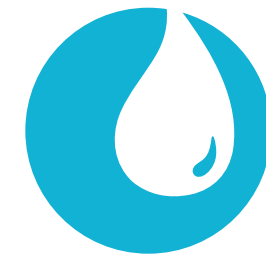


# City of Tallahassee Water Utility, Wastewater Division Becomes State Forerunner with Environmental Management Certification

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City of Tallahassee leaders and employees, joined by representatives from state, local and international agencies celebrated the newest milestone in the City's Go Green Initiative -- the recent certification of the Water Utility's Wastewater Treatment Division Environmental Management System (EMS). This internationally recognized accomplishment not only helps protect our region's natural resources but places the City's wastewater utility as the first such facility in the state to receive the designation.



The voluntary certification, based on the rigorous international standard known as ISO 14001:2004, marks the culmination of two years of work to enhance environmental stewardship, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and bolster environmental awareness among staff, vendors and contractors. In particular, it augments the Water Utility's ongoing commitment to protect groundwater, environmentally sensitive land and our region's natural treasures such as Wakulla Springs. It is in addition to the City's \$160 million in improvements to wastewater treatment operations and \$4.6 million for the nearly complete Tram Road Reuse Facility, which will recycle highly treated recycled wastewater for public irrigation purposes. As a system of management practices, EMS provides a structured framework whereby those who perform work for the City employ proven methods to improve operations and environmental performance. It also serves as a mechanism for prioritizing projects based on environmental needs, establishing goals, assessing cost and risks, increasing public awareness and improving community relations.

The elements of the ISO standard are designed around three main concepts: pollution prevention; regulatory compliance; and continual improvement. The standard provides for the critical analysis of all aspects of facility operations, from communications to training and emergency planning. Results have included the development of procedures that ensure that employees know and consistently use only approved standard operating procedures in the performance of their daily duties. In addition, the system has

enhanced communication with vendors and contractors, to ensure they also adhere to the same strict operational standards designed to protect the environment.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) promotes the use of management programs such as Environmental Management Systems that provide a structured, proactive approach to environmental protection.

"We applaud the City of Tallahassee on reaching this milestone. By achieving the ISO certification of its Environmental Management System, the City's Wastewater Treatment Division serves as an excellent example and challenges other wastewater utilities throughout Florida to adopt similar practices of continuous improvement that go beyond environmental compliance," said Elsa Potts, Administrator of the FDEP Office of Wastewater Management.

Future plans will focus on certifying other Water Utility divisions and expanding the program to other City departments. "This is an ongoing, dynamic program that ensures continual improvement," explained Oskowis.



"While the city has always been a forerunner in the wastewater treatment industry, this allows us to be even more proactive in our approach to being conscientious stewards and protectors of the environment," said Water Utility General Manager Jim Oskowis. "It not only reduces potential impacts from our operations but it increases safety and furthers the City's important Go Green efforts, such as energy and water conservation."

