

GEORGETOWN COUNTY
WATER AND SEWER
DISTRICT
Customer Satisfaction Survey

2009

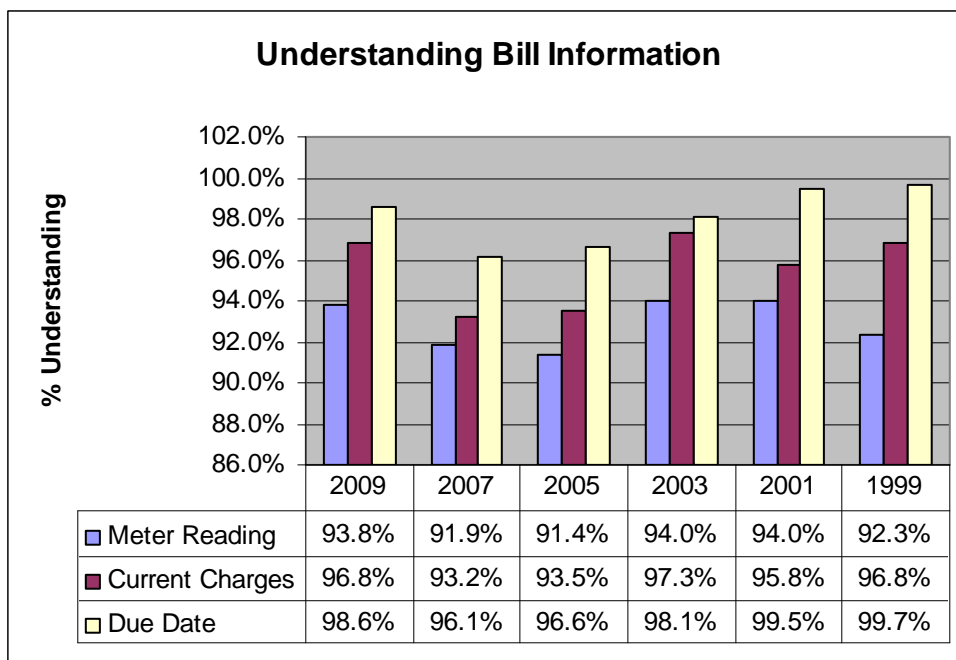
Summary Prepared by:

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This report summarizes the results of the 2009 Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Georgetown County Water and Sewer District. The results were tabulated and summarized by the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. The purpose of the survey was to assess attitudes, beliefs, behavioral characteristics, and satisfaction levels of the District's customers. The customers were encouraged to participate in the survey by having their accounts credited if they returned a completed survey. A total of 497 surveys were completed, yielding a margin of error of +/- 5 % with a 95% confidence level for the responses. Over 94% of the respondents have been customers at least a year and 64% have been customers for more than five years.

The results for each item are presented in the order they appeared on the survey instrument. In most cases, comparison results from previous surveys are presented. Overall, the satisfaction results are generally more positive than past surveys. The matter customers still rate as most needing improvement is water quality. A negative trend that continues is that customers know less about how the District is governed.

2.



How would you improve bill format?

There were numerous responses to this question. The most frequent response was to explain in more detail the various charges on the bill. Other comments from multiple respondents were to expand the consumption history section, have a more distinct separation of the late fee and the amount due, use bolder print, simplify the account number and send customers with multiple accounts one bill.

