

February/March 2011



Newsletter of the Trinity River Authority of Texas

*Leadership  
changes*



*History in  
the making*

# CRWS grit removal system wins national recognition

The American Council of Engineering Companies has selected Central Regional Wastewater System's new grit removal facility for national recognition. The facility, which features spinning innovation using a vortex for grit removal, is part of an extensive series of construction projects designed to increase CRWS' capacity to meet customer demand.

CRWS cleans wastewater for 20 DFW Metroplex cities, along with the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. The system is currently permitted to treat an average of 162 million gallons per day, with a peak two-hour flow of 405 MGD during wet weather. The CRWS plant is undergoing construction to improve processes and expand treatment capacity to 189 MGD, with a peak two-hour flow of 623 MGD.

The vortex grit project's innovative design will save construction costs by using existing infrastructure and will also reduce annual energy costs.

In a vortex grit basin, natural hydraulics of the influent and a mechanical propeller create a whirlpool, where grit is forced to the center and settles via gravity to the cone of the basin. Pumps then transport this grit/water mixture, called grit slurry, to grit teacup removal units where the grit is then separated from the water.

This new system saves construction costs because it was designed to fit existing structures, eliminating the need for demolition and construction of new structures. The system also reduces odor emissions and annual energy costs associated with the treatment process.

This project was chosen by a distinguished panel of approximately 30 expert judges as unique, innovative and sustainable, among other criteria.

The ACEC recognized CRWS' vortex grit removal system at national and state award ceremonies. The National Gala Awards Ceremony, an event considered the "Academy Awards" of the engineering industry, took place April 1 in Washington, D.C. The Texas Award Gala was held on April 8 in Austin. Look forward to the April/May issue of *inTRA* for photos of both awards ceremonies.

Above: Award entry board showing CRWS' new vortex grit removal system.



*On the cover: J. Kevin Ward, TRA's new general manager, seen here on the left, shakes hands with former General Manager Danny F. Vance. The black- and white-photo shows Vance shaking hands with General Manager David Brune in 1979 after Vance was named incoming general manager. Vance retired on March 1 after serving as general manager for 31 years. He was recently honored by the the Texas Legislature – see story on page 3. Get to know new General Manager J. Kevin Ward with the Q & A on page 4.*

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## TRA welcomes new Northern Region Manager Fiona Allen

Fiona M. Allen joined the Trinity River Authority of Texas in early March as northern region manager. Allen comes to TRA from the City of Arlington, where she served as deputy city manager for the last six years; for 14 years she worked in various capacities in the water utilities department and subsequently served as the city's first female water utilities director. Allen often represented the City of Arlington on TRA customer advisory committees, and prior to her time with Arlington, Allen spent eight years in civil engineering consulting, where she first encountered TRA projects.

As a child, Allen emigrated with her family from west England to Texas. She attended high school in Dallas, and then went on to earn a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University. She is also a Registered Sanitarian and a Professional Engineer, plus holding a TCEQ Class "B" water distribution license and a Class III wastewater collection system license. Allen is a member of the civil engineering advisory boards for both the University of Texas at Arlington and Texas A&M, and has served on the boards of the Texas Municipal League, the Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation. She is a current member of the Northern Trinity Groundwater Conservation District and president of the Arlington Alumnae Association of Kappa Kappa Gamma.

During her time with the City of Arlington, Allen had the opportunity to work on several

significant projects, including Rangers Ballpark and Cowboys Stadium, both of which she cites as key professional accomplishments. "Each project is something that the citizens of Arlington should be very proud of," she said. "I was fortunate to work with some really great people to see those to fruition, and I think the city will see significant benefits for many years to come."

With her background in water and wastewater operations, Allen is eager to get up-to-speed on all projects and to lend her expertise to continuing TRA's reputation for excellence. "I jumped at the opportunity to join an organization with such a strong reputation," she said. "I missed working directly in the water and wastewater field, and since I already knew and had worked with several members of the TRA northern region staff, coming to TRA at this point in my career was a perfect fit."

