Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Customer Service Report
Indicators of Metric Results
August 2015

Operations Support	Goal	Goal Met		Within Control Limits		Trend
Billing Accuracy / Reasonable						
	Meters Read					
	Estimated Bills					
	High Bill Complaints					
	Adjusted Bills					
Problem Resolution	Customer Contacts					
	Call Wait Time					
	Abandoned Calls					
	Emergency Abandoned Calls					
	Low Water Pressure					
	Water System Leaks					
	Sewer System Leaks					
Collections Effectiveness	Accounts Off for Non-Payment					
	Receivables 30 to 120 Days Old					
	Receivables 120 Days and Older					

Green = Favorable Variance
Yellow = Minimal Variance / No Action Recommended
Red = Unfavorable Variance / Action Recommended

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Meters Read as a Percentage of Total Meters

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Accurate Bills

Goal: Read 98% or more of meters each month

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits:
Yes

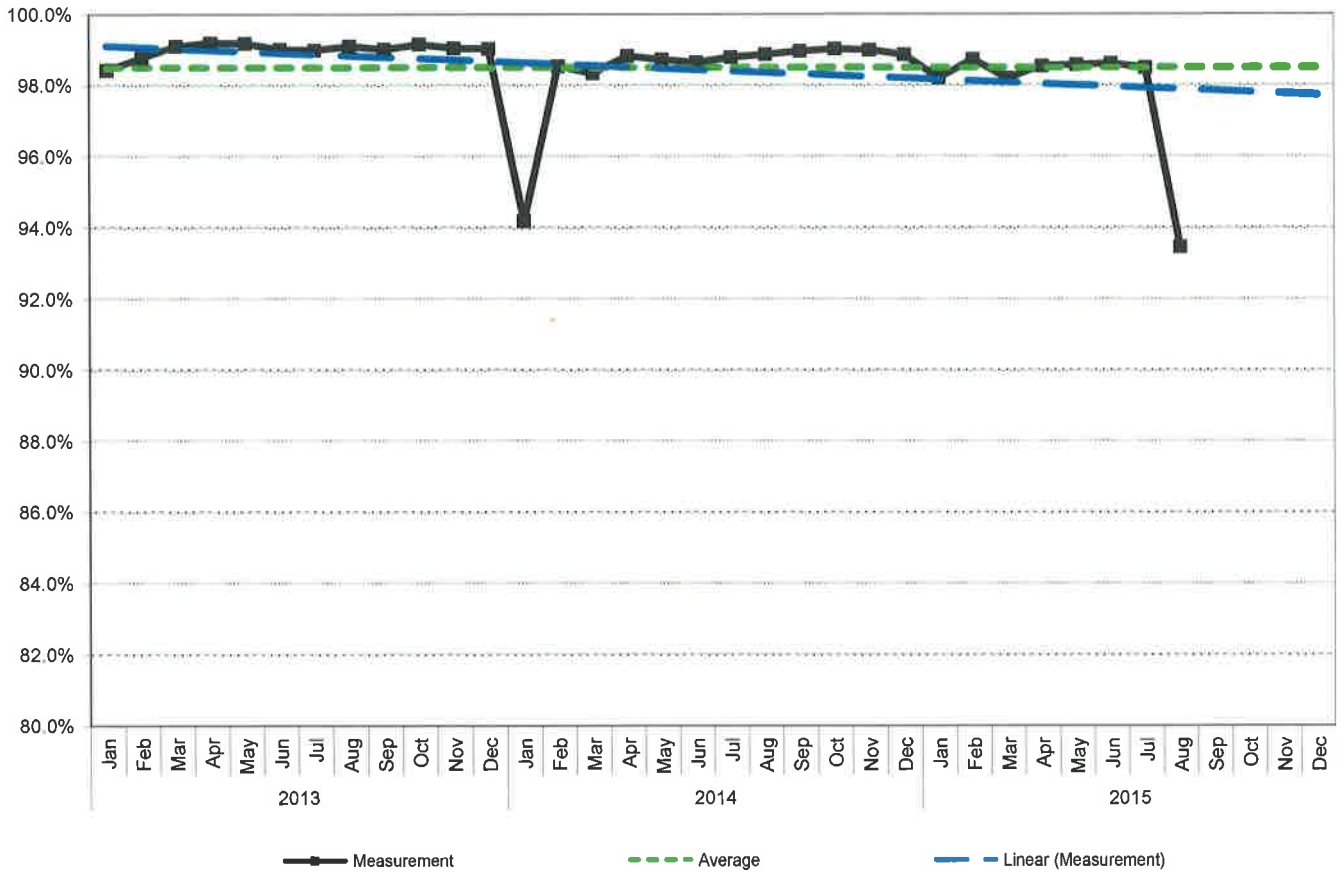
Trend: Level

Analysis

The purpose of the customer billing and collection processes is to collect revenues from customer accounts that are billed according to the service rules and are based upon accurate metered consumption. Obtaining an accurate reading is the first step in that process. Staff has maintained a reading rate near or above the goal since since April 2010 except for three months affected by Hurricane Isaac in 2012 and a winter freeze in January 2014 and extreme heat in August 2015.

Plans for Improvement

Staff is working to reduce the number of estimated and erroneous readings. Also, the Automated Meter Reading pilot project is also intended to reduce the number of estimated and erroneous readings, as well as to reduce the cost of obtaining a validated reading.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	98.4%	98.8%	99.1%	99.2%	99.2%	99.0%	99.0%	99.1%	99.0%	99.2%	99.1%	99.0%
2014	94.2%	98.5%	98.3%	98.8%	98.7%	98.6%	98.8%	98.9%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	98.9%
2015	98.2%	98.7%	98.2%	98.5%	98.6%	98.6%	98.5%	93.5%				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Bills Estimated as a Percentage of Total Bills

EUM Attribute:
Customer Satisfaction

Description: Provides reliable, responsive, and affordable services in line with explicit, customer-accepted service levels. Receives timely customer feedback to maintain responsiveness to customer needs and emergencies.

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Accurate Bills

Goal: Bill Accounts With Less Than 2% Estimated

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

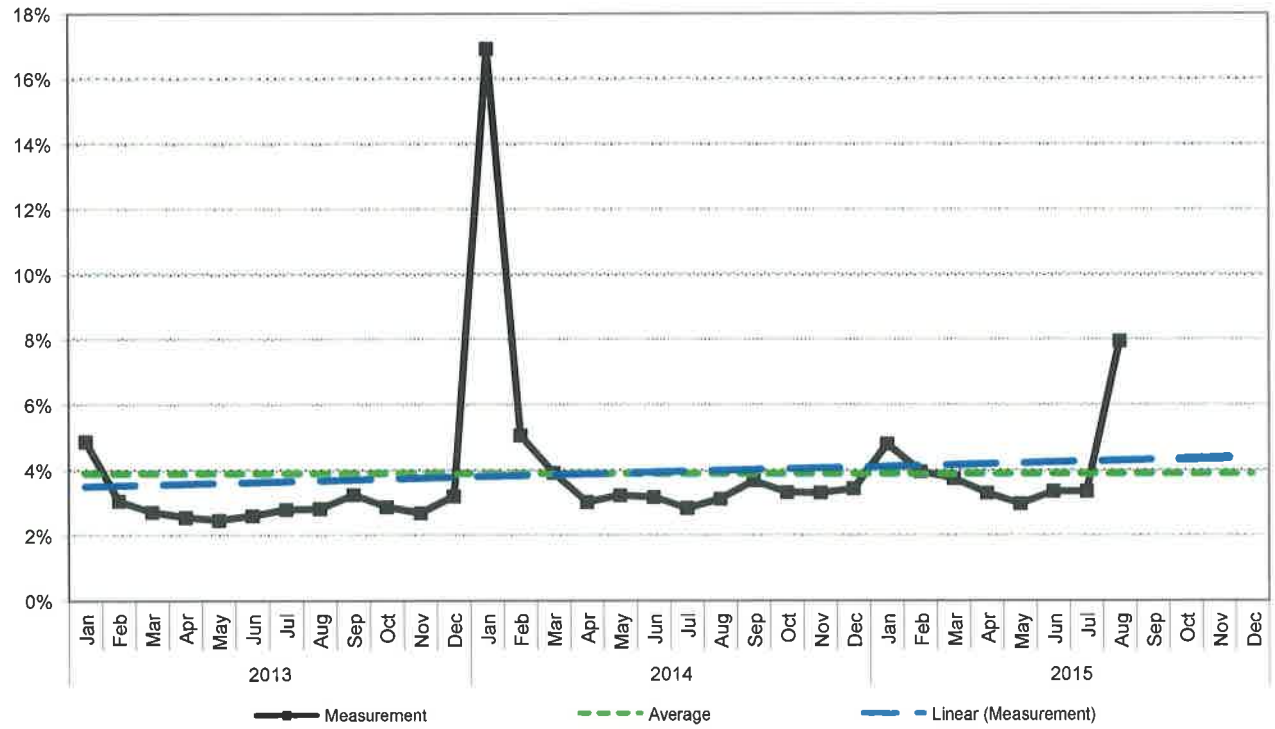
Trend: Level

Analysis

A bill is estimated if the meter is not read by the designated billing date. Bills are also estimated when a meter is read and the reliability of the reading is doubtful and the account is placed on an exception report. If the reading is not verified by the billing date, the bill will be estimated. Spikes in estimated bills usually occur when the Meter Reading department is unable to read a large section of meters during extreme weather.