3. Do you think Georgetown County Water and Sewer District is a:

	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Profit	49.5%	51.0%	44.3%	35.3%	47.2%	46.8%
Non-Profit	50.5%	49.0%	55.7%	64.7%	52.8%	53.2%

4. How do you think the Georgetown County Water and Sewer District finances its operations? Check all that apply:

Category	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Monthly Bills	89.7%	89.1%	92.5%	91.0%	98.6%	100%
Customer Connection Charges	80.4%	73.0%	71.3%	71.8%	95.9%	67.0%
County Taxes	53.3%	56.2%	58.3%	53.7%	55.3%	48.4%
Bond Issues	45.2%	41.0%	35.0%	53.7%	46.3%	38.9%
State Taxes	21.7%	26.4%	21.2%	19.5%	21.9%	16.7%
Profit from Stock Sales	12.8%	16.3%	12.6%	19.5%	17.5%	17.7%
Federal Taxes	10.4%	16.1%	13.0%	11.5%	15.1%	13.2%
Sales Taxes	9.5%	13.9%	8.4%	8.8%	9.3%	9.8%
Tourist Accommodation Taxes	5.8%	12.2%	9.6%	9.6%	9.1%	9.8%

5. Check the one block that applies. Georgetown County Water and Sewer District is:

Category	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Department of County Government	64.2%	64.0%	66.6%	63.2%	59.3%	61.6%
Department of State Government	4.2%	2.2%	3.9%	4.1%	6.0%	5.8%
Private Water Company	14.6%	13.0%	10.0%	11.0%	11.5%	9.6%
Special Purpose District	17.0%	20.8%	19.5%	21.7%	23.1%	23.0%

6. Check the one box that applies. The Board-of-Directors are:

Category	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Elected	17.1%	14.6%	14.6%	25.0%	24.6%	27.2%
Appointed by the Governor	6.7%	7.1%	7.1%	10.4%	7.8%	12.7%
Appointed by County Council	20.4%	25.3%	22.9%	50.0%	59.2%	50.2%
Appointed by Stockholders	6.1%	4.4%	3.0%	11.6%	8.4%	9.9%
Don't Know	49.6%	48.6%	52.5%			

7. Do you know the names of any of the current members of the Board-of-Directors?

	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Yes	11.9%	15.5%	13.1%	15.3%	16.1%	16.4%
No	88.1%	84.5%	86.9%	84.7%	83.9%	83.6%

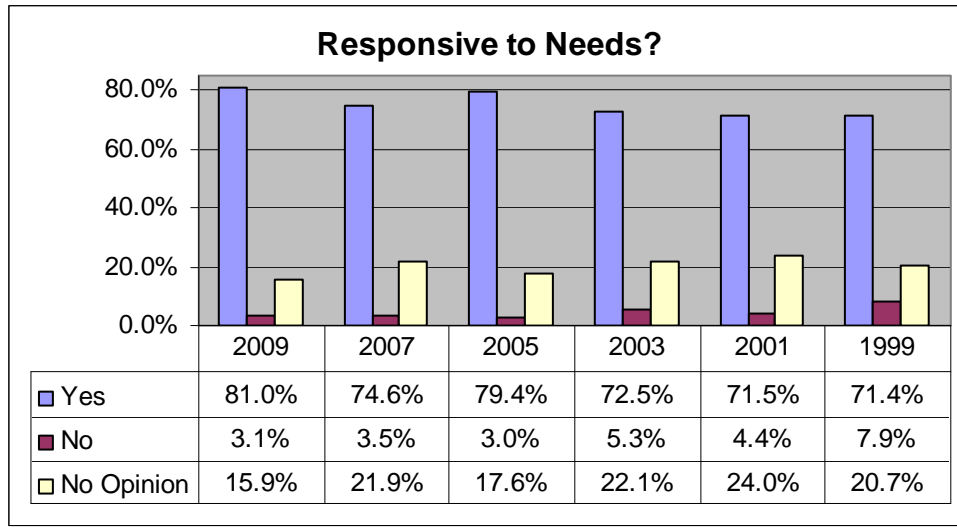
8. Do you know that monthly Board-of-Directors meetings are held at the Pawleys Island Office, 6:00 p.m. every second Thursday of the month and are open to the public?

