority.

(continued on page 2)

Este boletín informativo contiene información sobre los servicios de agua y alcantarillado de OWASA. Para obtener una traducción, por favor llame al 537-4221, mande un correo electrónico a webmaster@owasa.org, o visite la página de Internet www.owasa.org. ¡Muchas gracias!

Similarly, when an existing neighborhood petitions for extension of public water or sewer mains to replace private wells or septic systems, the extension costs are recovered by assessment of the benefitting property owners.

Does OWASA have a defined service area?

Yes. We serve the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and certain areas near the Towns that are part of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro urban service area as defined in agreements among Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Orange County and OWASA. These agreements provide that OWASA water and sewer service will not be further extended in the University Lake watershed or other “rural buffer” areas such the area north of Interstate-40.



At our Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant in southeast Chapel Hill, we use settling tanks (to remove solid particles), biological treatment, filters, ultraviolet light (to kill germs) and other processes to “reclaim” wastewater as a resource that can be recycled back to the environment or used for allowable non-drinking purposes.

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

OUR MISSION: to provide high quality water and wastewater services through responsible, sustainable, and creative stewardship of the resources and assets we manage. We will do this with a productive, empowered, talented, and diverse work force, which strives for excellence.

Quality Drinking Water: We will provide the highest quality drinking water for our customers through proactive and sustainable watershed management, and the effective and reliable operation and maintenance of the water supply, treatment, and distribution system.

Environmental Responsibility: We will protect the environment through the effective and reliable operation and maintenance of the wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling systems. We will manage our resources and assets in an environmentally responsible manner, maintaining or exceeding any regulatory requirements or mandates.

Excellence in Customer Service: We are dedicated to excellence in serving customers in all aspects of our business services. We will be leaders in keeping our customers informed and will provide them meaningful opportunities to participate in deci-

sions that are important to the community.

Employees: We value our employees as our most important resource and we will provide them competitive compensation and benefits, and maintain a safe and rewarding work environment. We will promote diversity and equal opportunity for development and advancement for all employees.

Efficiency and Value: We will perform all services in a financially sound and responsible manner with sufficient revenues to properly operate and fully maintain the water and wastewater system. As OWASA relies solely on user fees, we will continue to be guided by cost-of-service principles with regards to our rates, fees, and charges, and operate the water and sewer system with the lowest rates consistent with our obligation to provide proper and efficient services, now and in the future. We remain committed to continuous improvement in all of our services and will provide high value to our customers.

Sustainability: We will proactively plan, construct, operate, maintain, and finance the water and wastewater system in a manner consistent with the principles of environmental, social and economic sustainability. We will work hard to meet the

needs of our current and future customers, community, and environment without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. We will strive to make the highest and best use of our local water resources and we will adopt practices which encourage conservation of water, energy, and other natural resources.

Local Government Compatibility: We will manage our responsibilities in a manner consistent and compatible with the adopted growth management policies and land use plans of the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Chapel Hill, and Orange County. We will maintain open and positive communications with our local governments. We will also maintain open and positive communications with neighboring water utilities and cooperate in regional initiatives where appropriate and consistent with OWASA’s commitment to its member governments.

Innovation and Creativity: We will seek innovation and creativity in accomplishing our mission and enhancing our services. We will invest in ongoing research and development for new and improved ways to accomplish our mission.