Allen is currently scheduled to visit TRA's northern region operating projects to familiarize herself with the people and processes that make each one unique. And perhaps the trickiest part of settling into her new position is keeping track of TRA-specific acronyms. "There are definitely some translation issues with learning the acronyms specific to any organization," she said. "I still catch myself trying to use acronyms from previous organizations, so once I get that straight, everything else should fall into place!"

The northern region staff also plan to convene advisory committee meetings throughout

May not only to formally introduce Allen, but also to begin budget discussions and lay the groundwork for fully understanding the budget needs of TRA's northern region customers. Opening this dialogue early will help assure that TRA accurately incorporates customer cities' budget considerations as projects begin planning for the next fiscal year.

Outside of work, Allen enjoys traveling with her family – husband Don, with whom she will celebrate 25 years of marriage this year, plus daughters Meredith and Beth, and son Mark. Favorite travel memories include a trip to Scotland last summer with her mother and younger daughter, along with any time spent in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands – Allen's favorite vacation destination. She also enjoys working out and staying fit – she's currently

looking for a flat course 10-K as her next fitness challenge.

Allen's daughter Meredith is preparing for the American Board of Ophthalmology certification exam, while also planning a wedding for July. Her son Mark is an engineer currently working for a firm in Fort Worth, and is also engaged to be married; his fiancée Jessie, also an engineer, is employed with a firm in Dallas. Allen's daughter Beth is a junior at the Oakridge School in Arlington, where she is involved in field hockey and track, and shows an interest in studying chemical engineering.

When asked what she'd like to be remembered for, the answer for Allen was easy – "I'd like to be remembered for being a good parent," she said, "because that's my true legacy and what's really important."



Former General Manager Danny F. Vance and former Northern Region Manager Warren N. Brewer are joined here by new Northern Region Manager Fiona M. Allen and new General Manager J. Kevin Ward.

## TRA website wins Outstanding Achievement Award

The Interactive Media Council recently granted TRA's new website an Outstanding Achievement Award for excellence in design, development and implementation.

Judges deemed it a top choice in the utilities category, rating it high in all five of the competition criteria: design, content, feature functionality, usability and standards compliance. Only a fraction of websites are able to meet the strict guidelines in each of these areas.

Last fall, TRA launched its new website with a fresh look, helpful features and updated content. The homepage is the portal to up-to-date information about TRA and its projects, including current news, Lake Livingston's discharge and lake level and a quick link to Wolf Creek Park reservations. Features are added and updated on an ongoing basis, and TRA recently added a button to link to Wolf Creek Park's new Facebook page.

Taylor Huynh, personnel services manager, oversaw development of the new website. She started by gathering information

from the previous site.

"Users gave feedback about navigation issues and requested specific features," said Huynh. "We developed a vision for what we wanted the new site to look like and how it should function."

From there, she researched other websites, especially those that serve agencies similar to TRA.

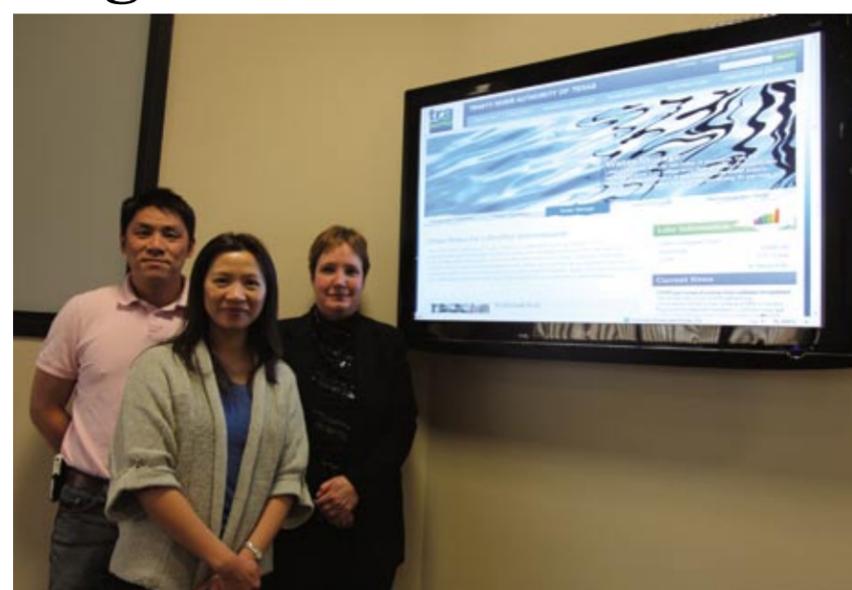
"We spent months looking at images and features," said Huynh.