Plans for Improvement

Current plans are focused on obtaining readings for accounts each month and verifying the reliability of each reading. Future plans will focus on advanced matering infrastructure that allows for readings to be obtained automatically several times daily.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	4.9%	3.1%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	2.8%	3.3%	2.9%	2.7%	3.2%
2014	16.9%	5.1%	3.9%	3.0%	3.2%	3.2%	2.8%	3.1%	3.7%	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%
2015	4.8%	4.0%	3.7%	3.3%	3.0%	3.4%	3.4%	7.9%				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Bills Adjusted as a Percentage of Total Bills Computed

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Accurate Bills

Goal: Reduce percentage over time

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits:
Yes

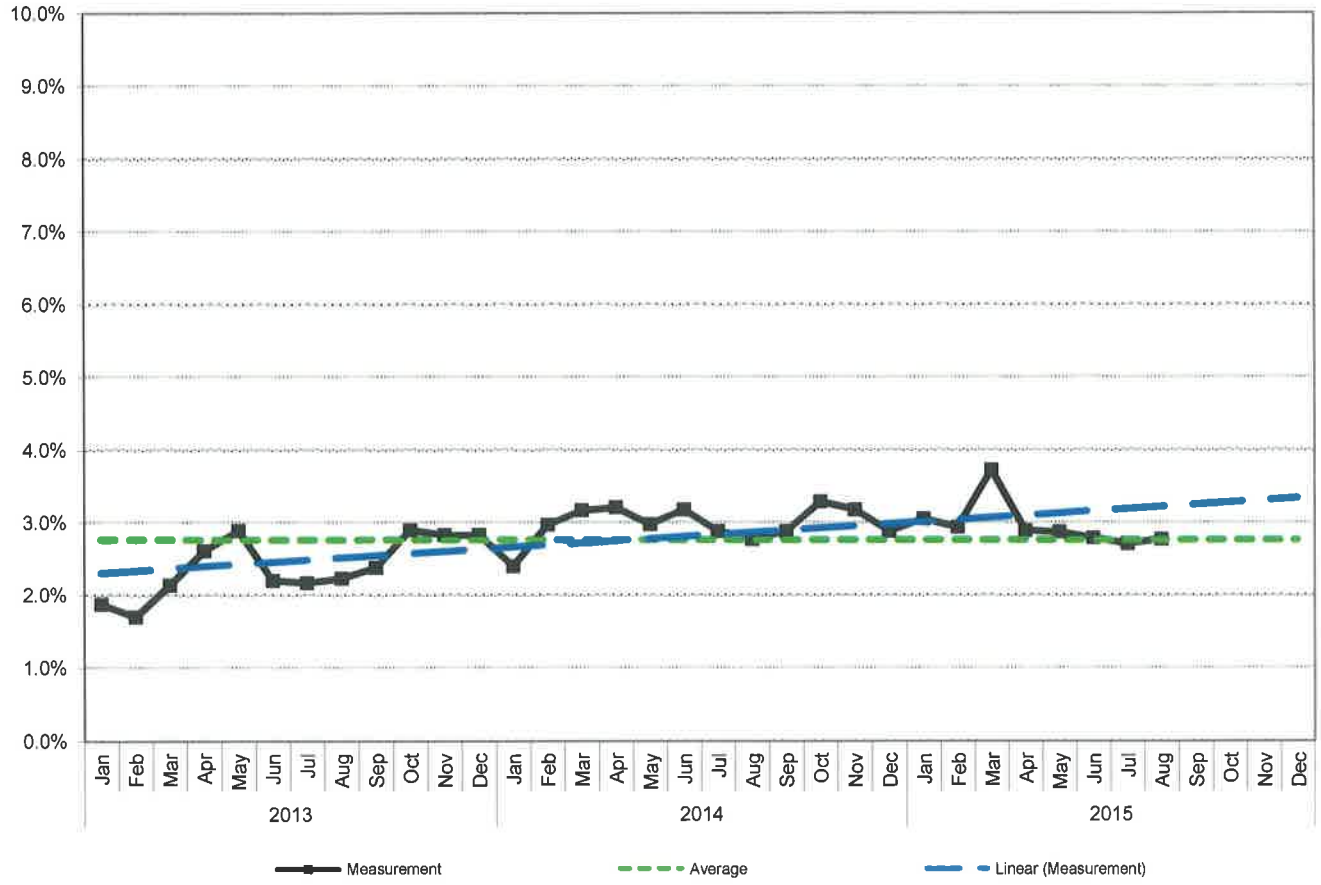
Trend: Unfavorable

Analysis

Customers request adjustments to their bill due to higher than normal amounts. The higher billed amount may be due to: a leak; one or more estimated readings followed by an actual reading; an erroneous meter reading; or increased water, sewer, or sanitation rates. Before an adjustment can be made, an inspection of the meter and service line must be performed.

Plans for Improvement

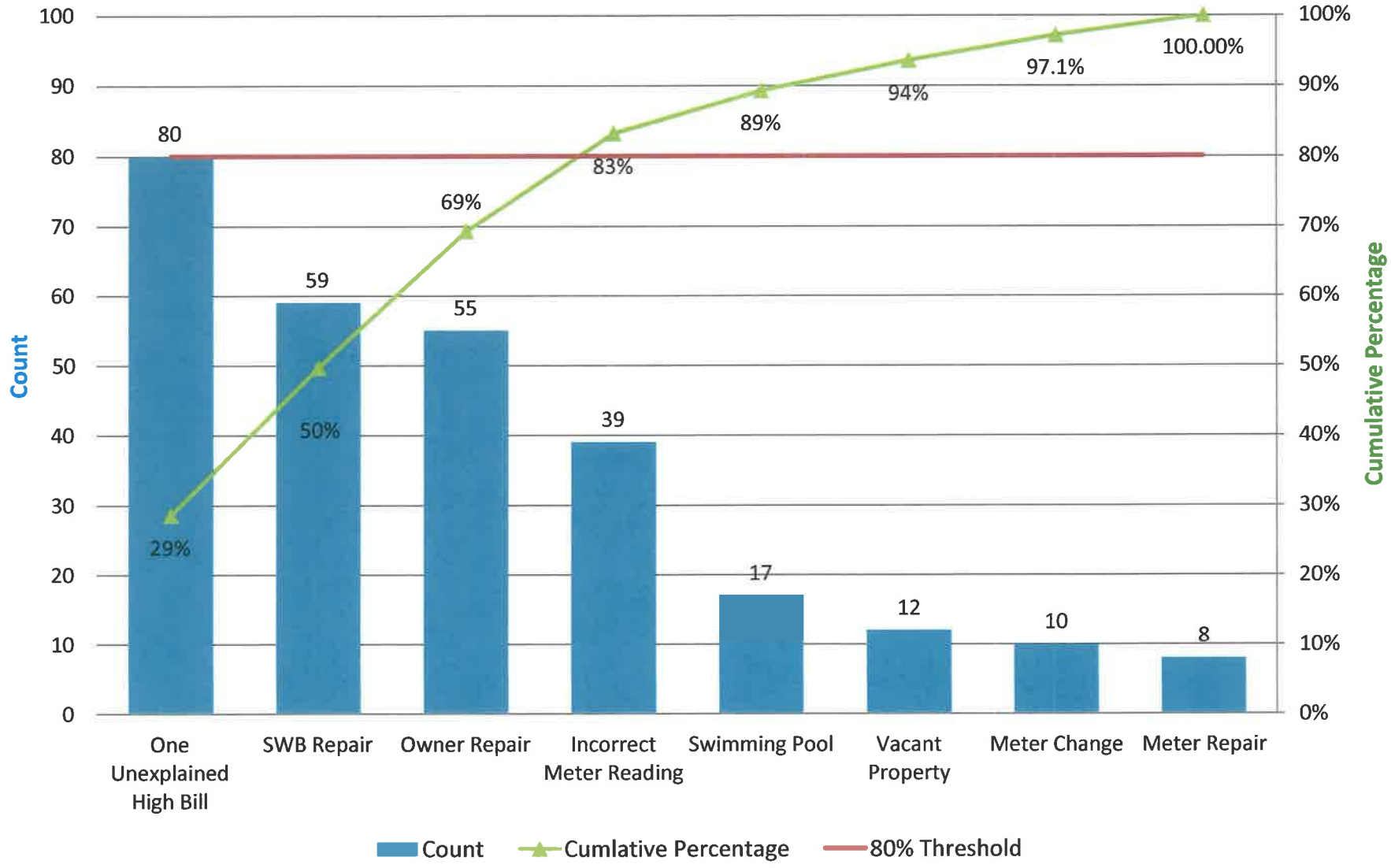
Staff is working to reduce the number of estimated and erroneous readings. Also, the Automated Meter Reading pilot project is also intended to reduce the number of estimated and erroneous readings, as well as to reduce the cost of obtaining a validated reading.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	1.9%	1.7%	2.1%	2.6%	2.9%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%
2014	2.4%	3.0%	3.2%	3.2%	3.0%	3.2%	2.9%	2.8%	2.9%	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%
2015	3.1%	2.9%	3.7%	2.9%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%	2.8%				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Chart of Reasons for Adjustments
August 2015



Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Investigations from High Bill Complaints as a Percentage of Total Bills

Constituency: Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Accurate Bills

Goal: Reduce percentage over time

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

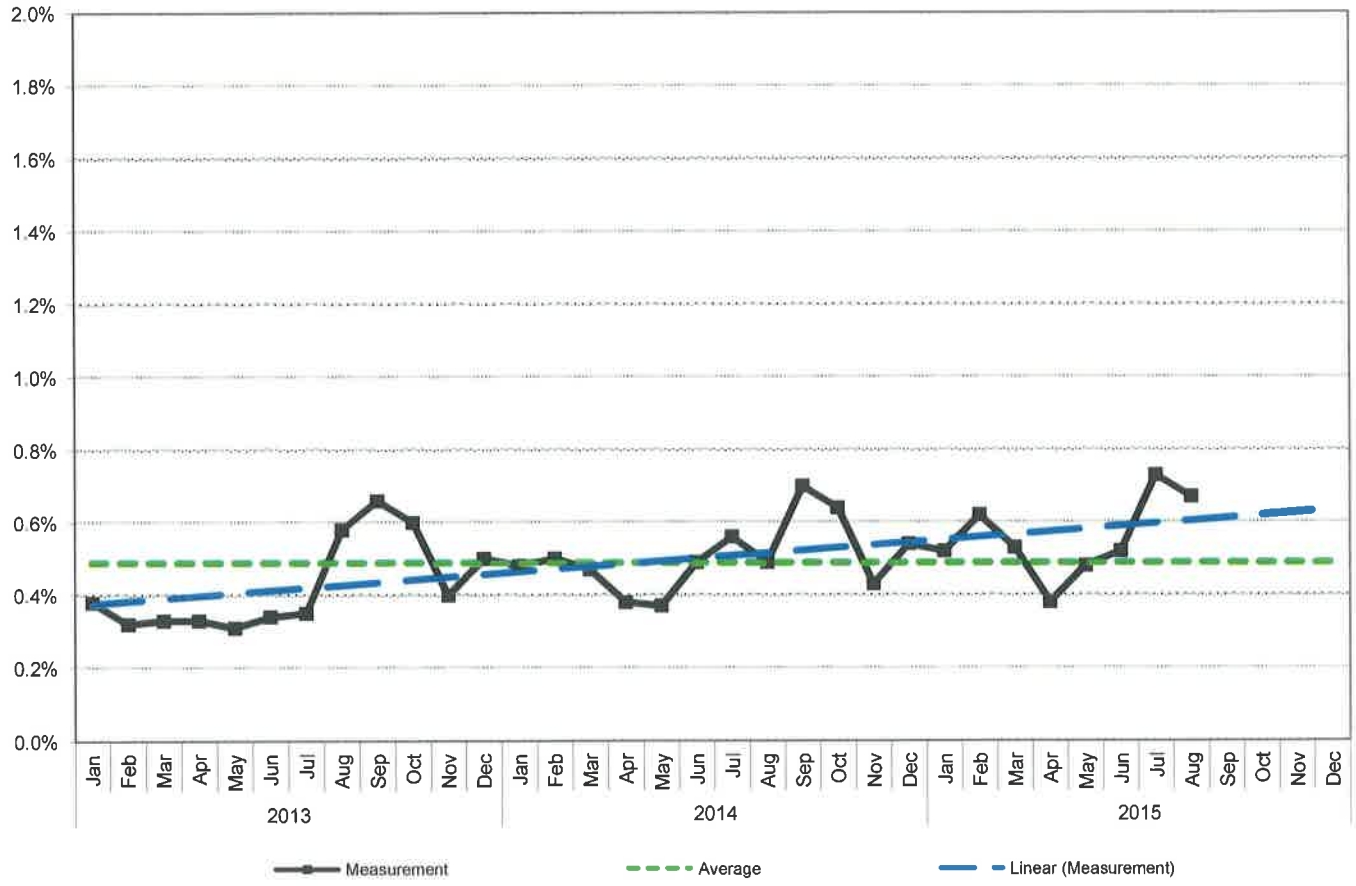
Trend: Unfavorable

Analysis

Customers request an investigation about their usage when the bill is higher than normal amounts. The higher billed amount may be due to: a leak; one or more estimated readings followed by an actual reading; an erroneous meter reading; or increased water, sewer, or sanitation rates. Before an adjustment can be made, an inspection of the meter and service line must be performed.

Plans for Improvement

Staff is working to reduce the number of estimated and erroneous readings. Also, the Automated Meter Reading pilot project is also intended to reduce the number of estimated and erroneous readings, as well as to reduce the cost of obtaining a validated reading.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
2014	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
2015	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Total Inbound Customer Contacts

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Timely Information and Respond Promptly to Requests

Goal: Reduce Triggers of Customer Calls

Currently Meeting Goal: No

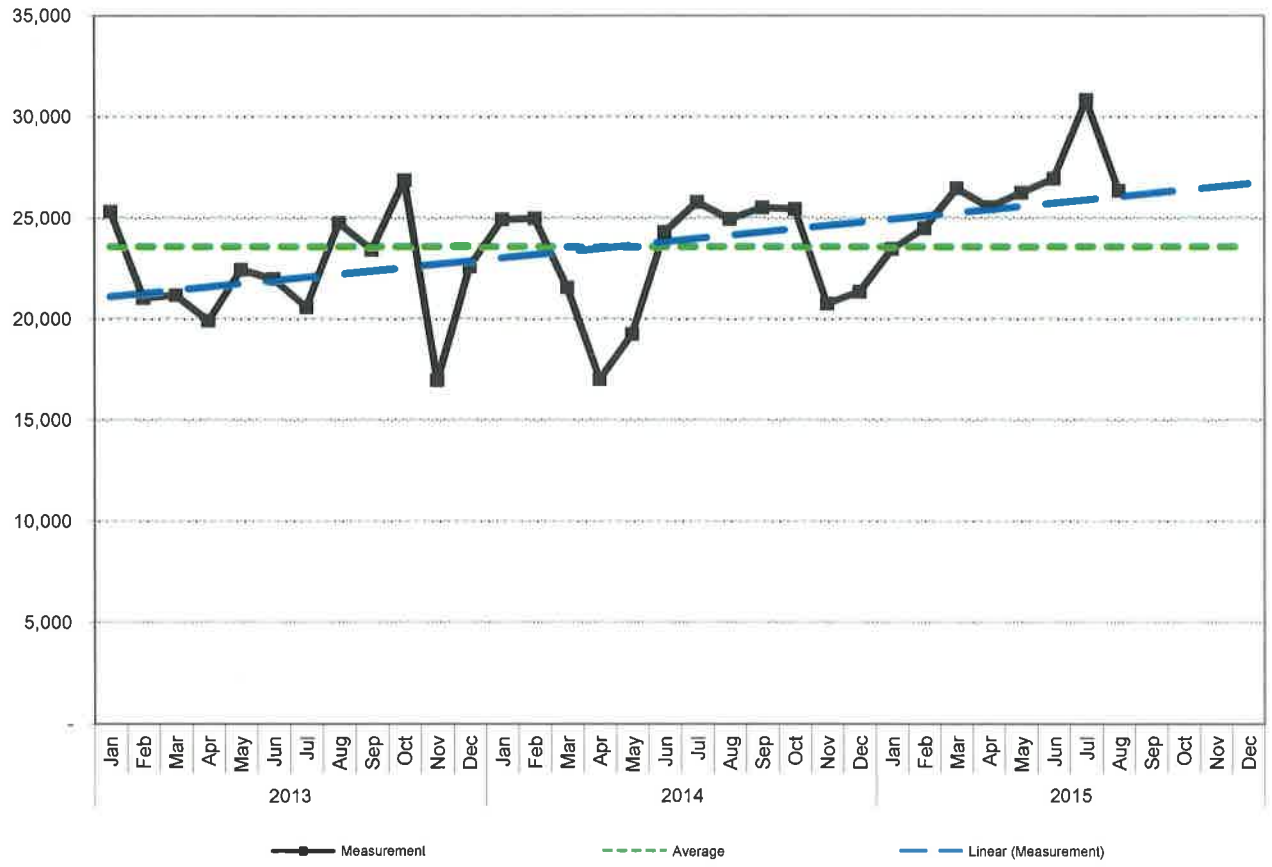
Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

Trend: Unfavorable

Customers contact the Sewerage and Water Board to start or end service; to request information about their bill; to report concerns about their water service, sewer connection, street flooding, or solid waste sanitation service; and other matters. The Call Center for emergency repairs is operated continously, while the Call Center for billing and non-emergency issues is operated from 7 AM to 7 PM. Call volumes can vary significantly month to month.