	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Yes	32.7%	13.4%	9.9%	15.1%	14.2%	13.8%
No	67.3%	86.6%	90.1%	84.9%	85.8%	86.2%

9. Have you ever attended a Board of Director's meeting?

	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Yes	2.9%	2.0%	3.2%	1.4%	2.8%	4.0%
No	97.1%	98.0%	96.8%	98.6%	97.2%	96.0%

10.



11. Have you ever experienced questions or concerns about any of the District's services?

	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Yes	33.1%	38.7%	37.1%	41.1%	38.6%	46.1%
No	66.9%	61.3%	62.9%	58.9%	61.4%	53.9%

12. Were these issues addressed to your satisfaction?

	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey*	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
Yes	74.0%	66.3%	76.6%	74.7%	68.8%	63.4%
No	26.0%	33.7%	22.3%	21.7%	31.2%	36.6%

13. Check the block that applies in each of the following service areas:

Category	2009 Survey	2007 Survey	2005 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Survey	1999 Survey
	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>
Customer Relations	12.6%	9.4%	11.2%	9.0%	14.3%	22.7%
Construction/ Repair Work	11.2%	7.4%	11.0%	10.7%	13.5%	20.5%
Meter Reading/Billing	5.8%	7.0%	10.3%	7.9%	11.4%	15.6%
Water Quality	27.2%	23.1%	28.2%	37.5%	35.6%	44.2%

Eighteen respondents made a specific comment about the water tasting bad. Other comments from multiple respondents included the water smells like chlorine, the cost is too high, the water is discolored or leaves a stain, backflow devices are expensive and unnecessary, and the water pressure is too low.

14. I am most concerned with:

Please list in order the items by your level of concern. Number one (1) to six (6), the most important item one (1) and the least important six (6).

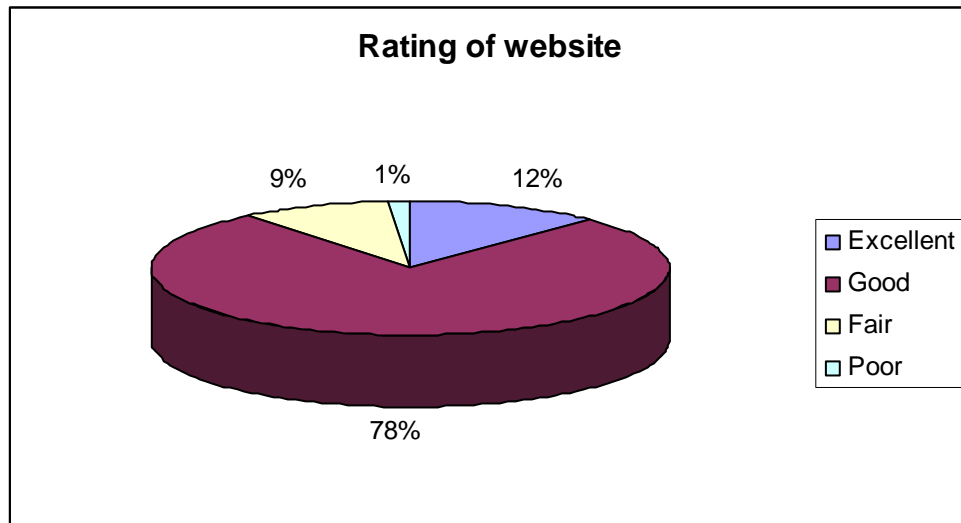
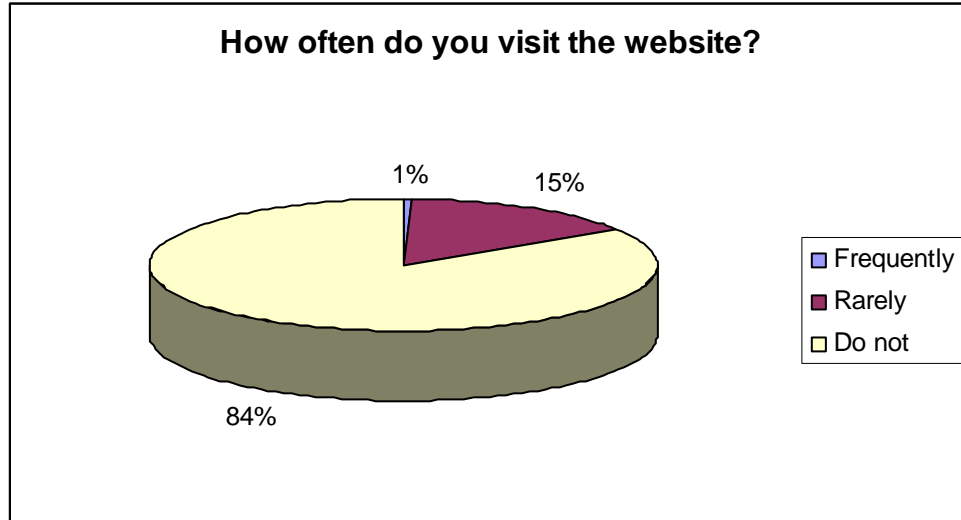
Items	2009 Survey Average Rating	2007 Survey Average Rating	2005 Survey Average Rating	2003 Survey Average Rating	2001 Survey Average Rating	1999 Survey Average Rating
Drinking Water Quality	1.49	1.43	1.56	1.34	1.46	1.40
Fire Protection	3.32	3.75	3.63	3.27	3.55	3.37
Environmentally Safe Sewer System	3.88	3.56	3.70	3.48	3.43	3.35
Monthly Rates and Charges	3.92	4.01	3.87	3.71	3.97	3.69
Water Pressure	4.00	3.77	3.62	3.75	3.91	3.75
Rate Increases	4.35	4.11	4.27	4.03	4.24	4.31

