

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another  
edition of The Break Room, a

weekly conversation about how  
the City of St Augustine

works from those who do the  
work everyday. Hosted by the

City of St Augustine's  
Communications Director, Melissa

Wissel. The Break Room offers a  
closer look at the different

City departments and provides  
updates on current and upcoming

projects and events. And now  
your host, Melissa Wissel.

MELISSA: Welcome to The Break Room.  
Thanks for tuning in. I'm

Melissa Wissel, Communications  
Director for the City of St

Augustine. We're celebrating

Waste and Recycling Workers

Week. So, who better to join me  
in The Break Room to talk trash

than the City of St  
Augustine Solid Waste Manager,

Olivia Smith. Welcome back.

OLIVIA: Thank you so much for having

me. I kind of feel like you  
don't really need any

introduction. You've been  
coming on The Break Room

regularly: recycling events,  
storm debris removal, you name

it, we've got you this time.

OLIVIA: We've covered it. Yeah. MELISSA: We

we've covered it all. Sometimes  
we have you on with Glabra.

You've got a lot going on  
always. And a lot of new

updates for us. So just let's  
jump in and talk about all your

fantastic workers. OLIVIA: Great. Well  
thank you yes for having us.

This edition is covering Waste  
Workers Week. This is our fifth

year working with the the PR  
department with the City, just

to brand and give recognition  
to our waste workers. You know,

it's a 24/7 job. We've  
touched on, we don't, we don't

handle garbage three hours  
every twenty-four hours. It's

the only time that we're not  
managing some sort of garbage

within the City. So, it's  
really important to just give

back a little bit and recognize  
our waste and recycling

workers. We've added some  
folks to the crews. You see new

faces. We've added new  
equipment. So, it has been a

really busy year for us so far.

MELISSA: And your equipment is not easy

to acquire. I mean, it's not  
like just getting a new laptop

or. OLIVIA: Yeah. I mean, there's been  
some industry lags. On ordering. We ordered  
quite a bit of equipment last

fiscal year that we're just  
seeing come in. I'm actually

still waiting on a few pieces  
right now. MELISSA: What did you get?

Tell us about some of the new  
stuff you've got. Really

exciting. So, we got a brand new  
grapple truck, which now puts us

at two of our claw trucks. We  
use that for illegal dumping,

bulk debris removal, storm  
debris removal. So we've upped

our ante in being able to that  
is the claw, the grapple that

comes out. So that's helped  
us run a bit more efficient. Um

we got rid of our old street  
sweepers and just got some new

ones. Same make and model. Just  
went with a little, you know,

newer, innovative. MELISSA: Are you still  
recycling the brush things?

OLIVIA: We are. MELISSA: They, do you sell them to  
farmers? What is it? OLIVIA: I, we work

with a program, that if I can  
sit on a truckload of them. It

helps us not to have to pay. So  
I don't pay landfill fees. I

don't pay trucking fees. And I  
work with a company that

repurposes them through mid,  
farmers in the Midwest.

As boot brushes and cattle  
brushes. So yeah, it's a feel

good program. And then, we don't  
incur that just sitting in the

landfill. Right. You know, so  
yeah, it's a good program. MELISSA: I

picture of some form of cattle  
out in Montana scrubbing that,

scratching their back. OLIVIA: That's  
absolutely right. Yeah. That's

absolutely right. Yeah. So, it  
is. It's a feel-good program.

We've been doing that for a few  
years. Let's see... we just

bought a new pressure washing

truck, not on the streets yet.

We're going to customize it.

It's going to give us a little

bit more flexibility to get  
into some of the nooks and

crannies of our downtown  
corridor, which is so unique

with space restraint. And  
so our pressure washers do a

phenomenal job. Start at five  
in the morning. They hit St

George Street and all the kind  
of extending avenues, and take

care of the unwanted illicit  
discharges and things like

that. MELISSA: And so those are the  
people that are out there with

the power washers, but you're  
also talking about an actual

power washing truck. OLIVIA: Well, so  
the folks that would still be

manual. But we have a a smaller  
truck that we're going to use

to be able to get in and out of  
those places. They still have

wands and brushes. Still  
completely a manual job, just

upping our ante again on the  
efficiency and effectiveness of

the equipment, so that the crews  
can work smarter not harder.

MELISS: So, tell me about the side loader. OLIVIA: Yes. It's all the rage. MELISSA: We're starting

to have it. It's all the rage.

I think there's been some

confusion. People think that by  
having a side loader, we're

we're giving up on our jobs.

Which is not the case. OLIVIA: Not at



all. MELISSA: Give us give us the the  
411 on how exciting

the side loader is. OLIVIA: So, the  
automated side loader is being

used over the past decade,  
decade and a half, throughout

municipalities all over the  
country, all over the, all over

the world, really. We're just now  
dabbling in it, due to space

restraints. It's tricky for us.  
And so you're only going to see

it throughout certain  
neighborhoods that don't have

severe park cars, tight right of  
ways, guide wires, fencing,

mailboxes close by, and so as we  
kind of create that route, we're

just there to pick up City cans.  
It's not for personal cans, it's

definitely not for loose stuff,  
bags and things like that, it's

an arm that out. It's not a  
grapple that comes down.

