Education and Communication

THE BASE OF EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO DO

Georgia Environmental Conference August 27, 2015

Education

WHAT IS IT?

Education

adidas
bring
the
fight

STOP
Running
Toilets!
asics
45711

NIAGARA

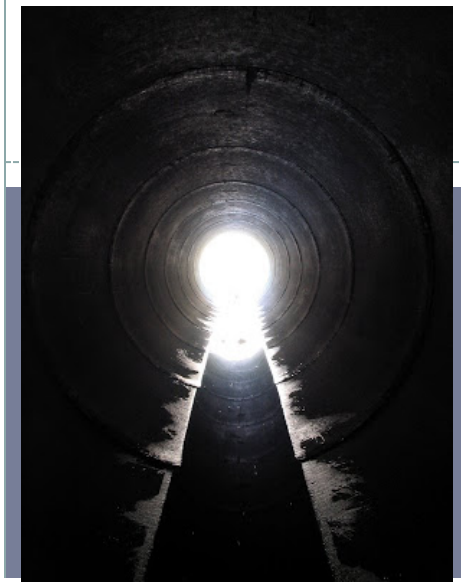
Communications

WHAT IS IT

Communications

- Press Releases
- Media opportunities
- Emergency response
- Crisis management
- Message development
- Regulatory information
- Rates and Fees
- Staff communications

Do I Need both?



You Tell Me?