15. How would you rate the quality of your drinking water?

Please rate each item on a scale of one (1) to five (5). One (1) is excellent (best) and five (5) is poor (worst).

Attribute	2009 Survey Results	2007 Survey Results	2005 Survey Results	2003 Survey Results	2001 Survey Results	1999 Survey Results
Color	1.86	1.95	2.10	2.26	2.12	2.37
Texture	2.09	2.12	2.24	2.36	2.28	2.47
Smell	2.16	2.12	2.09	2.31	2.37	2.48
Taste	2.26	2.15	2.20	2.54	2.44	2.53
Price	2.61	2.55	2.37	2.82	2.78	2.96

16.



The most frequent suggestion regarding what information customers would like to find on the website was having the ability to pay on-line. The second most frequent suggestion was to have access to billing information. Other ideas suggested by multiple customers included having GCWSD names and contact information, posting repair locations that might affect water availability, quality or pressure, reporting water quality test results, GCWSD expansion plans, and having access to more detailed district cost and financial information.

17. How often do you read the bill “insert” material periodically sent to you?

Category	2009 Survey Results	2007 Survey Results	2005 Survey Results	2003 Survey Results	2001 Survey Results	1999 Survey Results
Always	41.0%	22.7%	15.2%	19.5%	22.0%	28.1%
Frequently	23.6%	35.6%	33.7%	35.9%	36.4%	35.4%
Rarely	29.3%	34.7%	38.4%	38.4%	33.3%	31.1%
Never	6.1%	6.9%	12.7%	6.0%	8.3%	5.3%

17b. What suggestions would you offer to make the bill stuffer more informative?

While several respondents noted their appreciation for the bill stuffers, the most frequent suggestion was to omit the stuffers to save money. Other responses were suggestions for additional topics that are addressed in the next item.