And so it's side load fed,  
but it takes all the manual

labor of lifting off of our  
guys. So by no means does it

eliminate jobs, we still have  
crews running, but we've got

five routes of manual folks.  
Three per truck, you've got a

driver and two throwers, that  
are running anywhere from 8

to 10 hours a day. The growth  
in the city and the volume of

what people are disposing of is  
immense and we can't get it up

in time. So, in order to again,

look at the efficiency and

effectiveness of collections, focus on  
customer service, which is

always in our forefront, and  
look at safety aspects, and

staffing issues in the industry.  
That side loader is enabling us

to start to tighten down on  
that a little bit and see what

works, you know with the  
innovative technology that's

available. MELISSA: Is it requiring  
special training by the drivers,

or just learning the little control panel?

OLIVIA: It does. Yeah. Got some different  
controls, camera systems,

things like that. They're are  
different than the traditional,

with traditional rear loaders,

which are the two folks on the

back that you see throwing.

They collect about 600 homes

max a day. With the side

loader, it's one operator. He,

he does do some some training.

We've had him in some certified

training. Right now, we're

averaging 4 to 450. 4 to 450, 450 homes.

With just that

individual. So, as you can

tell, we're taking some of

that. Madeira's growing,

Antigua's growing. We've got

these communities that are

building like crazy, and it's

hard to stay up with that, with

the trucks and the staff that

we currently have. But our

phones have rang off hook, like

yours have. Of folks even  
in the county going, what are

you doing to my service? So, we  
have trail trucks out there. We

still got manual labor, but it's  
just helping us get through our

route safely and more  
effectively. MELISSA: Well, I'm glad

you're you're able to get that  
efficiency and just to continue

doing the great work that you  
do. If you are just now

tuning in, you're listening to  
The Break Room. This week, we

have Olivia Smith back with us  
talking trash. She is the Solid

Waste Manager for the City.  
We've got another new program

that I want to talk about that

people are excited about, but

we've gotta continue a little  
education, and that's the glass

recycling drop off. Let's give  
a let's give a little how to on

the glass recycle. OLIVIA: Yes, thank  
you. So, we're in our third

week. This is drop-off  
program only. Folks, remember,

loudly and proudly, we pulled  
glass out of your curbside a

year and a half, almost two  
years ago now. We did that

so we again, we could bring you  
a program that is sustainable,

transparent, and cost-effective.  
Those were our main core

reasons that we went that  
direction. So, now we've brought

it to the drop off centers. We  
already have your green

dumpster. It's for commingled,  
right? So it's metal, it's

plastic, and it's fiber. Now  
we've got these fancy blue

dumpsters. Glass only. It tells  
you exactly what type of glass

commodity can go in there. I  
need you to take the lids off.

Unscrew the lids. Give a quick  
rinse and throw your wine

bottles and your mayonnaise  
jars and your medicine jars,

cosmetic jars, things like  
that. MELISSA: Beer, wine coolers, bottles... OLIVIA: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Sodapop, all that. Those type of  
bottles are good in their

beverage bottles, cosmetic,  
things of that nature. So,

anything like windshields, light  
bulbs, you know, automotive

glass. MELISSA: It's not any kind of glass, it's strictly food glass.

OLIVIA: Correct. Correct. MELISSA: Beverage

container, glass or food glass.

OLIVIA: Right, and it's so the drop off

centers that we have available.

501 Riberia is is

downtown Lincolnville in the  
downtown inner city area. We've

got 323 San Marco which is our  
North City, where San Marco US-1

intersect. And  
then we've got 143 Red Cox Road,

and that's our island area.

And so hopefully this program

will will be well received.

We've had some contamination

issues that we need



to combat and so right now

we're having to sort through  
that. In order to keep these

programs at no cost to our  
residents and our businesses.

We encourage them to  
participate, as well. It's at

no cost to them. We have to  
make sure that it's a

sustainable program. We use a  
different vendor for that than

we do for our comingled  
recycling in our curbside service.

And so I need to make sure that  
I have a quality clean stream

in order to keep that  
partnership and keep moving

that glass in the right  
direction. MELISSA: So, to follow on

with that thought. If it's  
commingled and it's

contaminated, let's call it. So  
you've got somebody, I know we, I

don't know who you are, but we  
we took some pictures, and there

was like some corner round  
striping and some construction

debris in a pizza box. I mean, do we get in

trouble? I mean ,could vendors  
say you can't keep doing this?

OLIVIA: Absolutely. MELISSA: And you and you've  
actually had to take some of

that and dump it once.  
Not to where you would

ultimately deliver it because  
now our staff is

separating. So, that's another  
thing to think about. And you

would say some of it's  
intentional, or people just

don't pay attention, but please,  
please, please, we are pleading

this glass only. It's the blue  
bins. Because then your efficiency

goes right down. OLIVIA: The quality control. MELISSA:  
Goes down to the toilet. OLIVIA: Yeah

and again, we bring these  
programs, but there's always a

cost involved, even if it's not  
transparent through the

resident of the commercial. You  
know, our department is putting

out those dumpsters. We are a  
collection point, we don't have

a material recovery facility  
where we dump it and we sort it.