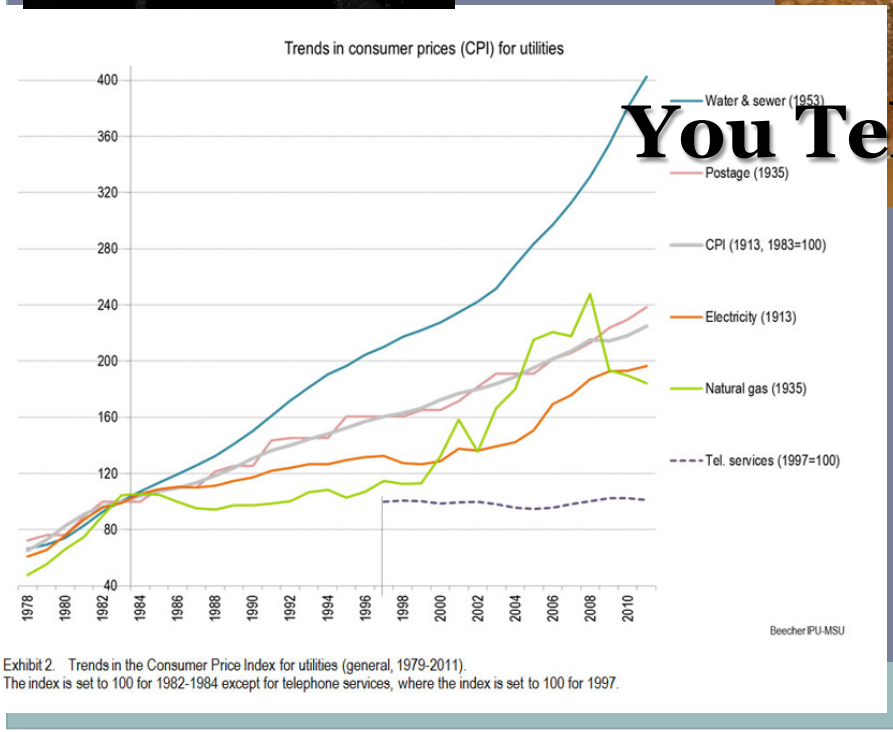
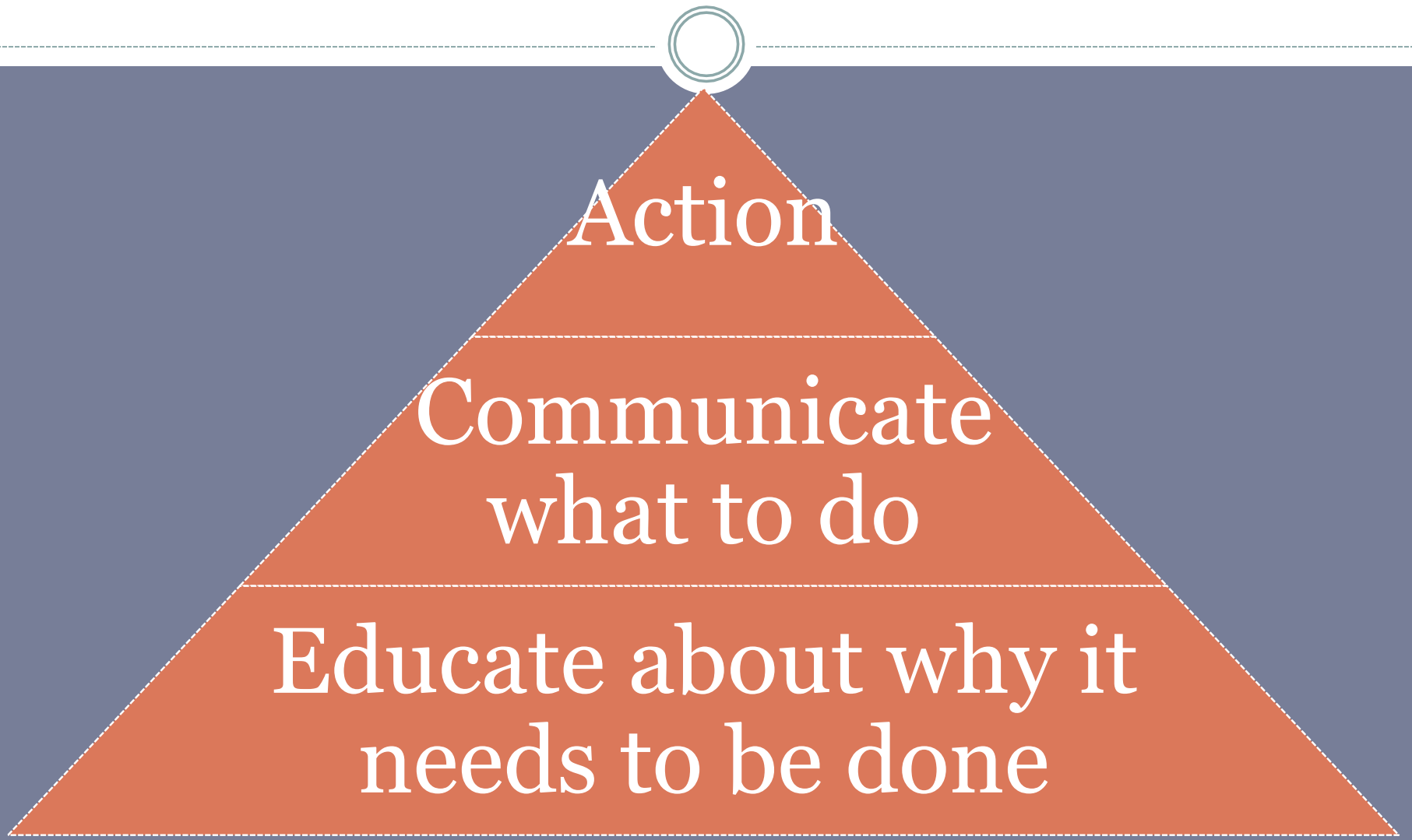


Exhibit 2. Trends in the Consumer Price Index for utilities (general, 1979-2011).
The index is set to 100 for 1982-1984 except for telephone services, where the index is set to 100 for 1997.

Working together at its Most basic



How Do I do that?