17a. I would like to receive more information on the following topics:

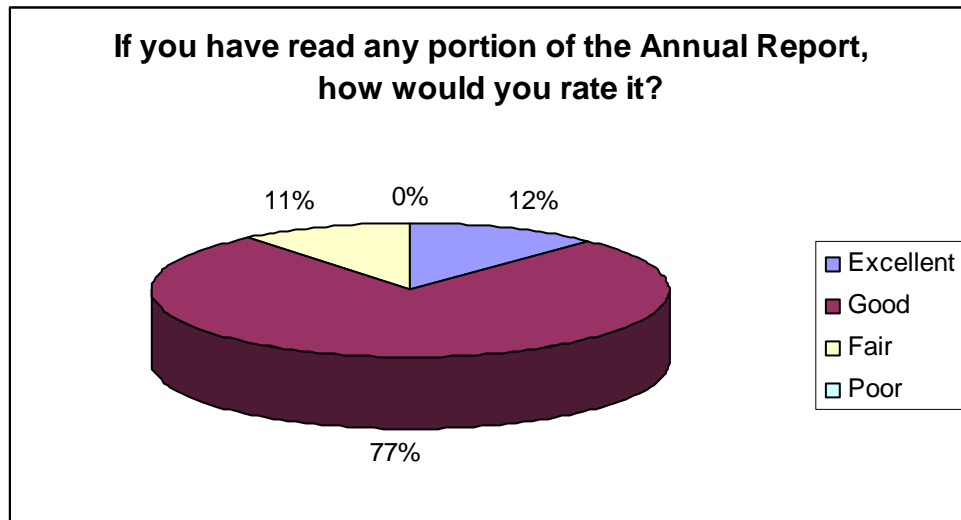
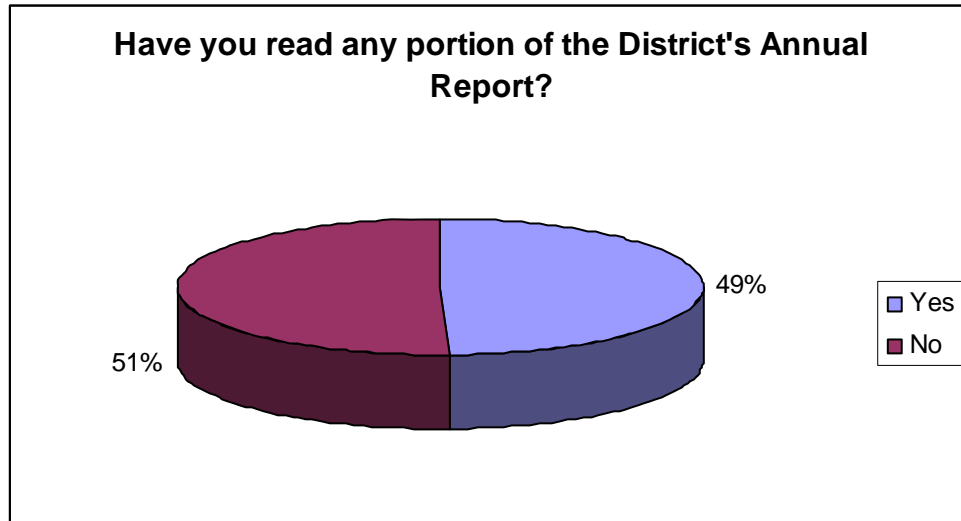
The most frequent topics suggested were water quality and water conservation practices. Other suggestions offered multiple times were cost explanations, expansion of services, district governance and environmental issues.

