

THANKS FOR A GREAT 100th ANNIVERSARY YEAR!



GU Commissioners *Julio H. Leandri, Shirley Dunbar-Rose, Terry H. Eames, Richard J. Stark, Chairperson & Mayor Dennis L. Popp*

PHOTOS TOP ROW: Kick-off celebration, 2/3/04; Customer luncheon, 8/18/04; Community picnic, 8/21/04. **MIDDLE ROW:** Unveiling our new emblems, 2/3/04; Utility Commissioners at TVC launch, 5/25/04; Concerts in the Park, 7/16/04. **BOTTOM ROW:** Earth Tones, 4/18/04; Business After Hours, 10/6/04; Chamber breakfast with Norm Bossio, 3/18/04; City Easter Egg Hunt, 4/10/04.

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GROTON UTILITIES

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CONNECTIONS

1994-2004

GROTON UTILITIES 100 YEARS OF GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

VOL. 4 OF 4


GROTON UTILITIES

WINTER 2005

Groton Utilities' History 1994-2004: *Our past... and future*



GROTON UTILITIES

 OVER THIS PAST YEAR, we have used this newsletter to look back at the 100-year history of Groton Utilities. While each decade had a unique set of challenges and opportunities for growth, this past decade has truly set the tone for the future.

As Director of Utilities during most of this past decade, Mr. Alex Chisholm had a mandate from Groton's City Council to run GU as a profitable business to keep taxes low in the city. Therefore, the company took some new steps to become "the premier utility provider in the northeast."

First, GU introduced a new logo and made its first acquisition: The purchase of Bozrah Light & Power in 1995. And, GU bought Manitock Springs Bottled Water Company in 2000, which it sold in 2003 at a profit.

GU took a truly bold step during this decade – building an entirely new digital cable TV and high-speed Internet service business. After several years of planning, GU launched Thames Valley Communications in May 2004 (see page 2).

For the first time, GU conducted a formal survey of business and residential customers. The satisfaction rates were overwhelmingly positive. This is credited to the hard work and dedication of the employees, and how they treat each customer as GU's most important asset.

GU and its owner, the City of Groton, helped start the Groton Division of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut in 1999. This gave Groton



Photo by © Roger Riley

businesses their own voice in a very active Chamber of Commerce organization. Since then, many of the Groton businesses have reformed as the Groton Business Association of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce.

Additionally, GU assisted planting a new pine tree for the Town of Groton in the Groton Shopping Plaza opposite the Post Office. Each December, GU decorates and lights this tree for the enjoyment of the community. GU, as a member of the Chamber, also helped

start the Groton Holiday Lights Parade, which has become a much-anticipated annual event.

Today, GU is under the management of Glenn M. Wilson – the company's 10th Chief Executive. The utility continues to follow a solid business structure, and continues to place a critically strong emphasis on customer service – its lifeblood. The future of the company will be as exciting and varied as its past, and the residents of the City of Groton will continue to be the winners.

Director's Message

At Groton Utilities, we have the best of both worlds: Exceptional employees and loyal customers. This has been the case since we opened our doors in 1904, and will continue to be our goal as we head into our second century in business.

Our customers always have shown great loyalty towards GU – and have stayed by our side through much growth and expansion. We are thankful for this and pledge to continue to provide a superior level of service for their water and electricity – as well as their Internet and cable needs.

It is too often said that employees are a company's greatest asset. In truth, employees are the company. At GU, our

employees work hard each and every day to provide exceptional service to our customers – out in the field, in our labs, and in our offices. We are fortunate to have such a caring and dedicated team.

In this, our last commemorative newsletter celebrating our 100th anniversary, we extend a warm thank you to our customers and our employees. Without you, we are nothing. We are proud to give back to the City of Groton and to the surrounding community. We look forward to a future together filled with many challenges in a constantly changing world.

Through it all, we will remain at your service. Thank you,
Glenn M. Wilson, *Director of Utilities*

Richard and Linda Mikna

Couple has worked at GU for a combined 79 years

THIS SPRING, Richard and Linda Mikna will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. They also will celebrate Dick's 41st year at GU and Linda's 38th year. They met at GU, have spent their working lives at GU, and truly are part of the "GU family."

Dick started working at GU in 1964 as a technical aid and draftsman. He worked his way through the ranks and today is an electric operations foreman. Linda started at GU in 1967 as a junior clerk at the reception desk, where she worked the switchboard. She later moved to the business office taking on many different projects, including typing (without computers or white-out). Today she is back at the front reception desk as a senior customer service representative.

Dick started his career in the GU building on Thames Street. He left briefly to serve 18 months in the Army in Germany. When he returned, he worked at GU's new offices on Meridian Street and then moved to the operations complex. Linda, however, was the first person hired in the new municipal building on Meridian Street and has worked there throughout her career.

Dick said one of his biggest contributions to the company was the role he played in the building and upgrading of



GU's sub-stations. "Today, I'm rebuilding what I helped build in 1970s, which is something I didn't think I'd ever see," he said.

Dick and Linda said Hurricane Gloria was one of their most memorable events at GU. "We worked around the clock to get power back up within 48 hours," Dick said. Linda brought all of her pots and pans to GU and set up a make-shift kitchen to feed the troops. "We went food shopping in the dark," Linda said. "It was a lot of work, but we had a lot of fun, too."

Dick and Linda say they have stayed at GU for so long because their jobs are interesting and the people are wonderful. For them, GU has been a big part of their lives – and they are proud to have been part of the GU family for so long.



GU Launches Cable & Internet Services

GROTON UTILITIES HAS A MISSION to be the best utility in the northeast. This means GU is always looking for new and better ways to serve customers. The recently launched Thames Valley Communications Division (TVC) is the perfect example of the type of company GU will be as it enters its second century in business.