21st Century

Technology Making Outreach Affordable

- Social Media
  - Twitter
  - Facebook
  - You Tube
- Your Website
  - Interactive Activities
  - Surveys
  - Resources
  - Interactive Forms

Government Channel

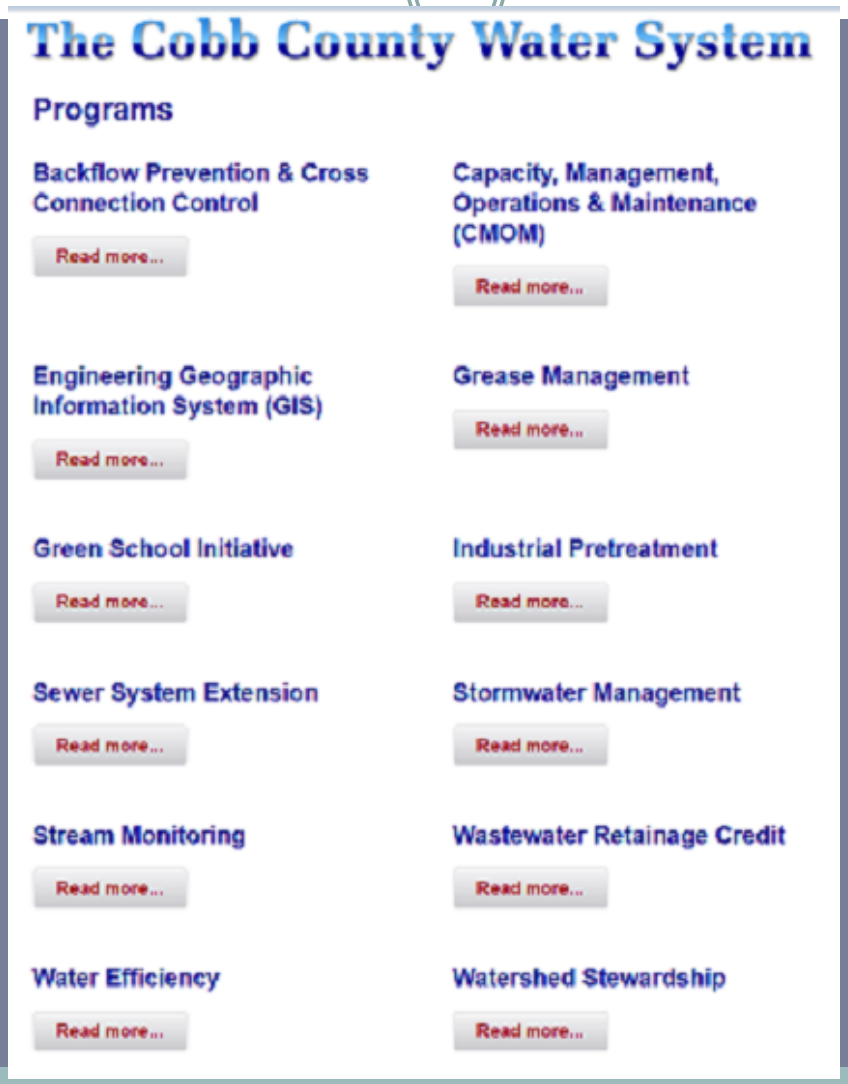
- Who watches cable access?
- Think about how to better use the Product.
  - Tape Pieces for Station - Get Copies as Video on Demand – Website
  - Instructional Videos – rain barrels, leak detection.
  - PSA's – 3 waterSmart PSAs with Walter Reeves – Cost $120.00.
  - EPA WaterSense is creating small videos – free for customers

