

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another
edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how
the City of Saint Augustine

works from those who do the
work every day. Hosted by the

City of Saint Augustine's
Communications Director,

Melissa Wissel. The Breakroom
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
Breakroom. Thanks for tuning

in. I'm Melissa Wissel,
communications director for the

City of Saint Augustine. This
week, I'm sharing the break

room with Glabra Skipp. She's
the environmental program

supervisor for the city.

Glabra, welcome back. It's good

to have you back. [Glabra] Thanks for
having me. [Melissa] So it's that time of

year again. We like to have
that annual discussion about

how we can be mindful of the
environment during the

holidays. So, let's get let's
dive right into that big old

big old pan of oil. [Glabra] Yes, I get
super excited to talk about

this every year. I know the
radio station loves it when I

come by. So, the first thing I
want to talk about is you've

got all those holiday guests.

What not to flush. [Melissa] Yeah. [Glabra] Please

remind your guests Of what
they're putting down your

toilet because it can cause a
lot of clogs which causes a lot

of problems for you. [Melissa] I like the
stickers, the magnets that we

have on our trucks here. Toilet
is not a trash can. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] It's

kind of the easy way to
remember it. [Glabra] We preach it a

lot. So, flushable wipes do not
flush them. They are not

flushable. They are flushable
in the sense that they go down

the toilet but they don't break
up like toilet paper. So, we

ask only toilet paper and human
waste to go down the toilet.

[Melissa] So, I always remember and if
anyone has heard me and you

talk on the radio about this, I
always say, I'll never flush a

toilet the same since I've been
on a tour of the wastewater

treatment plant and the one
thing you taught me or that I

took away from that is
flushable does not mean

biodegradable. [Glabra] Right. [Melissa] Like you
just said, you can flush it.

[Glabra] You can flush a golf ball.
Yeah. You can flush money. You

don't want to flush it. So,
yeah. It's something that we're

very passionate about and we
have, you know, we mentioned

these tours of our wastewater
plant. So, we do offer tours.

Um if you're interested, you
can go to our website. [Melissa] Yup. [Glabra] You

know, WWW.CityStAug.com/Wastewater and there's a

place that you can send an
Email and we'll set up a tour

for you. Works better if we
have a little group. [Melissa] I hope

that we can do that again a
little bit off topic. We did

not do those this year for City
Government Week because there

was some construction and some
new. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] Machinery down there.

So, hopefully next year folks
tuning in can listen back in

the fall next year every
October but you're right. You

don't have to have City
Government Week to do a tour

but can you tell us just a
little bit about the new

Headworks? [Glabra] Yeah, so the new
Headworks is basically where

everything comes into the
wastewater plant. So, we have a

bar screen type structure that.
Yeah, and it basically filters

out all of the stuff that was
flushed that shouldn't have

been flushed and I say that
with big air quotes because we

hope it's made it this far. It
can get clogged up in a pump

station. It can get clogged up
in a sewer line a lot of places

that can snag that stuff. So,
the Headworks is our first line

of defense at the actual

treatment plant to get that out

of the stream. So, we have a
big dumpster where you can see

all of the rags. I mean, you
can see lemon wedges. You can

see everything in it. [Melissa] Diapers,
other unmentionables, [Glabra] yeah.

Exactly. Yeah. Exactly. So,
it's best to keep it out of the

toilet. We will see it. We
don't want to see it. So,

please help us and that stuff
causes clogs. [Melissa] Right. [Glabra] You know,

it's costly if sewer main
gets clogged up it can cause a

sewer spill and then you've got
raw sewage going out into the

environment and we need to
prevent that from happening and

[Melissa] you have to do that study and
submit paperwork and [Glabra] oh yeah

you have to report it to the
state and you there's fines and

you get in trouble for every
sewer spill right so [Melissa] we're

pretty good though [Glabra] yeah [Melissa] I would
say overall we have a pretty

good record so toilets your
toilet is not a trash can if

you wouldn't otherwise flush it
don't what other stuff we're

talking holiday cooking lots of
people I mean we mentioned

fats, oils, and grease. Fog.

