Supportive Effort

Improvements to vehicles and technology are helping DC Water’s fleet department to have a positive impact on the organization.

DC Water provides water and wastewater services to the District of Columbia, an area of approximately 725 square miles.
When thinking about water and wastewater treatment, fleet management is not usually the first thing that leaps to mind. But just as DC Water is striving to provide its customers with world-class water and wastewater services that are both reliable and cost-effective, its fleet management operations aim to provide a similarly high level of service to all of the organization’s departments.

“Our job is to service the various departments and provide support services through our vehicles, mobile technology and equipment that allow our colleagues to better manage their duties,” Director of Fleet Management Tim Fitzgerald says.

“As fleet director, it is my job to oversee acquisitions and disposals to make sure we have the proper equipment in the proper hands at the right times,” he adds.

DC Water serves an area of approximately 725 square miles. It provides retail water and wastewater service to the District of Columbia.

In addition, DC Water also provides wholesale wastewater treatment service to Montgomery and Prince George’s counties in Maryland, as well as Fairfax and Loudoun counties in Virginia. Today, DC Water employs approximately 1,100 people located at various facilities throughout the district.

Altogether, DC Water currently provides more than 640,000 residents, 17.8 million annual visitors, and 700,000 people who are employed in the District of Columbia with water and wastewater treatment. DC Water’s main Blue Plains facility treats wastewater from jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia for an additional 1.6 million people.

Currently, DC Water’s fleet includes about 235 pieces of heavy equipment and 375 pieces of light- and medium-duty equipment. In addition, it has around 1,200 pieces of lighter equipment such as light plants and tow-behinds.

Working alongside Fitzgerald is rest of the department’s staff. It includes an executive assistant, program manager, program analyst a data analyst and 26 mechanics.

Most DC Water vehicles currently have GPS capabilities. DC Water’s fleet department closely tracks fuel usage, safety and performance. DC Water currently has two fleet shop locations, one that has 16 maintenance bays and another that is equipped with five maintenance bays.

“We are considered to be one of top
100 fleets in the industry in the country, which is in the top 2 percent,” according to Fitzgerald.

“We are working to help all other departments on their strategies so they can execute on their programs,” Fitzgerald adds.

**Efficient and Clean**

Among the priorities that DC Water has been focused includes replacing many of its current vehicles and heavy-duty vehicle equipment, which include Jet- Vacs and valve turners. The idea is to bring in more fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles.

“We want to be able to provide green equipment that is safe, environmentally friendly and has the ability to perform,” Fitzgerald says.

“We can do maintenance for equipment on-site, and we can also make sure that vehicles are running to optimal levels,” he adds. “Beyond that, we are always making sure all pieces of equipment are ready to go.”

In addition, to support its ongoing efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, the DC Water fleet department is implementing comprehensive steps and coordinating with each department within the organization to prioritize their needs for the acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to perform and support the responsibilities within the organization.

Beyond that, DC Water is also looking at the acquisition of other new pieces of equipment. This includes investing into new industrial river-cleaning equipment such as skimmer boats.

Along with that, the department is making investments into heavy machinery that can clean the catch basins and the valve turners, which DC Water has agreed to maintain for the district and for the federal governments.

“We have a clean rivers project that is happening right now in the district,” according to Fitzgerald. “That is a high-visibility project that our department is working very hard to support.”

**Technology Matters**

One of the pieces of technology that the organization has brought in is the FleetWave system, which provides DC Water with real-time data and information on fleet performance. DC Water has integrated the FleetWave system with the Geotab GPS fleet-tracking hardware and software system.

“We can do zone mapping, look at vehicles while on the road, look at maintenance codes and get automatic alerts on unit conditions,” Fitzgerald says. “It is all about tracking performance.”

DC Water’s technology platform allows the fleet department to know when to engage in preventive maintenance. The department also has the ability to make better decisions about purchases and the kind of equipment investments it should make.

DC Water will continue to make investments into the fleet department on an ongoing basis. Technology investments, such as putting smart devices in vehicles, will also continue to be important undertakings, because they will provide DC Water’s fleet department with greater control and efficiency.

“We are also engaged in collaborative efforts within our organization to ensure visibility to other departments,” Fitzgerald says.

“We want to cut down on wrench turning time and make sure our operators are safer,” he adds. “We are automating processes so work gets done faster.”

Ultimately, DC Water will be making investments into everything from expanded business intelligence to the sharing of knowledge. This will allow DC Water’s fleet department to stand out among the best fleets in the water and wastewater industry.

“We are a leader in our industry, and we are actively changing our culture,” Fitzgerald says. “Technology will continue to allow us to measure our efficiency improvements.”

“We can do maintenance for equipment on-site, and we can also make sure vehicles are running to optimum levels. Beyond that, we are always making sure all pieces of equipment are ready to go.”

**GEOTAB**

management by measurement

// DC Water’s fleet uses technology to closely track the fuel usage, safety and performance of each vehicle.