Huynh was assisted by Wayne Chen, information technology supervisor, and Julie Hoppe, human resources supervisor.

Chen was the creative force providing the graphic design and many of the interactive features. Hoppe coordinated prolific amounts of text and photos that came from many different resources.

One of Chen's designs is a map of the Trinity River basin that shows each of the geographical areas represented by members of TRA's board of directors. Users are invited to click on an area to see a photo of the director and read his/her bio.

Huynh and team spent countless hours editing, programming and



The Interactive Media Council has recently granted TRA's new website an Outstanding Achievement Award for excellence in design, development and implementation. TRA staff that had a hand in developing the new website are seen here from left to right: Information Technology Supervisor Wayne Chen, Personnel Services Manager Taylor Huynh and Human Resources Supervisor Julie Hoppe.

coordinating a myriad of resources, but the effort has certainly paid off.

"It was a gigantic team effort, but we are pleased with the results and honored with the award," said Huynh. "The best part is getting comments from users about how

we've made navigating the site and finding information so much easier."

The Interactive Media Council, Inc. is a nonprofit organization of leading web designers, developers, programmers, advertisers and other web-related professionals.

# Vance honored with legislative resolution

Shortly before his retirement, former TRA General Manager Danny F. Vance was recognized on the floor of both the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate with the reading of a resolution in his honor. Sponsored by Rep. Jim Pitts of Waxahachie and Sen. Chris Harris of Arlington, the resolution focuses on Vance's accomplishments while at TRA, including development of regional potable water and wastewater systems, significant improvements to all existing regional systems and major increases to assets and annual operating budget. The resolution also highlights his dedication to regional water planning groups and to overall excellence in the water and wastewater treatment industries. It can be read in its entirety to the right of this article.

This recognition of Vance's service was an important step in marking the significance of his contributions to the water industry. "Danny's leadership over the years has extended far beyond the

immediate needs of the Trinity River Authority and our customer cities," said TRA Board President Linda D. Timmerman, Ed.D. "So when Danny announced his retirement, the board wanted to make certain that this service was also recognized. A single call to a legislator by board Vice President Harold Barnard got the ball rolling, and the outpouring of support from both the House and the Senate was so gratifying. To a person, everyone wanted to join in our effort to thank Danny and to show him the tremendous impact his service has made locally, statewide and nationally."

While in Austin for this recognition, Vance, along with his wife Janet, also attended several events that allowed him time to reminisce and accept well wishes from TRA colleagues and board members, along with TRA friends and business partners. Vance's brother and sister, their spouses and Vance's nephews also were in attendance for the special day.

"The Legislature's recognition

of my service to TRA is unique and very special," said Vance. "The leadership of the TRA board of directors is responsible for the honor, and the recognition was made even more special by board members, family and friends who attended the ceremonies in Austin and are part of something that I will treasure forever."

This sentiment was certainly shared by members of the TRA board of directors. "I know that

every member of the board feels, as I do, that it was an honor and a privilege to be with Danny and Janet in the Texas House and Senate as legislators recognized Danny's service to the state," said Timmerman. "We saw firsthand the high esteem in which Danny is regarded by legislators and their staff – and having Danny's family present to witness the event was just 'icing on the cake' for the board."

