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At NRS, we see engineering as more than designing and building projects. Engineering better communities also means engineering innovation: new ways of approaching problems and solving them, using a toolkit that also encompasses financing alternatives, technological advances, and policy developments.

NRS *Texas Water News* is intended to help promote awareness of and dialogue on the important issues impacting water quantity and quality in the Lone Star State. We welcome your suggestions and contributions.

Bill Norris, P.E. **Jesús Leál, P.E.**
Principals, NRS Consulting Engineers



TWDB Kicks Off Strategic Planning Process

The Texas Water Development Board is looking ahead. Even as the 16 regional water planning groups prepare to submit their updated plans to Austin, the Board has embarked on its own strategic planning process for 2007 - 2011. The process was kicked off with a "Strategic Planning Workshop" Oct. 19, 2005, in San Antonio. More than 100 participants representing a range of interests spent the morning break-out sessions focused on reviewing TWDB product/ service areas and roles related to the agency's mission (see box on page 2). Invited participants included NRS principal Bill Norris.

The goals of the session, according to TWDB Executive Administrator Kevin Ward, were to identify future trends that will impact the Board's work over the next five to 10 years and assess efficiencies in specific product service areas so that resources can be properly matched with needs. The session was organized by TWDB Chief of Operations & Administration Lisa Glenn.

While Board activities are framed within the context of its enabling legislation and subsequent law, Ward noted, "customer input" is essential to helping prioritize needs and target resources. During the last legislative session, such input encouraged the Board to go forward on a large "exceptional items" request for legislative appropriations, Ward stressed. "These were things our stakeholders said needed to be done." The Board wound up with \$25 million of the \$37.5 million in its exceptional items request, allowing additional resources for funding planning activities and colonias projects.

Ward credits this achievement in large part to the stakeholders who attended the Board's first-ever 2003 strategic planning workshop. The discussions among stakeholders there focused in large part on the need for additional funding for the agency and ways to help make the case for that funding. Based on their input, the Board

submitted, also for the first time, a report on recommended legislation to the Legislature, as allowed by statute.

The process initiated by the 2005 planning session similarly will culminate in a report to the Legislature in December 2006. Input from the session already has been presented to TWDB managers at a Nov. 1 retreat. Now the information will be readied for a January 2006 presentation to the Board members. At that time, Ward said, "we will begin laying out process pieces, components, and strategies." The process will generate an action plan in June 2006, followed by the TWDB Legislative Appropriations Request in July and its legislative report in December 2006.

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Lisa Glenn and Kevin Ward.

Looking ahead to potential strategies, Ward said the Board already has heard considerable discussion from stakeholders about prospects for incorporating implementation into the water planning cycle. The second round of planning incorporated enhanced data, especially on groundwater availability.

There is a "high sense of urgency" about what needs to be done in terms of water development projects, Ward stressed.

A key management philosophy at the Board is to leverage activities so that plans and projects are developed in concert with one another, Ward said. The agency will be looking at the totality of the information on water needs in Texas: the regional plans, water management strategies and recommendations, modeling results, financial analyses. "We have high hopes we can digest all of the items and come up with some key strategic initiatives to lay before the Legislature."

"We know what the challenges are," he stressed, and "have no doubt we'll be able to resolve those challenges."

TWDB Strategic Planning Workshop Areas of Interest

Break-out session #1 focused on TWDB product/service areas:

- Water planning grants & technical assistance
- Groundwater modeling/data collection/research grants & technical assistance
- Surface water modeling/data collection/research grants & technical assistance
- Infrastructure construction finance
- Grants & loans for disadvantaged & rural communities
- Agricultural water conservation grants & loans/technical assistance
- GIS/TNRIS/data collection & dissemination

Break-out session #2 focused on roles related to TWDB's mission:

- Leadership
- Planning
- Financial assistance
- Data collection & dissemination
- Education



NRS principal Bill Norris participates in TWDB's strategic planning workshop.



TWDB's Jorge Arroyo leads a planning session.



TWDB's Dave Mitamura and Bill Mullican with Board Member Weir Labatt.

Texas Water Day 2006

The Texas Water Development Board and the Texas Water Conservation Association are once again joining forces to organize Texas Water Day on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

The 2006 Texas Water Day is scheduled for mid March. A main objective for the event is to push for passage of the Water Resources Development Act, which would help implement priority projects identified through the regional water planning process.

