

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.

MELISSA: 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 degrade 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. 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

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want to listen from the

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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

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another edition of The

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