Plans for Improvement

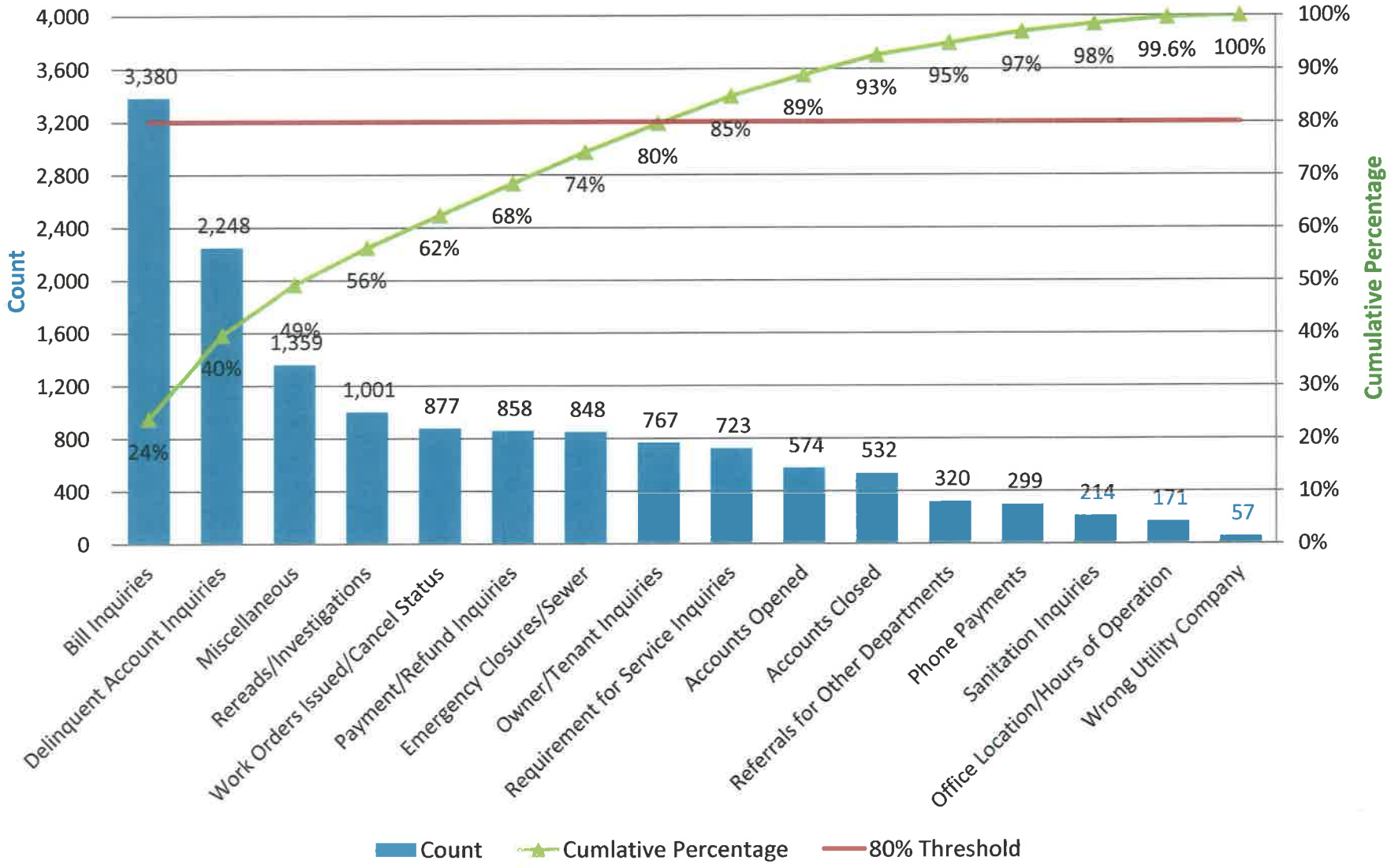
Staff is analyzing the events that trigger calls in order to determine methods to reduce the volume. Short term plans for improvement will focus on creating more efficient "scripts" for handling routine call matters. Longer term plans will focus on reducing the overall call volumes with interactive voice response capabilities.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	25,331	21,051	21,194	19,937	22,446	21,994	20,602	24,764	23,439	26,892	16,980	22,610
2014	24,945	24,992	21,579	17,032	19,276	24,315	25,800	24,967	25,532	25,467	20,775	21,366
2015	23,470	24,496	26,486	25,565	26,261	26,963	30,836	26,368				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Chart of Types of Customer Calls
August 2015



Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Average Call Wait Time

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Accurate Bills

Goal: Reduce over time

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits:
Yes

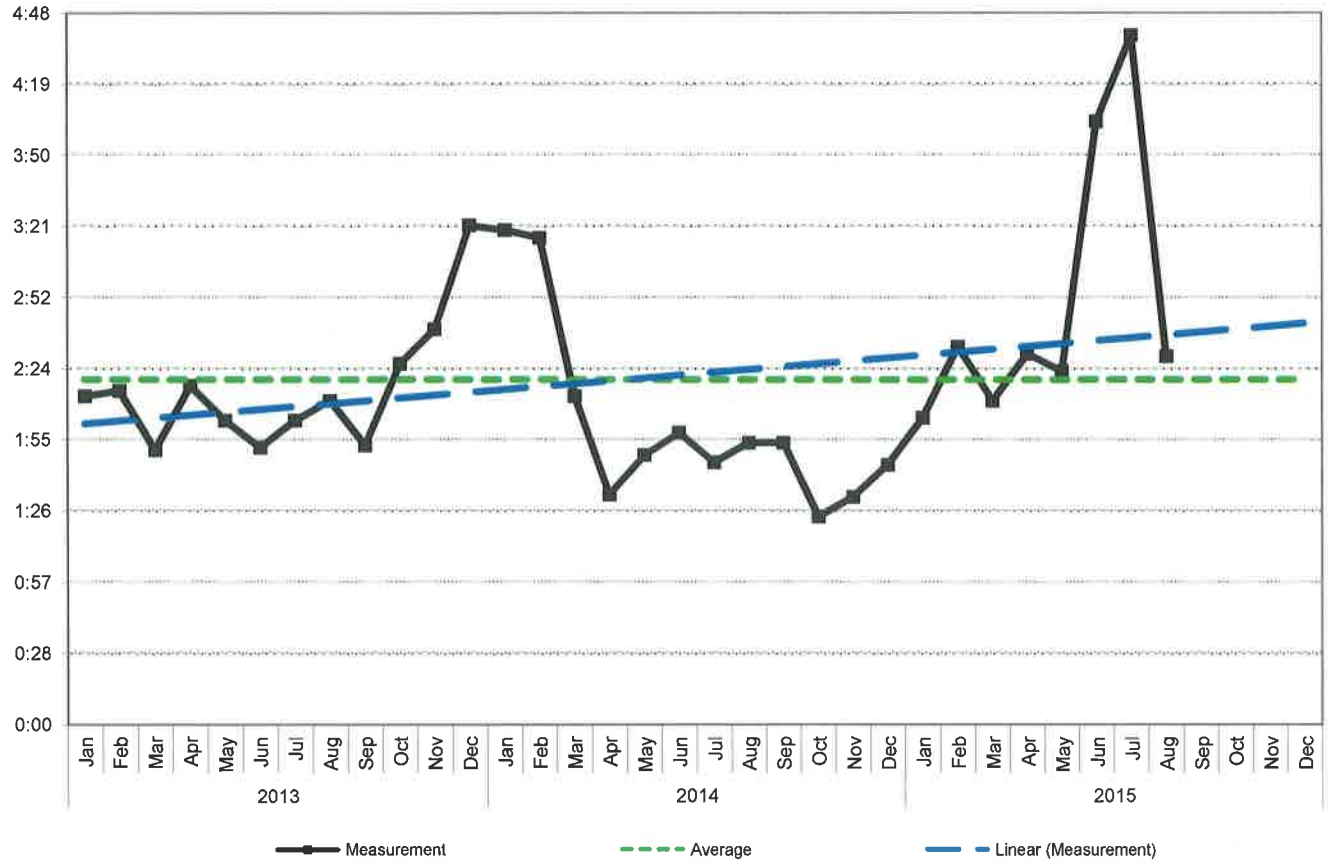
Trend: Unfavorable

Analysis

Customers contact the Sewerage and Water Board to start or end service; to request information about their bill; to report concerns about their water service, sewer connection, street flooding, or solid waste sanitation service; and other matters. The Call Center for emergency repairs is operated continously, while the Call Center for billing and non-emergency issues is operated from 7 AM to 7 PM. Call volumes can vary significantly month to month.

