



MEDIA RELEASE

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Business Series Focuses on First Utility District

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviewed Bruce Giles, general manager of First Utility District, as part of his latest video series highlighting small businesses.

Throughout the series, the Mayor has conducted interviews with small business owners and operators, providing them the opportunity to talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their families and employees, and helping them share any plans they hold for the future. A new vignette runs each week on the county and Mayor's various social media platforms.

This week's interview, however, is slightly different. Mayor Jacobs said he wanted to focus on First Utility since the operation plays an important role in the local community. First Utility District serves some 100,000 residents and 2,000 commercial accounts in Southwest Knox County, providing water and wastewater services.

"We go about our business very quietly but we're a pretty big operation," Giles said. "We're the largest wastewater utility district in the state and second largest water utility district, pumping out 34 million gallons of water a day and 20 million gallons a day of wastewater."

Giles noted that the company started out in 1954 with 120 customers and a few miles of line. The operation now boasts about 700 miles of piping in the ground. The company, which has won numerous awards during the past couple of years, also works closely with other utility districts.

"We should all remember that we serve the customer base and if we remember that, then it doesn't matter whose equipment it is as long as we're solving problems together," Giles said.

The general manager also noted that his staff includes biologists, chemists, engineers and service techs, and all have to be computer savvy and know how to use their hands to work on pipes.

"I feel like we have slighted the trades for years and that doesn't leave a positive message," he said. "It's not just getting in the truck and doing something. There's a lot of complexity in what they do if they do it correctly. And it's cliché, but it's like a big family here. We take care of each other and I think our customers are reaping the rewards of our philosophy."

To hear more of what was said, check out the [video](#).

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