Education free and easy

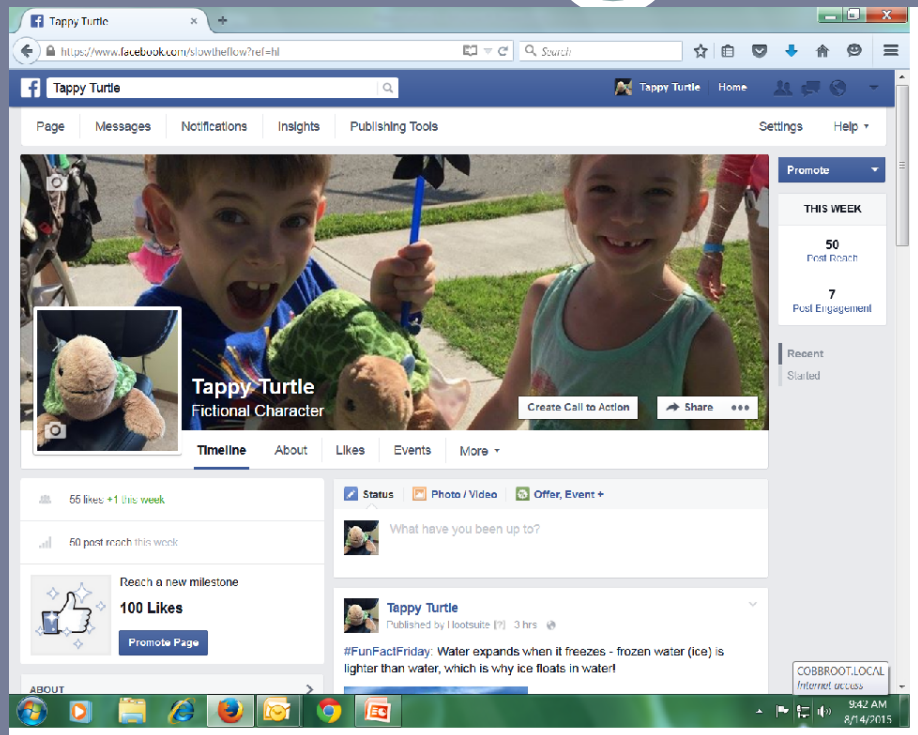
- Free Partnership
- Access to resources and materials
- Built in conservation education
- Web tools
- Social media post ready to go
- Packaged newsletter articles
- Experts
- Labeled products to assist customers