Plans for Improvement

Staff is analyzing the events that trigger calls in order to determine methods to reduce the volume. Short term plans for improvement will focus on creating more efficient "scripts" for handling routine call matters. Longer term plans will focus on reducing the overall call volumes with interactive voice response capabilities.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	2:13	2:15	1:51	2:17	2:03	1:52	2:03	2:11	1:53	2:26	2:40	3:22
2014	3:20	3:17	2:13	1:33	1:49	1:58	1:46	1:54	1:54	1:24	1:32	1:45
2015	2:04	2:33	2:11	2:30	2:23	4:04	4:39	2:29				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Calls Abandoned by Customers as a Percentage of Total

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Timely Information and Respond Promptly to Requests

Goal: Respond to calls with less than 10% abandoned

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Close

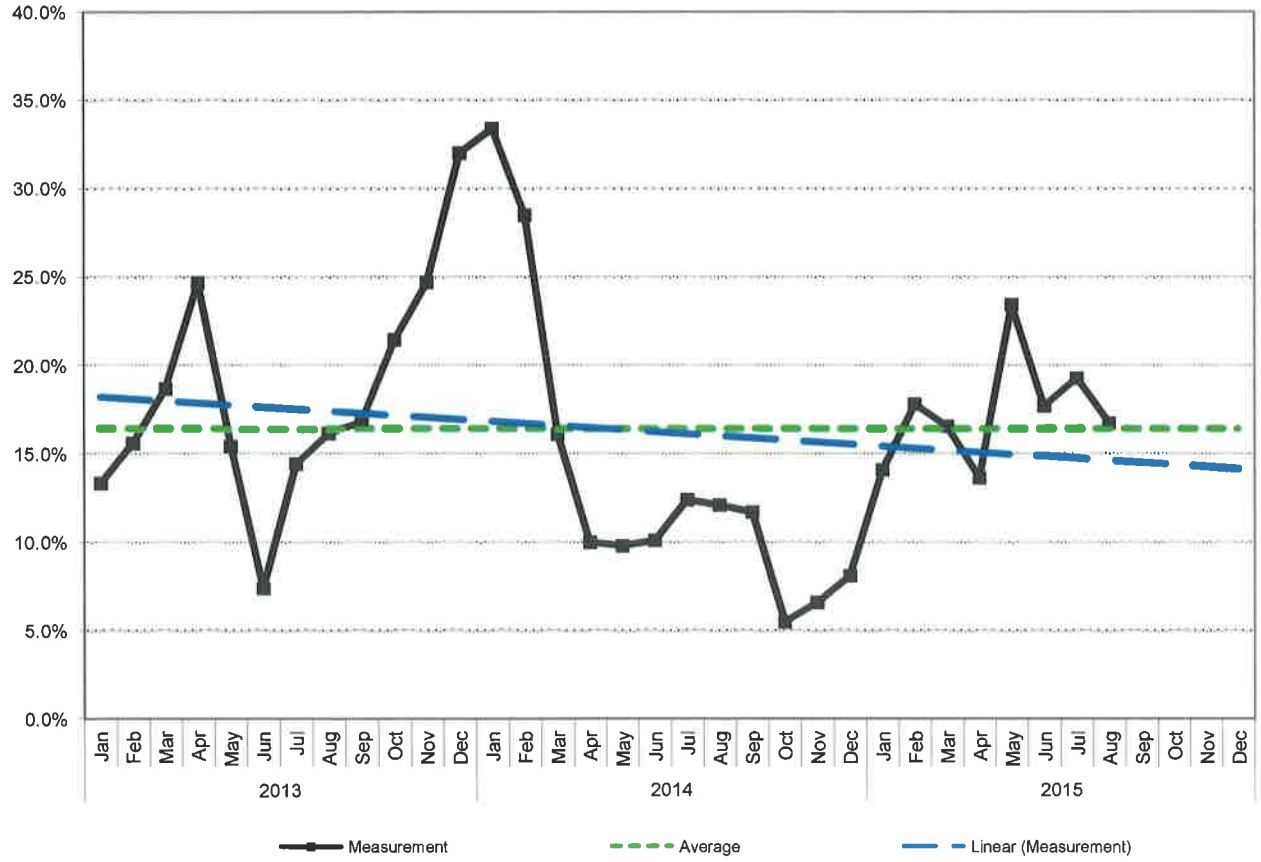
Trend: Favorable

Analysis

Customers abandon their call after waiting for an amount of time considered inconvenient, which varies from customer to customer. Some portion of the volume of abandoned calls is from customers calling and hanging up on multiple occasions.

Plans for Improvement

In order to resolve the significant increase in abandoned calls, additional employees have been hired and are being trained. Call rollover time has been reduced from 3 minutes to 20 seconds. Medium term plans for improvement will focus on creating more efficient "scripts" for handling routine call matters. Longer term plans will focus on reducing the overall call volumes with interactive voice response capabilities.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	13.3%	15.6%	18.7%	24.7%	15.4%	7.4%	14.5%	16.2%	16.8%	21.5%	24.7%	32.0%
2014	33.4%	28.5%	16.1%	10.0%	9.8%	10.1%	12.4%	12.1%	11.7%	5.5%	6.6%	8.1%
2015	14.1%	17.8%	16.6%	13.7%	23.4%	17.7%	19.3%	16.7%				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans

Emergency Calls Abandoned by Customers as a Percentage of Total Emergency Calls

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Timely Information and Respond Promptly to Requests

Goal: Respond to calls with less than 10% abandoned

Currently Meeting Goal: No

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

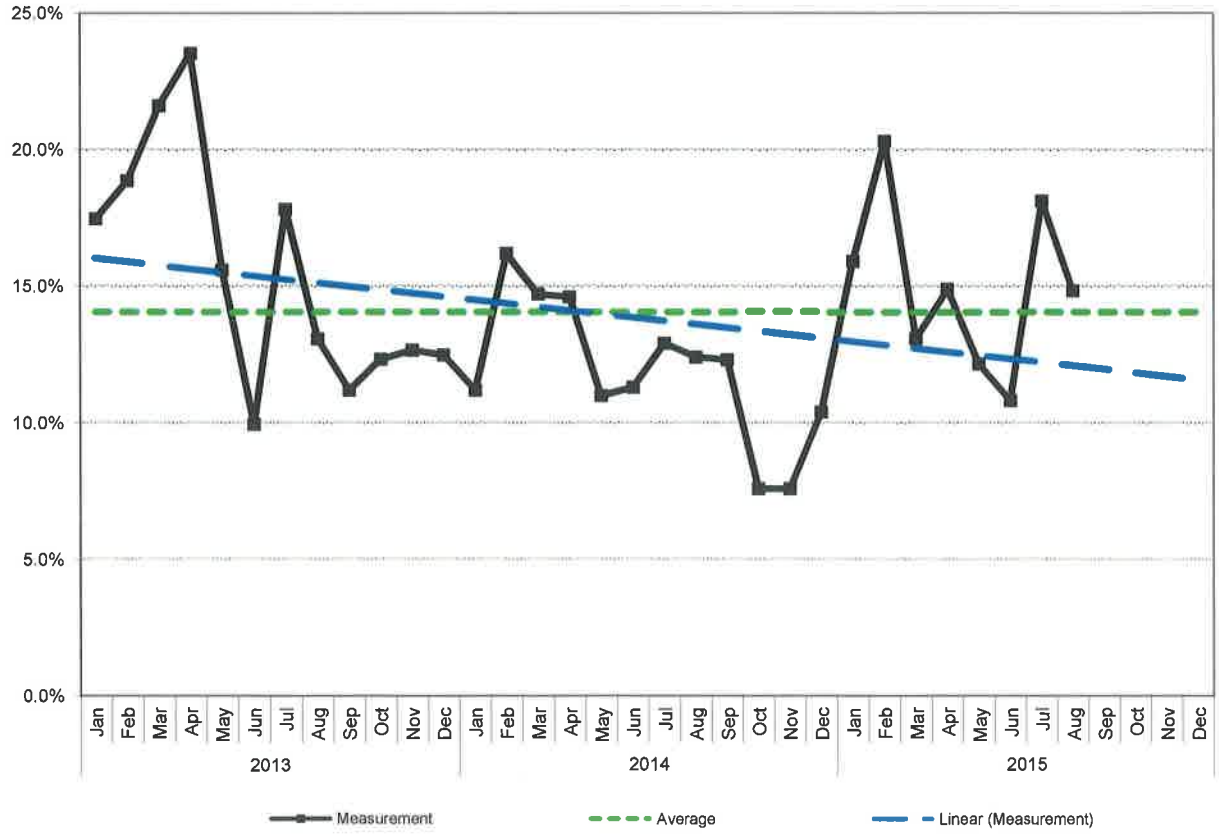
Trend: Favorable

Analysis

Customers abandon their call after waiting for an amount of time considered inconvenient, which varies from customer to customer. Some portion of the volume of abandoned calls is from customers calling and hanging up on multiple occasions. Staff is addressing this issue as a top priority. The telephone system was recently upgraded.