[Glabra] Fog. Fats, oils, and grease.

That's another thing that we
are very passionate about. So,

your kitchen sink, be mindful
of what's going down that as

well. Um there's some
surprising things. So, you

think of grease, you think of,
you know, baking grease but

there's also fats and oils in
things like salad dressings.

You know, your Italian salad
dressing where it separates and

you see the oil and you see the
solids. Um all that stuff can

contribute to clogs in the
drains. [Melissa] Right. [Glabra] So, fats, oils,

and grease. Basically, it that
acts in sewer pipes the same

way as your arteries. It lines
the walls and it keeps building

up until eventually it clogs.

If it happens on your private

property, you're responsible

for having a plumber come fix

your clog. [Melissa] You, one of the
things that you do on the tour

is you show that example to us.

[Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] And again, another one of

those things that resonates
you, I think you have a

illustration of side-by-side
pictures. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] Of one's a pipe,

one's an artery. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] They
really don't look that

different. [Glabra] They really truly.

[Melissa] It's really sad. [Glabra] But some

things you can do if you have
small amounts of grease, take a

paper towel, wipe it out, put
it in your trash can. I keep a

little tin can, you know, in my
freezer actually and if I have

extra grease, I just pour it in
there and once it gets full, I

throw it out with my trash. So,
it's nice because that keeps

the odors out. Don't smell
anything, keeps it clean, keeps

it frozen. When I go to throw
it out, there's no, I don't

have animals digging through my
trash and put it out on trash

day. So, Cool it, can it, trash
it. [Melissa] Oh. [Glabra] Cool your grease. [Melissa] Oh, I

like that. [Glabra] Can it? You know,
put it in your can and then

trash it on trash day. [Melissa] Think we
need to do a# with that.

[Glabra] Alright. [Melissa] A new campaign right
here. [Glabra] I'm I'm ready. [Melissa] Um the

speaking of throwing it out I
don't know we can talk about it

now or towards the end we do
have the used oil drive or the

used oil collection which we
hope for earlier going to have

again in January. Try to do
that every year. [Glabra] Yes. So, if

you have large amounts of
cooking oil like if you fried a

turkey, fish fry, you can it to
one of our collection events.