## Texas State

### House Resolution No. 126 Senate Resolution No. 29

**WHEREAS**, Danny F. Vance of Arlington is retiring from the Trinity River Authority of Texas on February 28, 2011, after four decades of outstanding service to the agency; and

**WHEREAS**, A native Texan, Danny Vance was born in Galveston in 1943, and he was raised alongside his brother, Benny, and his sister, Janis, in Palestine; he graduated from Palestine High School in 1962, and he went on to attend Sam Houston State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1966, served as a graduate assistant, and attained a master's degree in business administration in 1968; he also earned a teaching certificate, and for two years he served in the United States Army as a specialist stationed in Germany; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1970, Mr. Vance joined the Trinity River Authority as assistant to the manager of the Southern Region, and later that year he relocated to Arlington to serve as an administrative services manager for the agency; he also held the positions of general services manager and of regional manager of the Northern Region; in 1979, at the age of 35, he became general manager of the Trinity River Authority, and at the time he was the youngest manager of a major Texas river authority and only the second general manager in the agency's history; and

**WHEREAS**, During his tenure, Mr. Vance has overseen the creation of four regional potable water systems and three regional wastewater systems, as well as significant improvements to all nine regional systems, and the Trinity River Authority became the largest river authority in Texas, with major increases to its assets and annual operating budget; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Vance further dedicated his time to various regional water planning groups, and he served as president of the Texas Water Conservation Association; he was recognized by many for his leadership in balancing the need for adequate water supplies for a growing population with the environmental needs of the Trinity Basin and the Trinity Bay and Estuary; and

**WHEREAS**, In all of his endeavors, Mr. Vance enjoys the love and support of his wife, Janet, whom he married in 1967; the Vances are looking forward to their future retirement; and

**WHEREAS**, Danny Vance has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to excellence over the course of his career, and he may indeed reflect with great pride on his professional achievements as he prepares to embark on the next exciting chapter of his life; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd Legislature, hereby congratulate Danny F. Vance on his retirement from the Trinity River Authority of Texas and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued happiness; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for Mr. Vance as an expression of high regard from the Texas House and Senate.



Seen here on back row from left to right are Rep. Jim Pitts of Waxahachie, Janet Vance, former TRA General Manager Danny F. Vance, TRA board Vice President Harold L. Barnard. Front row; board Director Michael Cronin and board President Linda D. Timmerman.



Seen here from left to right are Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, Janet Vance, former TRA General Manager Danny F. Vance, TRA board President Linda D. Timmerman, board Director Michael Cronin, board Vice President Harold L. Barnard and Sen. Chris Harris of Arlington.

# General Manager's Message

## Q & A with J. Kevin Ward: Getting to know TRA's new general manager

TRA welcomed new General Manager J. Kevin Ward in early March, and he has spent much of his time since then settling in and getting acquainted with TRA.

In between meetings, briefings and unpacking boxes, *inTRA* had an opportunity shortly after Ward's arrival to get to know a little about him – to discuss his background, interests and experience, plus his vision for TRA's future. Below is a brief excerpt from that conversation.

### **Tell our readers a little about your professional background.**

**Ward:** I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in accounting, but I studied petroleum engineering for my first three years of school. After graduation, I worked as a bookkeeper and bookkeeping consultant for public schools for a little over two years before landing a job as an accountant with a firm that managed water and wastewater public utilities in the Austin area. That's where my engineering courses, plus some prior management experience, helped me advance to a controller's position with some general manager assignments to several key client districts. The fast pace of the industry and the diverse roles required of an officer in a small business gave me the opportunity to learn most aspects of the utility business. Later, when the real estate bust and late-80s recession hit, I went to work for the Texas Water Development Board, where my 23-year career ultimately put me in the role of executive administrator for the last eight years.

### **What attracted you to TRA?**

**Ward:** TRA has a great reputation for accomplishment, service and high ethical standards of behavior – by its board, management and staff. The culture of seeking excellence through hard work from a highly trained and experienced staff is evident – and the fact that the organization supports employees as they find a healthy balance between work and family obligations ensures that, when required, the entire workforce can rise to any occasion to address challenges. From the very beginning of my interaction with staff and the board of directors, I felt everyone's devotion to protecting and nurturing the great organization that they were blessed to be a part of. It wasn't long before I knew that I really wanted to join the TRA family and do my part to help it continue the tradition that was already well established.