Plans for Improvement

In order to resolve the significant increase in abandoned calls, additional employees have been hired and are being trained. Call rollover time has been reduced from 3 minutes to 20 seconds. Scripts were created for more efficient handling of routine call matters. Longer term plans will focus on reducing the overall call volumes with interactive voice response capabilities.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	17.5%	18.9%	21.6%	23.5%	15.6%	10.0%	17.8%	13.1%	11.2%	12.3%	12.7%	12.5%
2014	11.2%	16.2%	14.7%	14.6%	11.0%	11.3%	12.9%	12.4%	12.3%	7.6%	7.6%	10.4%
2015	15.9%	20.3%	13.1%	14.9%	12.2%	10.8%	18.1%	14.8%				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Total Service Requests about Low Water Pressure

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Timely Information and Respond Promptly to Requests

Goal: Reduce Number of Service Requests

Currently Meeting Goal: Yes

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

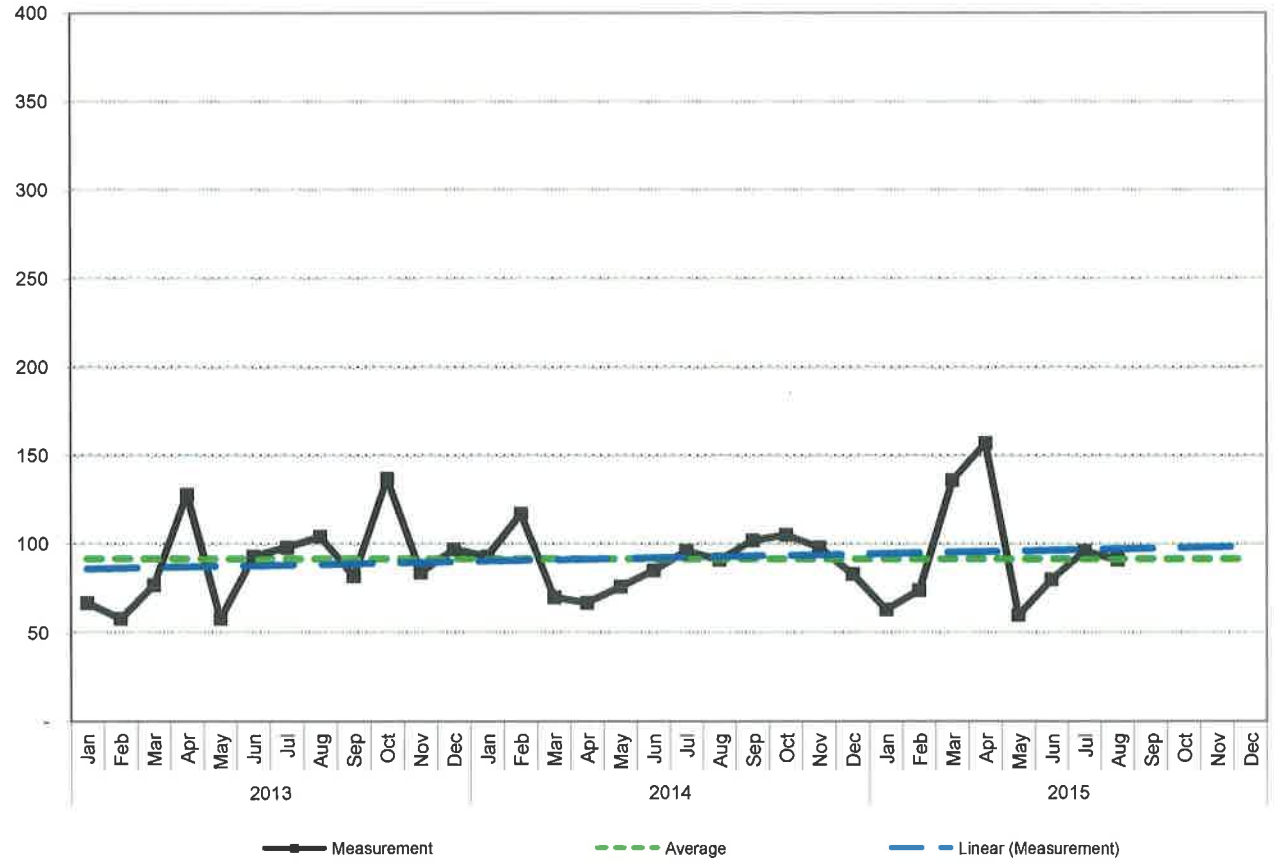
Trend: Level

Analysis

Customers contact the Sewerage and Water Board to request resolution to low water pressure. System pressure can be impaired by power failures at the treatment plants, by water main breaks, and by certain types of repair activities.

Plans for Improvement

Staff continues to make repairs to the water system to reduce the number of occasions of low pressure.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	67	58	77	128	58	93	98	104	82	137	84	97
2014	93	117	70	67	76	85	96	91	102	105	98	83
2015	63	74	136	157	60	80	96	91				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Total Service Requests for Water System Leaks

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Timely Information and Respond Promptly to Requests

Goal: Reduce Number of Service Requests

Currently Meeting Goal: Yes

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

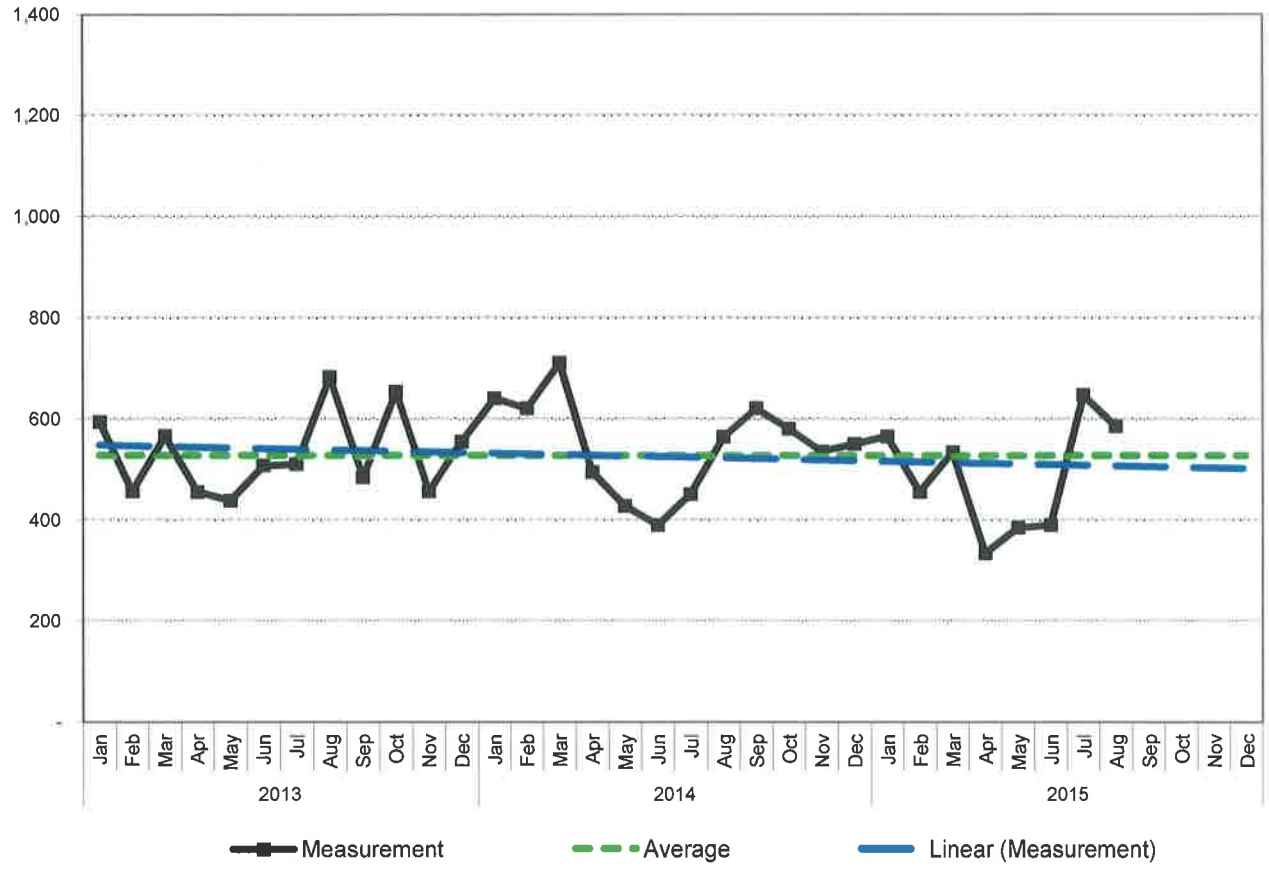
Trend: Favorable

Analysis

Customers contact the Sewerage and Water Board to request repairs to leaking mains, services and fire hydrants.