18. What is the best way for you to receive information about Georgetown County Water And Sewer District?

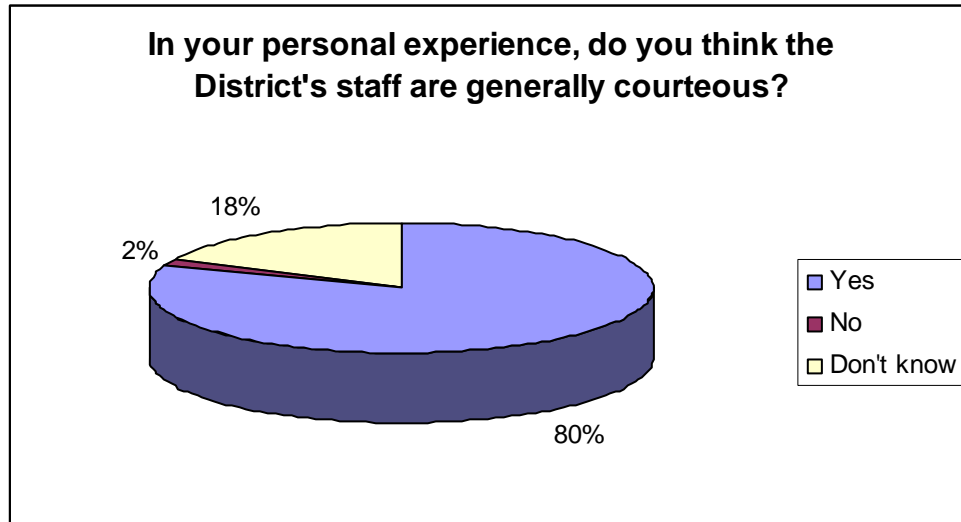
Please list in order those items that would be the best way to reach you. One (1) is best and eight (8) the worst.

Category	2009 Survey Results	2007 Survey Results	2005 Survey Results	2003 Survey Results	2001 Survey Results	1999 Survey Results
Bill Stuffers	3.23	2.80	2.85	2.87	2.75	3.06
Special Newsletter	3.39	3.19	3.12	2.56	2.64	3.27
Mailers	3.87	2.45	2.73	2.36	2.42	3.05
Newspaper Ads	5.20	4.70	4.20	4.35	4.11	4.10
E-Mail	5.40	5.23				
Television Ads	5.68	5.54	4.73	4.74	4.85	4.83
Radio Announcements	6.86	6.12	5.94	5.61	5.54	5.31
Public Service TV	7.07	6.49	5.90	5.67	5.66	5.67
Public Hearings	7.36	6.68	6.28	5.86	6.18	5.77

19.



20.



21. How would you rate the service of the District overall?

Category	2009 Survey Results	2007 Survey Results	2005 Survey Results	2003 Survey Results	2001 Survey Results	1999 Survey Results
Excellent	34.9%	31.4%	24.2%	21.6%	20.6%	21.4%
Good	57.1%	58.1%	65.2%	64.8%	63.0%	64.1%
Fair	5.0%	7.4%	7.1%	10.2%	12.5%	10.0%
Poor	0.8%	1.6%	1.5%	0.6%	0.8%	0.3%
Not Sure	2%	1.4%	1.9%	2.8%	3.1%	4.1%

22. What recommendations do you have that would help the district provide better services to you?

The most frequent responses to this question were:

- Reduce rates
- Improve water quality
- Provide sewer service to areas not being served
- On-line payments and billing

- Improve water pressure
- Increase fire protection

For the 2009 survey, we also analyzed the responses by billing cycle as we did in previous surveys. Because of the relatively small number of responses from each cycle, there were no significant differences among the cycles on any of the survey items. However, some of the results yield some interesting patterns.

Responsive to needs? (% answering "Yes")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	% Yes	Cycle	% Yes	Cycle	% Yes
Lowest %	1	70%	1A	67%	1A	54%
Highest %	1A	89%	4,5	81%	3	90%

Addressed problem to satisfaction? (% answering "Yes")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	% Yes	Cycle	% Yes	Cycle	% Yes
Lowest %	1A	70%	1A	40%	1A	62%
Highest %	3	77%	4	93%	1	92%

Customers in Cycle 1A answered "yes" more often than other cycles to the question, "Is the District responsive to your needs?" In fact, the 11% that did not answer "Yes" responded "no opinion". However, they had the lowest "yes" response to being satisfied with how the District addressed problems. A higher percentage of Cycle 1 customers (37%) experienced issues or concerns than customers in other cycles. Cycle 4 customers had the lowest percentage of those reporting concerns or issues (25%).