EPA WaterSense PARTNER

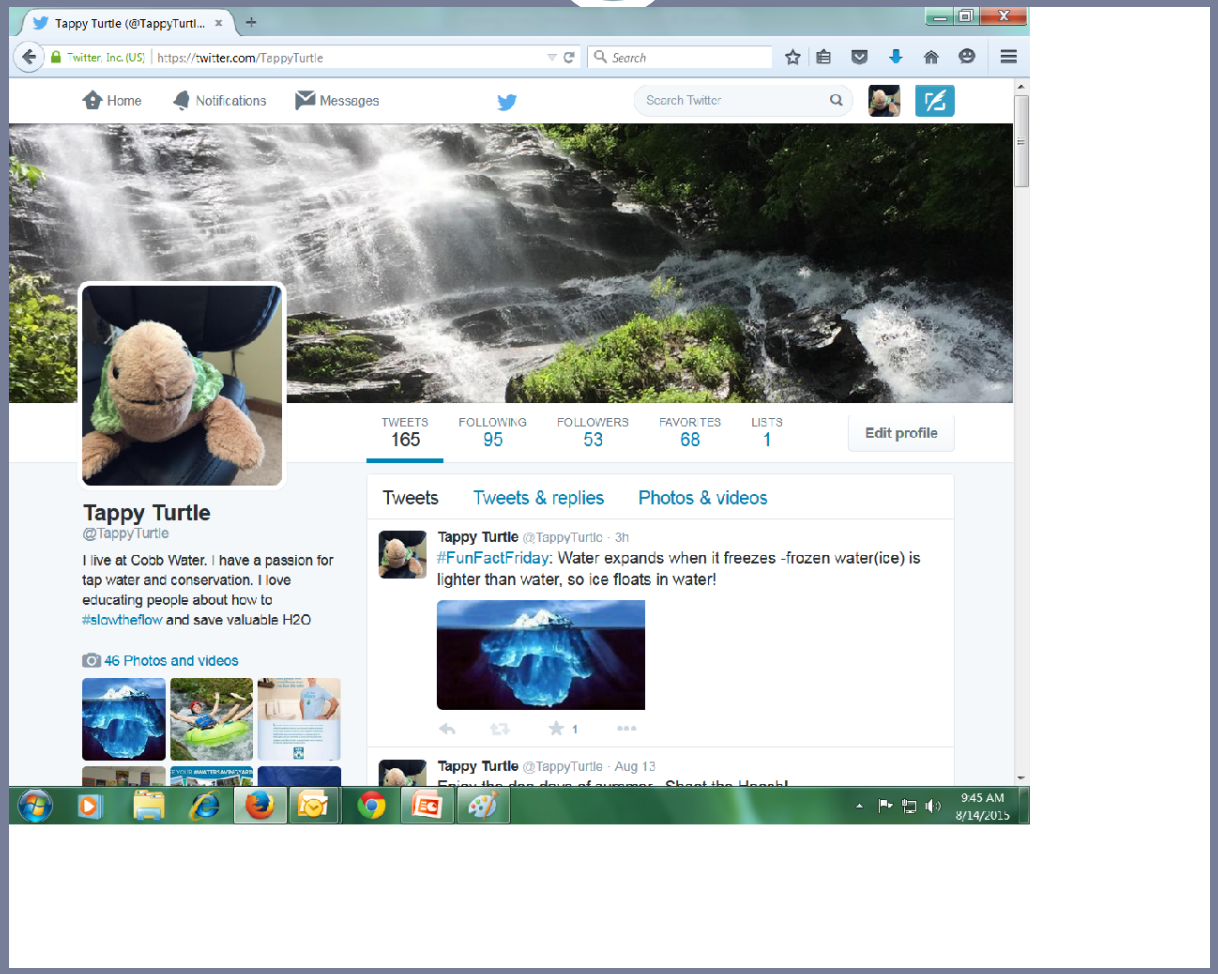
Website


The Cobb County Water System
Programs
Backflow Prevention & Cross Connection Control
Read more...
Capacity, Management, Operations & Maintenance (CMOM)
Read more...
Engineering Geographic Information System (GIS)
Read more...
Grease Management
Read more...
Green School Initiative
Read more...
Industrial Pretreatment
Read more...
Sewer System Extension
Read more...
Stormwater Management
Read more...
Stream Monitoring
Read more...
Wastewater Retainage Credit
Read more...
Water Efficiency
Read more...
Watershed Stewardship
Read more...