Plans for Improvement

Staff is working with FEMA to expand beyond point repairs to line replacements for water mains with high frequency of failure.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	594	457	567	456	439	508	511	683	485	654	457	556
2014	641	621	711	495	428	390	451	565	621	581	536	551
2015	566	456	535	335	385	390	647	586				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Total Service Requests for Sewer System Leaks

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Provide Timely Information and Respond Promptly to Requests

Goal: Reduce Number of Service Requests

Currently Meeting Goal: Yes

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

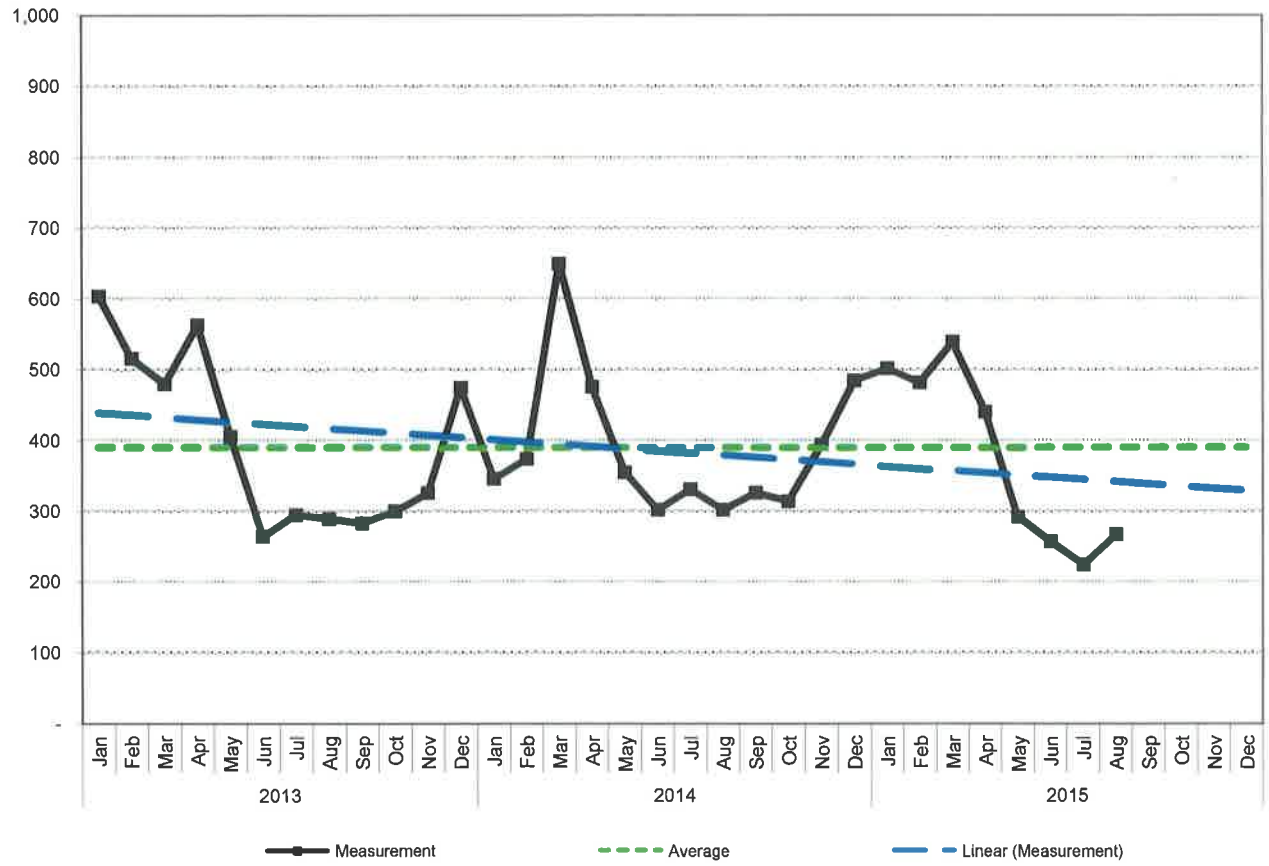
Trend: Favorable

Analysis

Customers contact the Sewerage and Water Board to request repairs to leaking sewer collection mains and service lines.

Plans for Improvement

Staff has recently expanded the use of Networks Department field staff focused on sewer system repairs.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	604	516	480	563	406	264	295	289	283	300	326	475
2014	346	374	650	476	355	302	331	302	326	314	394	485
2015	502	482	539	441	292	257	225	267				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Total Accounts Turned Off for Non-Payment

Constituency: Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Ensure Collection of Payments for Services Provided

Goal: None Established

Currently Meeting Goal: Not Applicable

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

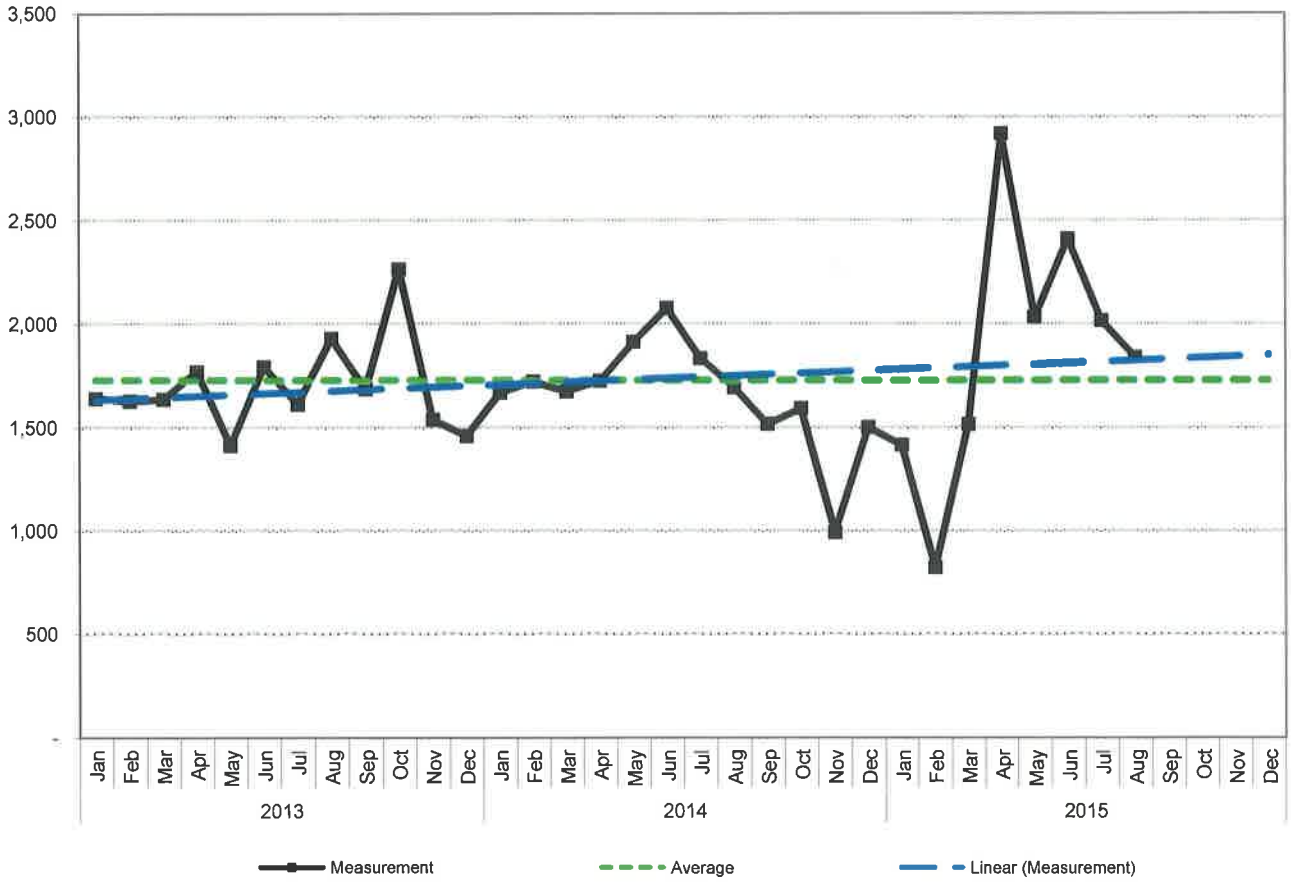
Trend: Level

Analysis

Customers accounts are turned-off for non-payment for balances more than $50 and over sixty days past due.

