Chris Adcock Brings Innovations to Pittsylvania Service Authority

By Su Clauson-Wicker

Pittsylvania County, covering nearly 1,000 square miles, is Virginia's largest land-mass county. Its 3,500 water and sewer connections are spread over a combined 185 miles of line.

When Chris Adcock became executive director of the Pittsylvania County Service Authority (PCSA) in fall 2013, he knew he had to upgrade the authority's maps and aging monitoring system. A computerized system with geographic information made sense.

"Our water systems are spread out, so without a GIS system, my field staff might drive 30-40 miles to get back to the office for water line information," Adcock says. "And for meter reading, even the radio-read system requires employees to drive by all the homes and businesses."

Within two years, Adcock and his progressive board had incorporated a new system of checking water meters without ever leaving the office. It works a bit like a cell phone.

"The Beacon system uses cellular transmitters to send meter readings over commercial networks to a secure, hosted database," said Adcock. The data can then be accessed by staff and customers through an Internet-based interface."

If a customer's usage jumps significantly in a day, it creates a red flag for the staff to check it out. Previously, a leak could go undetected until the end of a 60-day cycle.

"Pittsylvania was one of the first municipalities in Virginia to adopt the system," Adcock says.

With a strong GIS background from his years as a consulting and municipal engineer, Adcock sought to put the PCSA's system into a GIS format. Funded through a cooperative partnership with the county, GIS information will soon allow employees, contractors and economic development officials to view

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utility facilities, property lines, fire hydrants, and other information online.

This is especially important as Pittsylvania recruits businesses to its new Berry Hill mega park and other county industrial parks.

As he looks to the future, Adcock has worked with H&P engineers to study an expansion of the county's water supply coming from Henry County. The preliminary engineering report has been submitted to the health department.

"The coal ash spill on the Dan River got us thinking about a backup water supply," Adcock says.

Adcock is a Pittsylvania County native who returned after earning a degree in civil engineering from Virginia Tech. He lives in Danville with his wife and son, a ninth grader. Adcock is a scoutmaster and serves on the vestry of Danville's Epiphany Episcopal Church as well as on the boards of Danville Golf Club and the Harvest Jubilee concert series. To de-stress, he rides Danville's 35-mile, IMBA-spec Angler's Ridge mountain bike trails.

Geotechnical Services Expand to Blacksburg Office

H&P welcomes Chuck Newman, PE, who recently joined H&P's Blacksburg office as a Geotechnical Engineer. He is a graduate of Virginia Tech and has been involved in the design and construction of a wide variety of geotechnical projects including infrastructure, land development, and vertical construction.

Chuck's primary areas of expertise include ground improvement, shallow/deep foundations, chemical modification of soil, and geotechnical remediation.

He also has significant experience in design of segmental and cantilever retaining walls, earthen embankments, helical pile underpinning analysis and design, geophysical exploration utilizing electrical resistivity, ground penetrating radar (GPR) and in-situ analysis of foundations. Specific VDOT services include post installation testing, pile dynamic analysis (PDA), and crosshole sonic logging (CSL). You can contact Chuck at cnewman@handp.com.

Chuck Newman, PE