

Trends That Are Transforming Our Business.

Our new Strategic Business Plan, covering the years from 2008 through 2012, will deal with many changes affecting the treatment and delivery of water in this region.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS REQUIRE DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS

The Cleveland and northeast Ohio area are part of a national trend that shows our customer and employee demographics are dramatically changing.

As the Baby Boomer generation gets older, their children now become paying customers and they will exert different demands on the water system. It is our job at the Division to know and understand our new, younger customer base, and to provide them with the kind of interaction and responsiveness they have learned to expect from other service providers.

It is critical we adapt to this changing customer universe, as well as in our own employee family. In the next several years, more than 35% of our workforce will be eligible for retirement. This will generate a large influx of new employees who will need to be trained by our older, experienced veterans.



This is both a challenge and an opportunity, enabling the Division to instill a culture of superior customer service right from day one. When necessary, we will step up and help our new, younger employees refine their skills in decision-making, problem solving, management and other areas. This will assure that they are fully prepared to fill the roles assigned to them with regard to the complexities of water treatment and delivery.

THE CHALLENGE OF REGIONALISM, THE PRESSURES OF THE ECONOMY

As our customers continue to spread out and move away from the city of Cleveland and its service area, we have to make sure that the investments we make to serve them can be recovered. We will have to make decisions about how far we can extend our service area and remain financially viable.

Furthermore, the economy nationwide and here in this area is an important factor. More than half our revenues come from our commercial customers, which represent only 4% of our accounts. History shows us that, over the past 20 to 30 years, commercial consumption has dramatically decreased. So part of our mission is to help maintain a sound regional economy, so that we can generate sufficient revenues for future growth.

OUR CHANGING WATER SOURCE: LAKE ERIE

The Division must continue to track the trends that affect Lake Erie. Changes involving new invasive species and different types of algae can alter water quality, and we need to monitor those changes so that we can adapt in a timely manner.

In addition, there are areas of oxygen depletion in the lake, and those have to be carefully scrutinized, as well as any climate changes that might occur over time. To date, this area has been spared some of the more extreme results of climate change, such as severe droughts. But the future may tell a different story, and we need to be ready.

MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

The “greening” of the Cleveland Division of Water continues, as we seek to conserve natural resources whenever possible.

From a larger perspective, we must make sure that we sustain our physical infrastructure as well as our talented workforce and finances.

Of course, we also want to sustain our customers by helping to make sure they are healthy and part of a robust and growing economy.



ADAPTING TO CHANGING CUSTOMER UNIVERSE