Plans for Improvement

Staff is monitoring the number of accounts turned-off for non-payment to determine trend directions. No actions are contemplated at this time.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	1,641	1,628	1,638	1,770	1,415	1,795	1,613	1,932	1,687	2,265	1,540	1,461
2014	1,670	1,723	1,675	1,727	1,915	2,077	1,836	1,694	1,518	1,594	993	1,502
2015	1,417	823	1,517	2,920	2,033	2,411	2,016					

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Water and Sewer Receivables 30 to 120 Days Old

EUM Attribute:
Financial Viability

Description: Establishes and maintains an effective balance between long-term debt, asset values, operations and maintenance expenditures, and operating revenues

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Efficient use of resources in providing services

Goal: None established

Currently Meeting Goal: Not Applicable

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

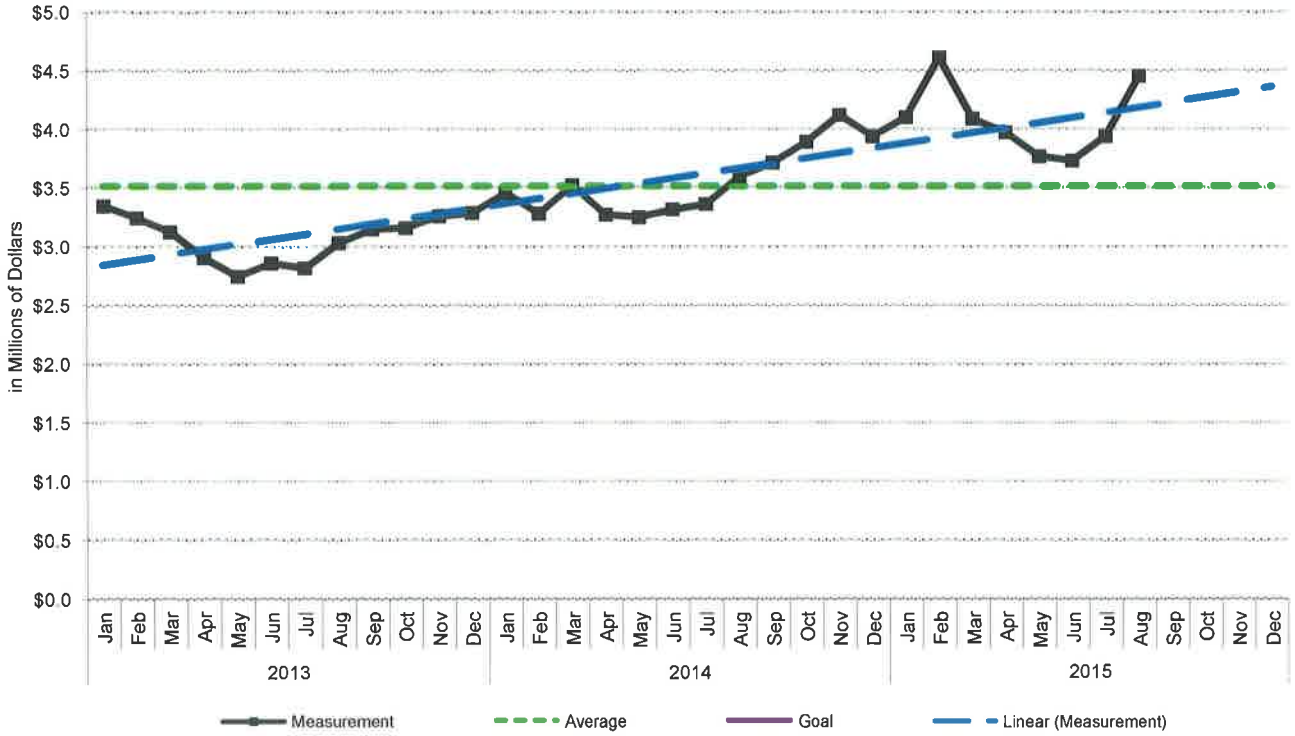
Trend: Level, when adjusted for rate increases.

Analysis

Water and sewer accounts receivable that are 30 to 120 days old are handled by internal staff using service disconnection. When those accounts are turned-off and final bills sent, the remaining balances after 30 days are sent to a collection agency. The uncollectable balances for 2007 and 2008 were higher than normal due to accounts that remained open for vacated facilities and were written off in 2011 and 2012,

Plans for Improvement

It appears that the higher post-Katrina accounts receivable balances have been resolved through standard collection practices and that annual collection rates now exceed 98% of annual billings. Staff intends to use standard process improvement methods to continue collection practices pending implementation of new billing and collection system.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	$3.348	$3.243	$3.127	$2.907	$2.748	$2.860	$2.819	$3.031	$3.149	$3.161	$3.258	$3.287
2014	$3.458	$3.280	$3.524	$3.271	$3.249	$3.314	$3.361	$3.598	$3.715	$3.893	$4.122	$3.941
2015	$4.104	$4.612	$4.091	$3.971	$3.769	$3.732	$3.941	$4.451				

Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
Water and Sewer Receivables 120 Days and Older

EUM Attribute:
Financial Viability

Description: Establishes and maintains an effective balance between long-term debt, asset values, operations and maintenance expenditures, and operating revenues

Constituency:
Customer Ratepayers

Objective: Efficient use of resources in providing services

Goal: None established

Currently Meeting Goal: Not Applicable

Process Operating Within Control Limits: Yes

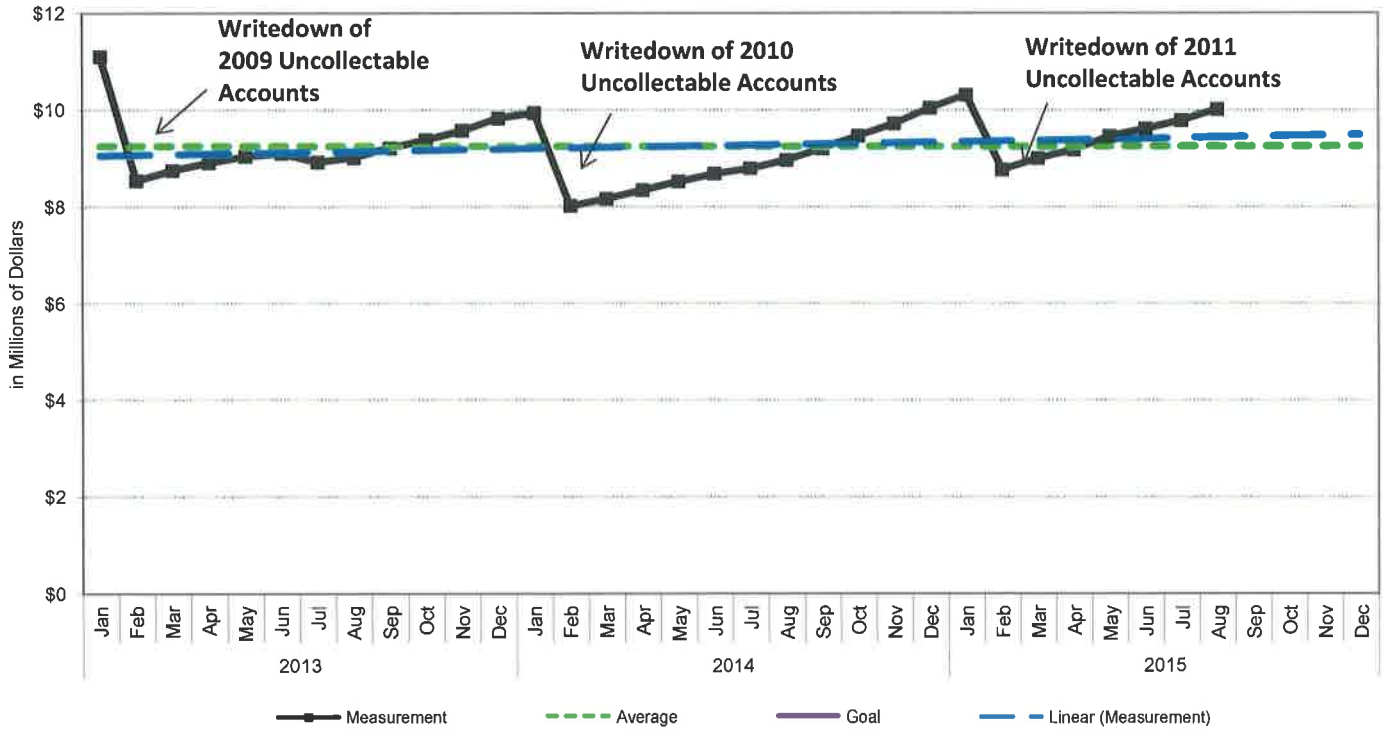
Trend: Level

Analysis

Water and sewer accounts receivable that are 120 days and older are handled by a collection agency. When those accounts remain uncollected after three years, the balances are written off as part of an annual process. The uncollectable balances for 2007 and 2008, which were written off early in 2011 and 2012, were higher than normal due to accounts that remained open post-Katrina for residences and businesses but were not occupied.

Plans for Improvement

It appears that the higher post-Katrina accounts receivable balances have been resolved through standard collection practices and that annual collection rates now exceed 98% of annual billings. Staff intends to use standard process improvement methods to continue collection practices pending implementation of new billing and collection system.



Data Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	$11.104	$ 8.552	$ 8.766	$ 8.928	$ 9.055	$ 9.113	$ 8.939	$ 9.029	$ 9.224	$ 9.398	$ 9.585	$ 9.839
2014	$ 9.946	$ 8.032	$ 8.185	$ 8.360	$ 8.536	$ 8.694	$ 8.807	$ 8.977	$ 9.218	$ 9.478	$ 9.728	$10.046
2015	$10.317	$ 8.781	$ 9.012	$ 9.188	$ 9.471	$ 9.625	$ 9.796	$10.018				