### **How would you describe your leadership style?**

**Ward:** I try to keep a strategic focus on longer-term goals, but

will sometimes dive deep into the workings of the organization to better understand why and how we do things. This lets me better anticipate next steps. I think that someone in a leadership position of a large, multifaceted organization has to fully understand the resources available to support every area of operation in order to respond to changing business needs that sometimes require us to change our plans. I will always consider customer service, communication and community support to be my priorities. I will want to establish strong relationships with the customers TRA serves. I will also have an open-door policy with staff, customers and stakeholders, and I hope that many will take advantage of the opportunity to meet with me and share their views on how TRA can best help them.

### **What kinds of things would you like to accomplish in your new role?**

**Ward:** I definitely want to successfully face the challenges presented in water financing, aging infrastructure and regulatory compliance, plus figuring out how my experience and expertise merge with the rest of the TRA team. Being a part of something meaningful is important to me, regardless of my role – sometimes my role will be as a leader and sometimes I'll be in support of others to nurture their leadership skills. I want to continue TRA's legacy of excellence in the services it provides, and I want to pursue the types of financing and programs that reduce costs for TRA and its customers. I also want to continue to promote a family-oriented environment that attracts employees with high ethical values who are inspired to serve the greater public good.

### **What are your plans for getting to know the people and projects of TRA?**

**Ward:** Now that I finally know where all the restrooms are in the general office, I'm ready to branch out! I intend to meet with our northern and southern region staff and get briefings on all the projects. We're also just now preparing to go through the budget process, which is an excellent way to get to know an organization. I'm looking forward to meeting with individual groups to learn more about their budget and operational needs. I look forward to visiting all of our projects in both regions, so those visits will be coming up in the near future. I also plan to spend time getting to know our board members and customers throughout the basin. I like to listen, so I look forward to hearing from all of our stakeholders about how

TRA can make their lives better and how we can continue to maintain and improve water quality in the basin.

### **What qualities do you most value in your team members?**

**Ward:** Honesty, dedication, and a good, strong ethical foundation – and I mean both work ethic and professional behavior ethic. I strive to build relationships based on trust; I believe that if we have that, we can accomplish anything as a team. My goal is for people to work together with no personal agendas – to care enough about each other to help individuals and the organization succeed. We have to grow and develop together.

### **What do you see for TRA's future?**

**Ward:** I definitely look forward to exploring and expanding TRA's role in watershed protection. In coming years we'll need more public education and outreach to change culture and habits among the general population to better manage non-point sources of pollution. Education and being proactive are key here. We will also have to adjust to what has essentially been an economic reset over the last few years – though economic conditions are recovering, they are doing so slowly. I also can see TRA becoming more attentive to national policy and where it's being developed. We can't undervalue the economic impact of the Trinity River basin on both the state and the nation – we have the potential to be a key player in many development projects that will help ensure that our customers have access to future water supplies. Internally, we also have to build for the future, developing potential leaders so that TRA can continue to move ahead. I'm looking forward to really studying TRA – where we've been, how we adapted once our original mission was modified, and where we can go from here.

### **What kinds of supervisors or mentors have been influential in your career?**

**Ward:** Like most people, I've had my share of good and bad bosses, but the best ones were always the toughest – they held me to a higher standard, and I didn't want to fail them. The very best supervisors were the ones who instilled in me a sense of obligation and fiduciary responsibility – for much of my career I've had the privilege and responsibility of guarding and shepherding something that belongs to someone else. You can't take that lightly.

### **What's the kindest thing a co-worker has ever done for you?**

**Ward:** It may not have always



General Manager J. Kevin Ward

**The Board of Directors feels fortunate to have attracted Kevin Ward for the position of general manager. His expertise, knowledge, experience and dedication to our mission is exactly what we need at this time in the history of the organization. We welcome him to the TRA family.**

**Board President**

**Linda D. Timmerman, Ed.D.**

seemed like it at the time, but I think the biggest kindnesses have been when co-workers trusted me enough to be brutally honest with me. When people have cared enough about me and the organization we're a part of to raise an issue I didn't see or point out a different way of approaching a challenge, that has ultimately helped me. Those kinds of coaching sessions certainly build character, because we have to be able to apologize, admit to mistakes and correct them as quickly as possible.