We've been doing them April,
November, and January. Um the

April and November ones are at
our solid waste facility. The

January 1 is at the Francis
Field. Um but also, we will take

it anytime. So, if you want to
bring it to our wastewater

plant at the end of Iberia

Street. We have a collection

bin. We will pour it in and
we'll recycle it. We, just our

goal is to keep it out of the
pipes and out of the

environment. [Melissa] So if you've
cooked a turkey at Thanksgiving

and you don't want to wait
until Christmas or you really

want to get rid of that oil
again, just call go online get

the get the phone number make
[Melissa] and do you need to make an

Appointment? it's good to let
you know we're coming? [Glabra] you don't

need to make an appointment
it's nice for us to know

because it is a gated facility
and we need to give you access

to come in but we get a lot
of people coming and you would

be surprised on our collection
events how many people stop by

and say they've had this in
their garage for months and

they know what to do with it so
we will take it anytime from

you but we also welcome you to
come to our collection events [Melissa] I

don't like keeping all that
stuff in my garage either [Glabra] Not

for that amount of time for
sure. [Melissa] Uh if you're just now

tuning in, you are listening to
the break room. I have Glabra

Skip on the radio with me. She
is our environmental program

supervisor talking about the
fogs and clogs of fats, oils,

and grease. Your toilet is not
a trash can. Uh what other good

tips can we talk about today,
Glabra? You've you stay

really busy keeping us green. I
mean. [Glabra] Try. [Melissa] And your team,

you've really started
developing a staff? [Glabra] Yes. I said, I

have three inspectors that work
with us. Fats, oils, and

grease, backflow, cross
connection, and stormwater

management. So, one thing I
wanted to do a plug on right

now especially this time of
year is your lawn debris. So,

all those leaves that are
falling, please do not blow

them out into the street. We

want you to rake them, bag

them, put them out with your
yard trash. Leaves cause

problems on a lot of different
levels and if they're on top of

the stormwater inlet, they'll
clog it. The rainwater can't

flow So, it's sometimes a
flooded street is as simple as

clearing the leaves off the top
of a storm drain. [Melissa] So, help us

with this flooding because it
may not be that. It could be

you've clogged up your top of
the drain. [Glabra] Definitely could be

and. [Melissa] People think, I think
people think, oh, it's natural.

It's a leaf. It's
biodegradable. I can just blow

it into the street but you're
saying it's really better to

just. [Glabra] It is better to [Melissa] mow it,
mulch it. [Glabra] Mow it, mulch it. So, they can get into

the pipes and they can it can
cause clogs too. Get sticks and

leaves and all kinds of stuff
bound up in that pipe and

excess leaves in the pipes.
Those pipes go directly to our

waterways. So, then those leaves
get in the waterways start

breaking down its excess
nutrients in the waterways. So

the leaves aren't naturally in
that waterway. We want to keep

them in your yard. Keep them
mulched. You can use them in

your compost. So anyway, to keep
them out of the storm drains

please. [Melissa] So real quick compost.

I'm going to ask you about that

one. That's another program.

Are we doing that again this

coming? [Glabra] Yes, we're working on

that. [Melissa] Okay. [Glabra] We are working on

that. Um so, yes, you can use

leaves in your compost. Um

another thing that we ask you

not to do is not to put your

yard trash piles on top of the

stormwater drains. We need to

access those drains for

maintenance purposes and to

keep them clear. So, please

keep your lawn debris off

those storm drains. [Melissa] And yard

debris trash pickup. We have

that as part of our recycling.

You can get the paper bags from

stores around town. [Glabra] Correct. [Melissa] We prefer paper than plastic.

[Glabra] Correct and the price on those has really come down. So, we

see a lot of people Using those. We encourage using

those. Um definitely paper above plastic. [Melissa] Um and we so in

talking about the green and all that. We also...you're...are you...

you don't really oversee the recycling. That's Olivia but we

can talk about recycling. It's never a bad topic. [Glabra] Absolutely.

And as part of our collection events we do collect

electronics as well. So, if you get new electronics for the

holidays recycle your old.

[Melissa] Right. [Glabra] Broken outdated used.

We'll take it. We'll recycle

it. That keeps it out of the

landfill. That's our goal.

[Melissa] And that's anything from a

phone, a printer. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] Uh sound

bar. [Glabra] Yes. DVD player, monitors,

computers. [Melissa] What don't we take?

[Glabra] We ask not for televisions.

[Melissa] Right. [Glabra] Um televisions are

different. We ask for not to

bring those to our [Melissa] tires and?

[Glabra] Correct. No tires. No car oil.

No hazardous waste. We're not

certified to collect hazardous

waste. So, we are strictly

looking at electronics in the

sense of old DVD players, computers, we

will take batteries so any kind

of battery we will collect

those [Melissa] car battery? [Glabra] yes [Melissa] okay good [Glabra] so

again same as our cooking oil

we collect those at all of our

collection events but you can

bring them to solid waste

anytime it's in the same

facility as our wastewater

plants so if you have cooking

oil and electronics [Melissa] bring it

all down that way [Glabra] in the right

spot [Melissa] the hazardous materials

you can drop that at the county

correct the county does have

that facility I don't know any

of that information off top of

my head but [Glabra] and neither do I

but you can go to the website

and they have the drop off

locations for the hazardous

waste. [Melissa] Okay and that's
good to know as well. So, we've

got all kinds of solutions and
options. Um another one thing

quick which again indulge meat.
Tell me a little bit about the

glass recycling. I know you've
got that down near you as well.

