



Canyon Lake Water Service Company

## Customer Report on Canyon Lake Water Service Company Preparation, Response and Actions Following 2021 Winter Storm

### About Canyon Lake Water Service Company:

Canyon Lake Water Service Company (CLWSC), also known as SJWTX, Inc., serves 20,000 customers, or nearly 60,000 people, in the counties of Blanco, Comal, Hays and Travis counties in Texas.

SJWTX is a subsidiary of SJW Group, which is among the largest water and wastewater companies in the United States with utility operations in California, Connecticut, and Maine beyond the state of Texas.

### Review and Evaluation of CLWSC's Preparation and Response to Winter Storm URI

A detailed evaluation of CLWSC's preparation and response to Winter Storm URI has been conducted by our team with support from our colleagues across the SJW Group. While a number of steps were taken in advance of and during the February storm, the post event review has identified both immediate action items that have been completed or are moving forward as well as some longer term projects for the company.

Trinity Consulting has been retained and is working with our local Texas team and our operations and communications teams across the country to complete a detailed and comprehensive action plan to improve our response to future extreme weather events and crises. The full report is expected to be available this summer and it will be made available through a link on our website.

In the meantime, we want to share with customers and the community some of our early findings and actions.



The entire state of Texas was under a Winter Storm Warning. (Courtesy: National Weather Service)

## EMERGENCY PREPARATION AND RESPONSE:

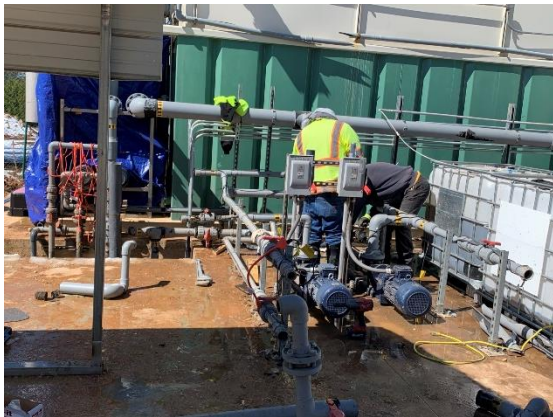
**Situation:** CLWSC followed its standard storm preparation protocols for freezing temperatures and inclement weather, including generator checks, topping of fuel tanks and putting as much water as possible into water storage tanks. The planning did not fully anticipate the extended duration and intensity of the freezing temperatures, and treacherous road conditions that made it difficult for our people to visit critical locations and transport generators to where they were needed.



CLWSC employee clearing access to facility.



Portable generators deployed to water delivery facilities.



Repair work underway at our Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Grove. Crews were on-site within 48 hours to repair damage from the storm.



CLWSC employees worked with local water haulers to provide water for all residents in the county. Over 100,000 water bottles were distributed.

### **Action Items:**

- Continue work with Trinity Consulting on a risk and resiliency assessment and a comprehensive emergency response plan that takes into account multiple 'worst case' scenarios. These initiatives were started before the storm. Tap the expertise of our colleagues in Connecticut and Maine where winter storms are common in our winter storm preparation protocols.
- Completed an electrical engineering analysis of our 14 most critical facilities for generator sizing and installed permanent generators at locations that do not already have them.

## OPERATIONS:

**Situation:** Many subdivisions served by CLWSC rely on a single water source. Extended power outages and/or freezing temperatures took some of these sources offline resulting in a loss of water service.

### **Action Items:**

- Continue work with our consultant on our Risk and Resiliency Assessment as required by the US Environmental Protection Agency to develop long-term capital plan to build system resiliency and reliability.
- Re-evaluate and re-prioritize our ongoing infrastructure investment program with an added focus on water mains and facilities projects that will provide for alternative sources of water, increase system storage and a robust grid of pipelines to provide alternatives for water to reach customers from our primary sources.
- Completed work on a 1.5 mile pipeline to interconnect the recently acquired Clearwater Estates system to provide an alternative source of supply for those customers and those in the Sattler area.