### **To date, what would you count as your greatest professional achievement?**

**Ward:** I'd have to say building the team at the Texas Water Development Board. We were able to establish a corporate mindset and develop a team around a strategic vision. We set a goal to grow the agency and to become the go-to source for science, financing and policy, and we were able to achieve that – in fact, I worked myself out of a job! It was gratifying to put together a team that accomplished so much and to be able to see our plans come to life.

### **What would you like to be remembered for?**

**Ward:** I'd like to be remembered as someone who was a big part of helping Texas achieve its full economic potential. The magnitude of what we do is tremendous – people can work, live and prosper throughout much of the state because of the services we provide. In some ways, Texas is still a frontier, and quality of life issues go a long way toward developing our state's potential – we're likely to see continued expansion of our services over the next 10 to 15 years.

### **If you didn't have to earn a living, how would you spend your time?**

**Continued on page 7. See Ward.**

**Employee Milestones**

**New Hires**

CRWS welcomes **Lisa Arent** as senior secretary and **David Hill, Tanner Pietrocci, Michael Scamp, Charles Scott** and **Linus Ugoh** all as operator I. CSS welcomes **Stephen Renfro** as inspector I. GO welcomes **J. Kevin Ward** as general manager and **Fiona Allen** as northern region manager. LRF welcomes **Burt Fogle** as park ranger.

**Promotions**

**Stephanie Schultz** was promoted to inspector II with CSS. **Jonathan O'Bryant** was promoted to operator II at DCRWS.

**Current Events**

Dennis Alan Querry (DAQ), son of **Mike Querry**, CSS construction services supervisor, won first place at the Johnson County agricultural show in February in the electromechanical division.

**David Hatley**, CRWS laboratory supervisor, welcomed new grandson Rylan David Hatley, born Feb. 4, weighing only 2 pounds, 6 ounces. Parents Jon and Amanda look forward to bringing Rylan home in late March.



*Bonnie Crawford, TCWSP accounting clerk, welcomed a new grandson Feb. 19. Sawyer, who weighed 6 pounds, 12 ounces and was 19 and a quarter inches long at birth, joins sisters Savanna and Sabrina.*



*Adam Sanders, son of Thomas Sanders, manager of construction services, has been named Officer of the Year by the Harris County Chamber of Commerce. He has also been nominated for Rookie of the Year. Deputy Sanders was commended for his dedication to duty and enthusiastic approach to his job. In 2010, he made more arrests and filed more criminal charges than any other rookie assigned to patrol duties in the Harris County Sheriff's Office. He made 30 felony and 104 misdemeanor arrests, filed 138 criminal charges with the district attorney's office, answered 1376 calls from citizens, wrote 372 offense reports and worked 93 automobile accidents.*



*Andrew Moore, DCRWS operator I, competed in Bowie High School's first-ever alumni baseball game. Moore hit two for four at the plate with one RBI.*



*Sue Beard, construction services executive secretary, welcomed her fourth grandson, Chase Matthew Gilbert, on Jan. 27. Chase joins proud big brothers Carson, 7; Ethan, 3; and Dylan, 5.*