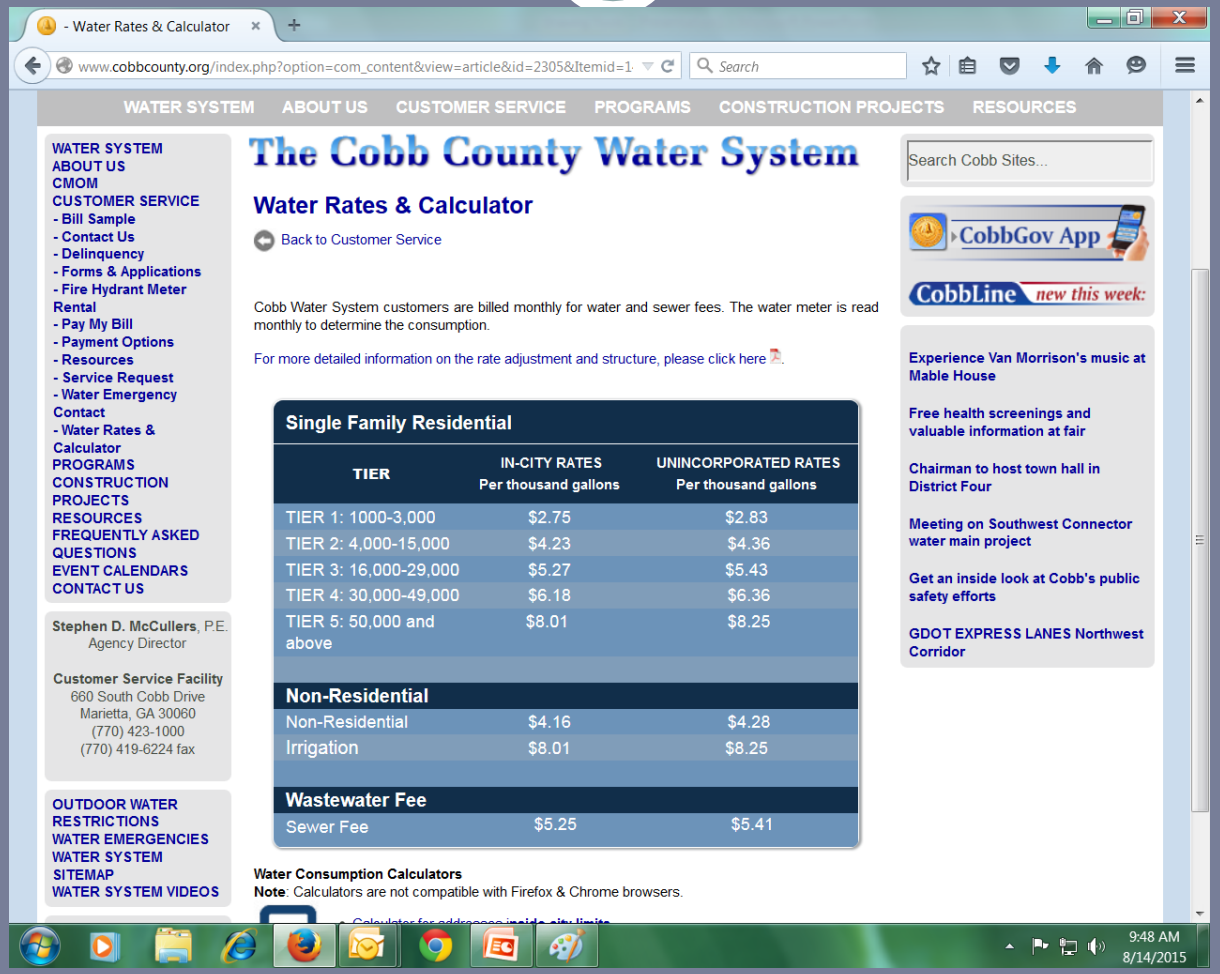
We are so boring



Get Creative



Be Interactive



It’s all about the Partners

The Beauty of Partnership

- Affordable.
  - Maximizes your resources.
  - The cost of everything goes down if more than one entity pays.
  - Split the financial commitment.
- Grantors Love Partners
- Increased Turn Out.

Pick the Right Partners

- Do they share a common interest in your project?
- Do they have any resources you lack?
- Do you share a common audience?
- Do they have materials you all can share?
- Do they have any $?

It is as Easy to Love a Rich Partner As a Poor One

- We have had success partnering with Manufacturers.
  - As long as same offer is made to everyone.
  - They can provide financial support and expertise.
- Professional Associations
- Success Partnering with Retailers
  - They have the contacts
  - Locations
  - Materials

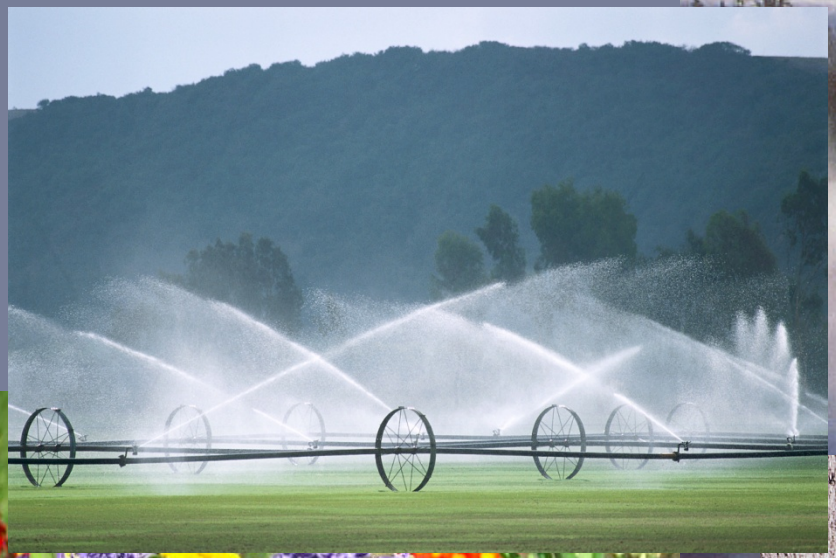
Leverage Partners around the Region

- If I can do an event with another jurisdiction why wouldn't I?
  - More Publicity
  - More Participation
  - Shared Expense and Staff Commitment
- Green Plumbers Training
- Outdoor Workshop
- Water Drop Dash during Fix a Leak Week
- Girl Scouts Education Day

What are We Really Selling?