Elevated water storage tower under construction in the Ventana subdivision.



Ongoing work at the Point subdivision to expand water storage facilities.



Newly built ground storage tank on FM 3159 will provide additional fresh water supply to Vintage Oaks and Meyer Ranch.



Fixed-based Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) reader tower installed in Deer Creek service area. AMI helps customers quickly identify water leaks and is being installed in Canyon Lake service areas in 2021.



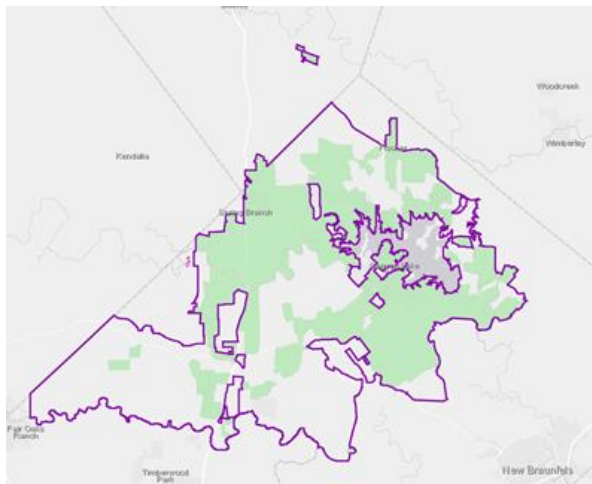
## COMMUNICATIONS:

**Situation:** The company recognizes that robust customer communications are critical during emergency events to provide customers time sensitive information on water quality or service and allow them to plan based on anticipated service restoration timeline.

The impact of the storm affected inbound and outbound communications between customers and employees. This was further compounded by COVID-19 precautions that were in place that had most office employees working from their homes rather than company facilities. The loss of power and telecommunications service made it difficult to respond to customer issues in the immediate aftermath of the storms so further communications tools needed to be developed.

### Action Items:

- Emergency customer notification tools have been expanded, with use of social media and website updates to provide for timely customer communications for events that may affect water quality or service for our customers. GIS mapping tools are available to be posted on the website so customers can check the service status at their location during an event.
- Formalized resource sharing with Texas and the communications teams in California and Connecticut that was implemented during the response.
  - The communications teams outside of Texas will be able to use phone, text, and email services to provide timely updates to customers throughout an event.
  - The California team shares a common website platform and is prepared to make timely website updates for Texas.
- Additional support from across the organization will allow CLWSC to focus locally on the most important customer service issues, such as tracking down areas of significant water loss that were hampering water pressure restoration.



GIS map feature launched during the winter storm event to show service restoration status. It was effective and will be used for future events.



CLWSC Facebook page used to communicate bottled water locations in the storm's aftermath.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE:**

**Situation:** As was the case with communications, most of the CLWSC call center personnel were working remotely due to COVID-19 precautions and many lost power and/or the ability to answer and make company calls. In the aftermath of URI, having a way for customers to report leaking services became critical to the restoration of full service. We note that nothing replaces having local employees answer calls from their local customers, but having the capability to temporarily redirect customer calls during an emergency is a valuable benefit of being part of a larger water and wastewater utility company.

### **Action Items:**

- Formalized the customer service procedures that were implemented during the storm response that allowed the California and Connecticut calls centers to answer calls from CLWSC customers.
- Executed a contract with a new answering service that will provide nation-wide resources for customer service calls during emergencies.
- A protocol is being developed that would allow a seamless process so that all of our call centers can serve as back-ups to each other during local events.
- A new contact center solution is being implemented to efficiently route internal calls, emails and chats to enhance customer communications.



## **CONCLUSION**

These are just of the highlights of the immediate after action report. There will be additional short-term and long-term recommendations identified and implemented based on the full after action report and the plans being developed.

CLWSC is committed to providing customers with reliable service and safe drinking water. We have already learned a lot from the February storms and look forward to making improvements that reduce the risk of customer impacts from another similar event.

Please contact us [\(830\) 312-4600](tel:830-312-4600) if you have questions or comments.