

# Up With Reuse

CONTINUING PROMOTIONS, INCLUDING A MASCOT, HELP POMPANO BEACH PUMP UP RESIDENTIAL CONNECTIONS FOR ITS RECLAIMED WATER IRRIGATION SYSTEM

By Jeff Smith

Efforts to encourage Pompano Beach residents to connect to the city's reuse water irrigation system reached a new high in 2014 when the winner of a promotional contest suggested the name of Squirt as a sprinkler head mascot.

Since then, Squirt has taken on a personality, growing arms and legs, wearing sunglasses and showing up all over town promoting reuse water's benefits, says utilities director Randy Brown. The mascot and other promotions have helped this city on Florida's Atlantic Coast increase reclaimed water use significantly.

## CONTEST KICK-START

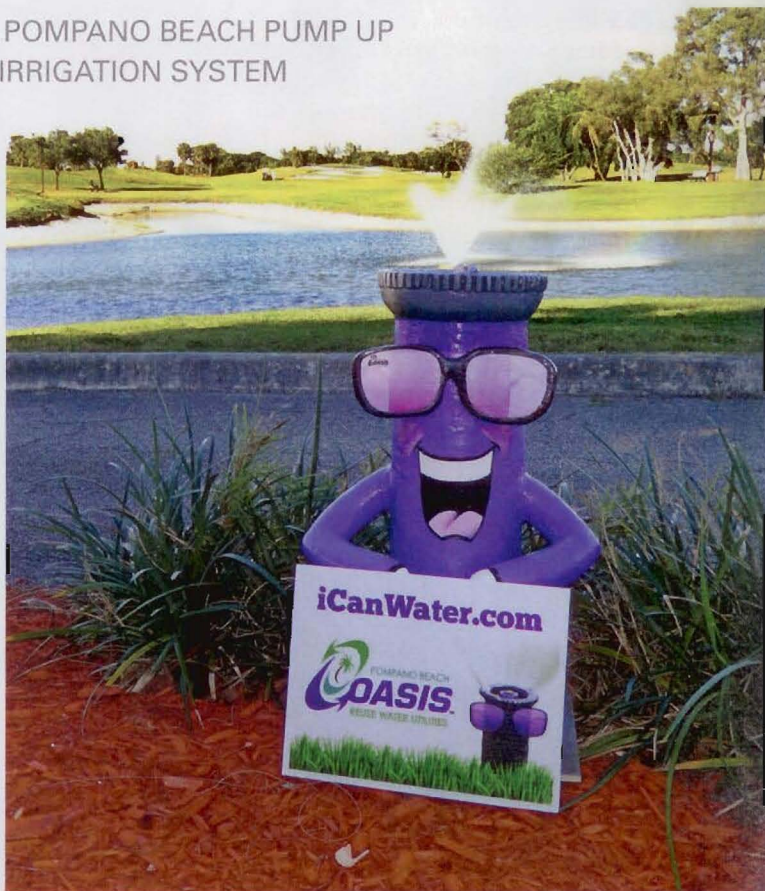
The city's reuse facility went online in 1989 as a 2.5 mgd filtration and disinfection system with 73 homes connected. Initial community acceptance was slow, partly because of high hookup costs, which have since been removed. Today, 625 homes and more than 300 businesses are connected, and a second storage tank has been added to handle the current 7.5 mgd capacity.

The reuse system, named OASIS (Our Alternative Supply Irrigation System), originally supplied only the city's two 18-hole golf courses. Promotions directed at residential hookups met limited success. But in spring 2014, the "Name Our Sprinkler Head Mascot" contest was opened to all Pompano Beach K-12 students.

From more than 15 entries, utilities staff members Isabella Slagle, Fran Oney, Maria Loucraft and Brown selected Squirt, submitted by fourth-grader Reese Hartsell. As a prize, Hartsell won a purple iPod Nano, the color symbolic of the reclaimed water system's purple pumps and piping. Hartsell's teacher, Candyce Rapp, whose class had the most entries, won a \$100 gift card.

## SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Loucraft, utilities compliance and efficiency manager, says the unique thing about the reuse system is that there is no wastewater treatment plant in the city; the col-



The mascot Squirt helps Pompano Beach market its reclaimed water for use in residential irrigation.

lections system carries wastewater to a county facility. A portion of that facility's secondary effluent, on the way to its ocean outfall, is pulled into the Pompano Beach reuse facility for tertiary treatment.

"The key thing is that it's sustainable for the city," says Brown. "Every gallon of reuse water saves a gallon of drinking water, so we can delay expenditures on infrastructure, like treatment plants. We can protect our consumptive use permit and use water for things that are important, like having enough supply for the future during times of economic growth. If we need the water, we've got it. Reuse also helps to relieve the demand on some of the city's wellfields, which were starting to see saltwater intrusion."

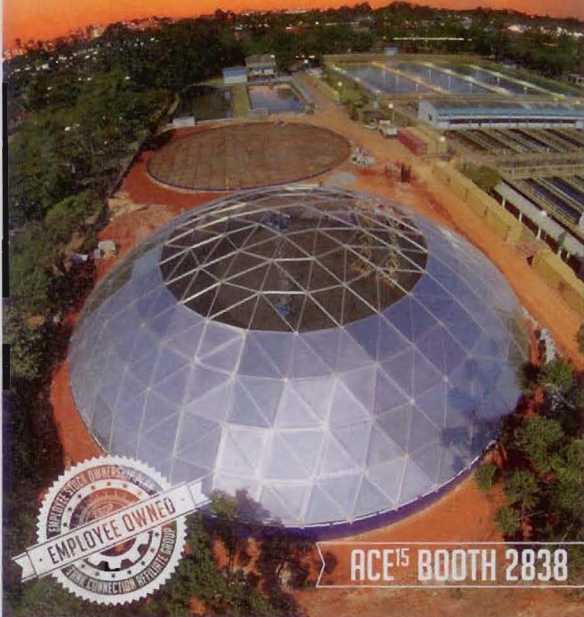
The reuse facility lies near a major thoroughfare and a large shopping center. Because appearance and security are major concerns, the utility in 2014 replaced a surrounding chain-link fence with nearly 900 feet of decorative aluminum fencing in a high-gloss black finish. The tops of the fence bend outward from the plant and are capped with steep pyramid-shaped



The hallway in the administration building displays a poster used to promote the OASIS program.

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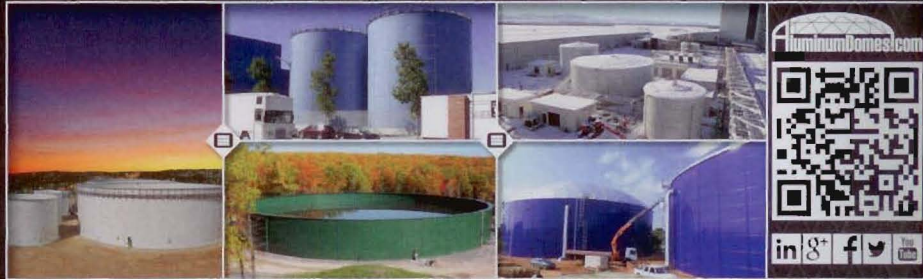


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The reclaimed water plant grounds are attractively landscaped.

“Every gallon of reuse water saves a gallon of drinking water so we can delay expenditures on infrastructure, like treatment plants.”

**RANDY BROWN**

responded to a call for ideas for a logo to symbolize the reuse mission. The winning entry was enhanced by commercial artist in exchange for recognition.

The contest also yielded the plant's tagline: Making it Clean and Turning it Green. In August 2012, the plant promoted residential hookups with an Evening of the OASIS. Festivities included music by a local guitar

ist, a variety of foods and a plant tour.

## SPRUCING UP

To present a more professional image during plant tours, the administrative offices received new paint, furnishings and wall hangings in 2014. Strategic landscaping helps shield the plant from passers-by. "It's really a beautiful facility and no one really knows it's there because it just sort of blends in," Loucraft says.

Promotion of residential connections is an ongoing effort, Brown says: "Typically we expand the distribution system by 10,000 to 20,000 feet a year, and we usually connect 150 to 200 homes each year. So this program has been quite successful."

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Contests have been part of other reuse promotions. In 2005, residents

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