TVC – a new cable and high-speed Internet company – has been "in the making" for nearly eight years when GU began to actively explore new ways to expand revenues and protect its infrastructure. When Congress passed the Telecommunications Act in 1996, a world of opportunity was opened to research and develop new communications services. GU decided it had the infrastructure to make a move towards providing cable TV and Internet connections – and more choices for Groton residents. So, after much research, development and planning, the company presented its plan of action to Groton residents in 2001 – and received a solid mandate from the people of the City of Groton to move forward.

GU tapped Mr. David Lee, formerly of SNET and Connecticut Telephone, to head up the cable TV and internet venture. Mr. Lee was involved in fiber optics deployment and technical integration at SNET, and also served as the chief technical officer for Connecticut Telephone. Mr. Lee began working for GU as a consultant, laying the groundwork for the cable venture and ultimately serving as Chief Operating Officer.

TVC had the unique opportunity to "hand-pick" the staff from a very viable marketplace to build a team that is entrepreneurial in spirit and can think into the future. "We run TVC with the same philosophies and attitudes as GU, especially in the area of customer service," Mr. Lee said. "At the same time, we view ourselves as an investment in the future of the City

of Groton – so we are always thinking 5 or 10 years down the road and how we can become the premier cable TV and Internet provider in all of Southeast Connecticut.”

To build TVC, the Groton Utilities installed a state-of-the-art hybrid fiber coaxial system that delivers crystal-clear television signals and high-speed Internet services. TVC’s system carries digital cable TV with packages that include premium movie channels, iN DEMAND Pay-Per-View, personal digital recording and high-definition packages, an interactive guide, and 45 channels of uninterrupted CD-quality music. The system also provides high-speed Internet access up to 50 times faster than traditional dial-up modems.

The company invested heavily in an entirely new advanced fiber-optic network – built from the ground up – and did not simply retro-fit an existing system the way most other cable companies do. Therefore, TVC has the capacity to increase future broadband services by an additional 80%, which means TVC will be able to offer new applications for interactive gaming, streaming video, MP-3 audio, and much more as they emerge into the marketplace.

Although TVC is a completely separate company, it is capitalizing on the market brand strength of the utility (“The strongest I’ve ever seen,” Mr. Lee remarked.). TVC includes GU in its logo for a visual connection to the utility.

With its official launch in May 2004, TVC’s services are being very well received by many City of Groton residents and businesses. The company is planning to expand into all of Groton, Ledyard, North Stonington, Stonington and Voluntown within the next five years.

TVC truly is an investment in the City of Groton’s future, helping to enhance the local economy and offer new cable and Internet choices to consumers. The division – and GU – really believes TVC is setting the tone for the next 100 years as a local company, with local people, providing local service.



PROFILE:

Al Dion – 40 Years with GU’s Water Division

BUILDING a competent, talented team. Simply put, that is what Alfred (Al) Dion, deputy director, water and waste water management, is most proud of when he looks back over his 40-year career at Groton Utilities.

“I love to see people develop into accomplished, excited, talented performers,” Mr. Dion said. “Throughout my career at GU, I’ve tried to help put the right people in the right places, and to look for ways to facilitate their activities. This has allowed them to make great contributions to the utility – which has, in turn, helped make GU such an accomplished organization.”

Mr. Dion started working at GU in July 1965 as a senior tech aid. Soon after, he became a junior engineer, then civil engineer, operations superintendent, general manager administration, and today is the deputy director of water and waste water management.

Mr. Dion has seen a great number of changes since he started at GU. He was involved in the building of the Morgan Dam, Sandy Hollow Road relocation, and Billings Avery Diversion, as well as plant and system upgrades and improvements. And, he helped GU through one of its greatest changes: The steep reduction in water production from 10-12 million gallons a day to 6 million when Pfizer ended manufacturing in Groton. “We got through this difficult time by keeping focused on our customers and core business values,” Mr. Dion said.

Mr. Dion said that GU has truly benefited from the foresight and ambitions of the company’s founders 100 years ago, who purchased land and water sources for the utility. Today, GU actually has excess water which it can now sell to the region to help defray costs. In fact, Mr. Dion has been involved in planning an entirely new regional water system with several area towns.

GU also has to keep a level of trust among its customers – residents and major groups such as EB, the naval base, and Pfizer – so they know they will



always have quality drinking water. Mr. Dion has worked with managers and staff to meet – and exceed – regulatory requirements, and GU has always maintained a high level of compliance. “I feel really fortunate to have known and worked with all of GU’s chief plant operators,” he said. “They are a very dedicated group of people who always try to solve problems and never just pass them along.”

One problem that no one could pass along was the security of GU’s water sources and treatment plants – especially since the September 11th terrorist attacks. As part of the Homeland Security effort, Mr. Dion helped train employees to be aware of unusual activity. This is in addition to preparing for other emergencies such as water main breaks or spills near water sources. He has worked with the DEP to create a Mutual Aide Spill Response Program and worked with the Connecticut Department of Public Health in training first responders (police and fire) to understand water systems and how to respond to various emergencies.

Throughout his career, Mr. Dion also has been very involved in the water industry community, holding chair positions with the Connection Section of the American Water Works Association (of which he is a “lifetime member”). In 2001, the organization named Mr. Dion the George Warren Fuller Award recipient for his “distinguished service to the water supply field,” which included co-chairing the region’s first Water Utility Coordinating Committee.

But his real reward is looking around at the water industry and the department team he helped build and seeing so many accomplished individuals. “Groton Utilities is all about people and the community,” Mr. Dion stated. “We have an exciting future ahead.”