When asked about what areas of the District's services need improvement, the following differences were noted:

Customer Relations (% answering "needs improvement")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	%	Cycle	%	Cycle	%
Lowest %	5	8%	4	4%	3	2%
Highest %	1	24%	1A	30%	1, 1A	17%

Water Quality (% answering "needs improvement")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	%	Cycle	%	Cycle	%
Lowest %	5	18%	3	10%	1A	11%
Highest %	1	36%	1A	41%	4	37%

For the first time, there also were notable differences in responses to the questions about Construction/Repair Work and Meter Reading. Thirty percent of the customers in Cycle 1 indicated that Construction/Repair Work need improvement compared to only 5% in Cycle 3. Seventeen percent of customers in Cycle 1A responded that Meter Reading needed improvement compared to only 1% in Cycle 5.

In matters of District governance, customers in Cycle 2 seem to know the least about this subject.

Is GCWSD a for-profit agency? (% answering "yes")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	%	Cycle	%	Cycle	%
Lowest %	3	36%	3, 4	43%	3, 5	32%
Highest %	1	60%	1A	77%	4	62%

Is GCWSD a department of county government? (% answering "yes")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	%	Cycle	%	Cycle	%
Lowest %	1	56%	3	60%	2	55%
Highest %	2	69%	4	72%	1	75%

Is GCWSD a special purpose district? (% answering "yes")	2009		2007		2005	
	Cycle	%	Cycle	%	Cycle	%
Lowest %	2	13%	4	13%	1	10%
Highest %	3	22%	2	25%	4	27%

How would you rate the service of the District overall?

Cycle 1

Category	2009	2007	2005	2003
Excellent	37.7%	33.3%	13.2%	21%
Good	50.9%	55.6%	67.9%	61%
Fair	8.8%	11.1%	9.4%	18%
Poor	3%	0%	0%	0%
Not Sure	0%	0%	1.9%	2%

Cycle 1A

Category	2009	2007	2005	2003
Excellent	33.3%	33.3%	14.3%	16%
Good	48.5%	29.6%	65.7%	64%
Fair	12%	25.9%	11.4%	16%
Poor	3%	7.4%	2.9%	0%
Not Sure	3%	3.7%	5.7%	8%

Cycle 2

Category	2009	2007	2005	2003
Excellent	33.1%	27.4%	28.1%	17%
Good	61%	62.9%	59.5%	70%
Fair	3%	6.5%	6.5%	7%
Poor	0%	1.6%	1.3%	1%
Not Sure	2.9%	1.6%	0.7%	5%

Cycle 3

Category	2009	2007	2005	2003
Excellent	40.2%	42.6%	38.1%	30%
Good	51.1%	52.5%	57.1%	59%
Fair	5%	4.0%	3.6%	8%
Poor	1.1%	0.9%	0%	0%
Not Sure	2.2%	0%	1.2%	3%

Cycle 4

Category	2009	2007	2005	2003
Excellent	24.1%	21.6%	16.7%	12%
Good	68.5%	75.0%	61.7%	76%
Fair	6%	2.7%	8.3%	12%
Poor	0%	0%	6.7%	0%
Not Sure	1.9%	2.7%	6.7%	0%

Cycle 5

Category	2009	2007	2005	2003
Excellent	37.4%	26.4%	18.7%	27%
Good	57.1%	62.1%	72.5%	64%
Fair	4%	6.9%	7.7%	8%
Poor	0%	2.3%	1.2%	2%
Not Sure	1.9%	2.3%	0%	0%

The highest overall rating was achieved in Cycle 5 (94.5% rating the District overall as Good or Excellent). The lowest rating was in Cycle 1A (81.8% rating the District overall as Good or Excellent).