We're there to collect and move  
it in the right direction.

Material management is what  
we're doing. And so we don't

want to put in the time to have  
to quality control every little

thing, that's why we give out  
tags curbside to say this is

contaminated. And then the  
proper etiquette to how do I

clean it up? What do I need to  
do? So those tips and tricks

are essential in providing  
those type of programs and

seeing them through to be  
successful. MELISSA: Now I will, I'm

going to, I'm going to say this,  
and I know we mentioned the

three that are on the on the  
east side of US-1. I do live

in the west side of US-1, and

I know we're working to get a

location over there. So I just  
want people to know that we're

aware. OLIVIA: Yes, we are working on the west  
side. We know that you need it.

And in order to provide that  
coverage. We do need to. So, I'm

looking at the ins and outs of  
what we need to do for our

ingress and egress,  
availability to the residents.

But at first, this is a pilot,  
and we want to make sure that

we're again successful in our  
endeavors. I will say that

we've collected successfully  
about eight yards of clean

glass, which is, doesn't sound  
like a lot in 3 weeks, but

considering that we've had to  
stop and pick out contaminants.

90% of those contaminants  
though, I was able to move to

the commingled stream, which  
meant that they were cardboard

and paper, plastics that we  
could use. When I get styrofoam

and other things in there, the  
grocery plastic bags. We've

talked about this before.

Tanglers and yeah, those are

things that they need to go in  
another direction, and / or the

landfill. So, any confusion, we  
encourage you to call Solid

Waste. That's what we're there  
for. MELISSA: Well, I like the idea of

what you just said that, at  
least folks are getting the

recycling out there. Just put  
it in the right bin. OLIVIA: Yes,

absolutely. So, step in the  
right direction. Yeah. MELISSA:

Quickly before we sign off, you  
do have some other quick

updates. We've got some new  
compactors downtown and the big

belly cans we love. Those are  
the ones that are solar powered

and your folks can see it on  
the computer. We're going to

see some of those new ones  
later this year. OLIVIA: Yeah, we've

got another ten sets coming  
out. So, hopefully we're

looking at that late summer,  
early fall, just depending on

logistics, but you'll start

seeing more of those in the

downtown. Again, effective and  
efficient. My crews don't have

to stop and pull a bag every  
two hours due to the

high-volume foot traffic. We  
have backdoor software that

that takes us through door jams  
and all sorts of stuff. So,

real cool, really innovative,  
very helpful to our crews, and

it saves money on plastic bags  
and things that are not

going to degradate in the  
landfill. So, you'll see those

soon. MELISSA: Any upcoming recycling  
events? Is our next one in

November? OLIVIA: Our next one, it  
will be. It seems like a while



off. I know we try to touch on  
'em but yeah. America Recycles

Day in November. We don't do  
anything really for Waste

Workers Week, but just get the  
message out there. Things

like slow down to get around,  
folks. We see a lot of

impatient people. These are  
lives on the back of garbage

trucks. They're out there to  
keep everybody safe, healthy,

you know, health and safety  
standards are utmost

importance. So, just  
encouraging people in the

industry. Please, as you're  
seeing a garbage truck and a

worker, slow down before you,  
you know, scoot around them and.

So really yeah, we don't have  
any events. We're focused on

programs right now on our  
services. Again, a lot of our

new equipment that's coming  
out. We even got a second

fork truck. That's for our  
dumpster rental program, a new

front loader, a new rear  
loader. We talked about the

side loader. MELISSA: It's like Christmas down there. OLIVIA: It is it's very exciting, but the demand is

there. I mean, the services  
aren't slowing down. MELISSA: So are you hiring?

OLIVIA: Excuse me, yes, we're also hiring! So  
with all this equipment, right

and demand of service comes the  
fact that I need qualified

folks. So look into us, Solid  
Waste is hiring. MELISSA: [CityStAug.com/recycle](http://CityStAug.com/recycle). We've  
all of our all of our recycling

information there on the  
website. And then of course, if

you just go to the homepage of  
the website and look for the

jobs module, employment, and  
look up what we've got. We

advertise all of our open  
positions there and we've... OLIVIA: I've

got quite a few.

Come and talk trash with us. We

need you. MELISSA: Excellent. It's a  
great place to work. The

benefits are good and it's a  
great team that you've got down

there. OLIVIA: Thank you. They work  
hard. MELISSA: Well, we are out of time.

So, thanks for coming down.

OLIVIA: Thanks so much. MELISSA: If you missed

part of this broadcast and

want to listen from the

beginning or share it with your  
friends, you can subscribe to

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weekly program addressing  
projects and programs offered

by the City of St Augustine.

Join us each week as the City's Communications

Director Melissa Wissel has  
in-depth conversations with the

people who make our town work  
to meet the needs of our

community. The Break Room is  
produced by Communication

Specialist for the City of St.  
Augustine, Cindy Walker. See you

at this time next week for  
another edition of The

Break Room.