Reuse, flood control, desalination, and support from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Geological Survey also continue as major issues. Briefing papers on these issues from the 2005 Texas Water Day are available at www.twca.org (click on "Texas Water Day").

More information plus registration and sponsorship forms will be posted on the TWCA website as plans are finalized. Texas Water Day 2006 is co-chaired by Tom Ray of Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc., and Suzanne Scott, San Antonio River Authority.

Water Planning: Quotes of Note

Speakers at the Water Planning session of the Texas Water Conservation Association's fall meeting in San Antonio Oct. 19-21 included:

Texas State Sen. Kel Seliger: SB 3 "was too big with too many moving parts," such that dissent over components eventually outweighed support. "I think we are going to see these things dealt with separately" in the 80th Legislature. Of particular interest: seawater desalination. Texas has an "insatiable thirst for water; why would we not address this with an inexhaustible supply?"

Derek Seale, General Counsel, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality: Funding for water programs is a "big challenge." The agency is now conducting a comprehensive review of water programs and related fees. Staff proposals on water fees are likely to be released for public review by early July 2006. In the meantime, a proposal for decision on a water reuse application will come before the Commission by year-end. "This may be a turning point in reuse policy."

Bill Mullican, Deputy Executive Administrator, TWDB Office of Planning: Final rules on HB 1763 (enhancing joint management planning among groundwater conservation districts in groundwater management areas) are expected in November.

Greg Rothe, General Manager, San Antonio River Authority, and TWCA President-Elect: Proposes a "state assembly" of planning group members as an effective means of conveying ideas to state officials.

Jorge Garcés Named Head of NAD Bank

Jorge Garcés has been named Managing Director of the North American Development Bank, succeeding Raúl Rodríguez, a Mexican citizen, whose term as Managing Director ended Oct. 15. Mr. Garcés, a U.S. citizen, had served as Deputy Managing Director of the Bank since April 2001. The NADB charter requires that the directorship of the Bank alternate between the US and Mexico.

Garcés pledged that the Bank "will continue to serve the U.S.-Mexico border region by developing needed infrastructure, and will continue to look for innovative ways to finance and develop projects that improve services in the border region, improve the environment, and ultimately improve the quality of life for border residents."

Upcoming Events

Technology Transfer Workshop: Advances in Technology & Operator Training, presented jointly by the South Central Desalting Association and the American Membrane Technology Association, Feb. 8-9, 2006, Corpus Christi. Keynote remarks by TWDB Chairman E.G. Rod Pittman. For more information, contact SCDA at info@desalting.org or 512-236-8500.

Aquifers of the Gulf Coast of Texas, the third in a series of conferences on the groundwater resources of Texas, will be presented by TWDB's Groundwater Resources Division Feb. 15-17, 2006, at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. NRS principal Bill Norris will present on brackish groundwater desalination in the Gulf Coast area. For more information, contact Sarah Davidson at sarah.davidson@twdb.state.tx.us or 512-936-2387.

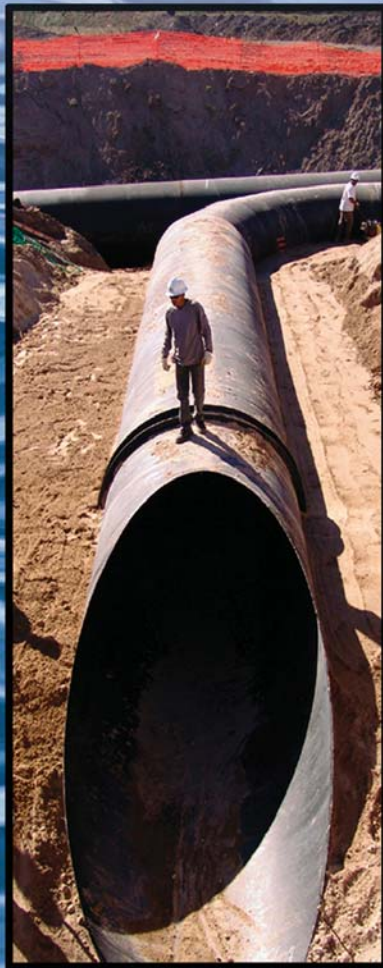


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Newsletter design and development by Fernandez Group, Inc. - www.FernandezGroupInc.com



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