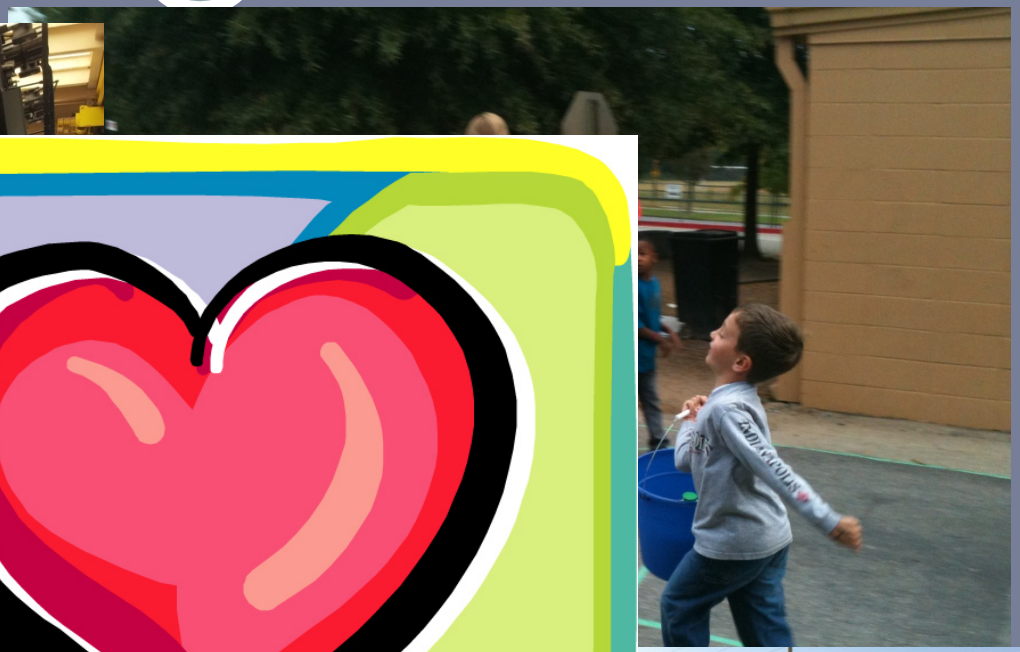
- Think of the bottle water industry?
- No one cares about water…until it appeals to their values or base needs
- We have to sell the experience of clean water
- It's a cultural shift
- Technical info may have taken us as far as it can
- Water rates are increasing nationally at twice rate of inflation…what are they getting?

Fresh, Clean, Life sustaining



When Customers Think of Us Like This?

Are You the Big Bad, Impersonal Utility or an Integral part of a Community?



Presence

- Is the only time they see you during a rate “stroll”?
- When things are good are you engaging the press?
- How many plant tours do you do?
- Do Rotary and Kiwanis know you?
- Are you asked to participate at community events?
- Does your outreach staff understand your rates?
- “The children are our future” ratepayers.

OMG It's a Crisis!!!!!

Keys to Messaging/Managing a Crisis

- Do not make customers work
- Have an emergency communications plan
- All the other stuff takes a back seat
- Be nimble
- Be responsive
- There will be no shortage of folks to tell your story
- Don’t let them fill the information gap
- Everything you have done before is infrastructure… this is when you build on it
- Don’t forget your staff!!!

Questions?

NO I WON'T WEAR THE TOILET COSTUME…
OTHER QUESTIONS?

KATHY NGUYEN
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COBB COUNTY WATER SYSTEM
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KATHY.NGUYEN@COBBCOUNTY.ORG