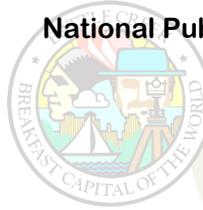


DPW Records

National Public Works Week 2016—Always There

May 18, 2016



We protect the infrastructure for everybody.”

-Melissa Matson

DPW Records utility locator

Staff maintains the city's infrastructure history on paper, online

Over the last decade, the four employees who work for our Records Division in the Department of Public Works, and those before them, have undertaken the monumental goal of moving every street measurement, hydrant placement, sewer and water line, inlet and more online.

The records room is a historical library of water and sewer connections, aerial maps, street building and rebuilding plans and photos of some of that work happening. Some of these records date back to the 1890s and early 1900s; the group recently found record of a fire hydrant



Culvert installation at Dickman Road.

installed in 1893. These records sometimes are as accurate as the technology at the time of their creation, so GIS Specialist Virginia VanderVeen often has a stack of printed maps on her desk that say “WRONG” with the incorrect infrastructure location circled in pen.

She and Utility Locator Melissa Matson use GPS equipment to pinpoint exactly where those pipes, manhole covers and other pieces of infrastructure are supposed to be, adding accurate locations and measurements to our online maps.

And, while the technology is great, the group also still has to use the prints and tap slips to identify item locations.

This is important so that our other city staffs—engineering,

water and sewer crews and others—can start digging in the right places and find the infrastructure they need as easily as possible. During a water shutoff, if the valves aren't in the places recorded, that can cause problems for and delay that work.

Along with the mapping, this group handles permits to allow work in our rights of way (basically, the area between the sidewalk and the street), driveway permits and utility locating.

Melissa does much of the utility locating, so you may see her in your yard with little flags of various colors if you're starting home renovations, or any other sort of work that involves digging. You call MISS DIG (811) and Melissa will come out and mark the underground utility lines at your property.

As with many Public Works careers, on-the-job experience

goes a long way in educating our staff and improving their skills. And the education that's useful can vary.

Virginia didn't have utility experience coming in, but has GIS and urban planning degrees, with expertise in map design. That helps her create maps of various types for the public, as well as to support the rest of our city departments.



Always There

DPW Records is a division that maintains much of the city's infrastructure history, through maps, tap slips and photos.

The group also maintains the city's rights of way to ensure this infrastructure is well taken care of.

That infrastructure will always be there. The records tell us where it is and how it works. That's important information to keep now, for other city crews doing work in and around our hydrants, streets and sewer lines, as well as in the future for the generation of city workers who will come after us.

DPW Records Facts

1890s	city utilities first constructed
409	miles of sewer main
383	miles of water main
188	miles of storm drain
4	DPW Records staff