[Glabra] That is at the same drop off.
So, there are select locations

where there is glass recycling
and dumpsters and you one at

the end of Riberia Street
Solid Waste. So, bring your

glass down. [Melissa] We're
going to get this town in

green. [Glabra] Yes, so we're working on
em. [Melissa] And one other program that

you are in charge of with JB is
our tree canopy. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] We're in

our when does it that starts
in? [Glabra] The applications are in

June. So, we fill the
applications rather quickly and

the trees will be planted at
the beginning of next year.

[Melissa] Okay. [Glabra] So, January around there
will be planting the trees that

are part of that program. [Melissa] So,
when I if I've applied to that,

I already know at this point
that I'm going to get a tree.

[Glabra] Correct. [Melissa] And is it a first
first serve. I know when we the

first time we did it it kind of
blew the doors off. It didn't

and [Glabra] yes it was it's very
popular. We have a lot of

applications for these trees
and we had to limit quantities

last two years because the
first year was so many trees

and we wanted to get a good
punch in that first year. So we

have limited quantities again
but those have been filled and

like I said those will be
planted next year. [Melissa] Can you tell

me again how it works? I mean I
know I applied for it but what

is it that What's the, why do I
want to be part of the Tree

Canopy Program? [Glabra] So, it is a,
these are not the little

saplings that you get at Arbor
Day. These are full-size, these

are large trees that will but

the city will pay to have

planted on your private
property. So, a lot of cities,

the programs are on like the
right of way, that area, you

know, from your house to the
street that you don't

technically own but for us, we
have very limited right of way.

So, we wanted to offer a
program where we would plant

the trees on private property.
So, there's a lot involved with

that. There's a legal agreement
that you have to sign that

allow us access to plant the
tree on your property. Um we

actually have a contract a
contractor come out and plant

the tree. [Melissa] Okay. [Glabra] So we will we
plan on continuing that program

for years to come. We've been
very pleased with the success

and we hope we can grow it and
increase our quantities in the

future. [Melissa] And the reason is we
want more trees, more oxygen,

more shade. [Glabra] Yes. [Melissa] And keeping
our city green. [Glabra] We've lost a

lot of trees in Hurricanes
Matthew and Irma. So we're

trying to rebuild the tree
canopy and every little bit

helps. [Melissa] Okay so between tree
canopies and composting. We've

got ways for the community to
get involved in and things that

the city is actually providing
as well. [Glabra] Yes and the city is

hiring it's first
sustainability specialist. So

she will be starting soon in
the public works department so

you'll be having her on the
break room soon. So lots of

initiatives that she's going to
be taking on and working.

[Melissa] Excellent. Well we will have
you and her back. And we can

introduce her to the community
and share the great things

that great programs that is
going to be heading up. [Glabra] Yes,

we're very excited to have a
new sustainability specialist.

[Melissa] Awesome. Well, as always
Glabra, it's great to have you

here. You got a lot going on.

Fog's fog no trash down your

toilet. Keep the grease out of
the sink. [Glabra] Cool, it cannot trash

it. [Melissa] Okay. [Glabra] Keep the grease out
of the drain. [Melissa] On that note, we

will wrap it up. Uh you can
find this broadcast and any

past broadcast at City Saint
Aug Radio. com. You can also

find us on your favorite
podcasting app. Look for us on

Spotify, Apple, and more. Again, you
can find that listing at City

Saint Aug Radio. com. We
want to keep you informed about

what's happening in and around
the city and that you hear it

from the people doing the work
to make it happen every day.

You can find us on social
media. You'll find us on

Facebook, Twitter, and
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Thanks for tuning in. Until
next time. [Narrator] You've been

listening to The Break Room, a
weekly program addressing

projects and programs offered
by the City of Saint 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.