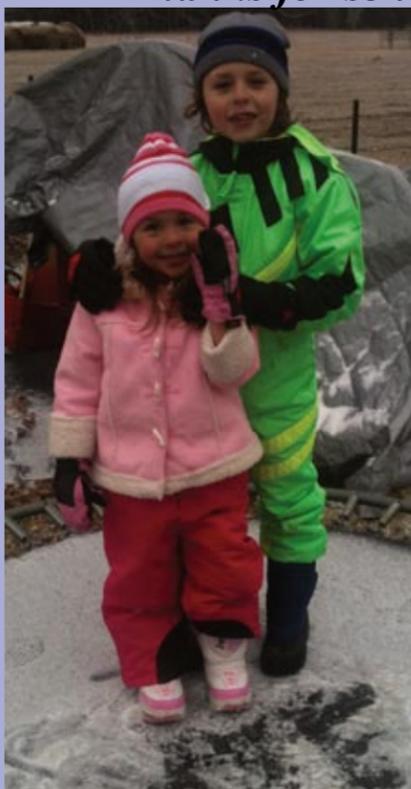


*Charlie White, Wolf Creek Park ranger, and his wife Shirley celebrated the birth of their first grandson. Charlie White III was born Jan. 17 weighing 7 pounds, 7 ounces.*



*Dmetri James Blaylark, grandson of Melvin J. Blaylark, CRWS field technician II, said he had "the best day ever" building a snowman, making snow angels and throwing snowballs with his Paw Paw and Granny.*

**Snow day fun**  
Thanks for sending your photos!



*Brook and Brett Munoz, children of Kristie Munoz, LLP biologist, play on their snow-covered trampoline.*



*Personnel Services Manager Taylor Huynh's daughters, Addison and Tiffany, brave the cold to play in the snow.*



*This little angel is Kenley, daughter of Dustin Taylor, CSS construction inspector II. Kenley and her Dad spent the day riding sleds, making snow angels and throwing snowballs with the neighbors.*



*Construction Inspector II Steph Schultz's daughter M'Kayla and her horse Rocky enjoy the snow.*



*David Scott, operator II at MCRWS, reported that he, his wife Patti and the "kids," seen here, trekked down Matlock Road in Mansfield to pick up doughnuts for the neighbors.*

# TRA operators and maintenance staff overcome daunting conditions to keep water and wastewater flowing

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, Feb. 1, temperatures in North Texas dipped to a frigid 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Freezing rain and sleet coated surfaces and were subsequently covered by snow. Temperatures stayed below freezing for four days, freezing water pipes, damaging equipment and making roadways impassable. Wind and humidity made the cold feel worse, and rolling power blackouts throughout the region added to the challenge.

The unusual wintery weather conditions caused difficulties at the Trinity River Authority's General Office in Arlington and at several operating projects.

Outdoor irrigation pipes, located in brick columns next to the newly constructed Danny F. Vance Annex at the General Office, froze and ruptured during the freeze. Water then migrated into the building, soaking carpet, walls, furniture and office supplies. Personnel and computers were relocated to the original building for a week while maintenance staff and contractors worked around the clock to dry and rehabilitate the affected areas.

While most of TRA administrative offices closed down for at least part of the freeze, TRA's water and wastewater treatment plant operators and maintenance personnel kept the plants in operation under difficult and often dangerous conditions. Plant staff braved hazardous commutes and long hours working outdoors with wind chills below zero, with snow and ice making stairs, walkways and roadways dangerously slippery. Clothing, including gloves and footwear, quickly became wet. Exposed skin reddened and ached with cold. Locks, tools, equipment and human hands malfunctioned or quit working altogether.

TRA's project managers are grateful for dedicated staff that put in extra hours under difficult conditions to keep water and wastewater flowing and customers serviced.

"The plant kept running because people pulled together," said Basilio M. Chavez, chief maintenance mechanic at Ten Mile Creek Regional Wastewater System.

Even before it arrives, cold weather adds to the workload as plant personnel take steps to make sure all pipes and controls are insulated and heat-traced with electrical wires encased in insulation that provide heat and keep pipes above freezing. As soon as ice begins to form on exposed surfaces, walkways and roadways must be cleared and treated with de-icing products to ensure safe passage for personnel.

"Operators go up and down stairs carrying samples," said John Bennett, Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System project manager. "They don't have both hands free to hold handrails."

### Essential personnel

The extra work means longer days for plant personnel, even though getting to work on the icy roadways is daunting. For those with families, school and daycare closings add to the challenge.

Most TRA projects went to 12-hour shifts, while some worked even longer hours.

"Some of my staff couldn't make it home. They worked for 24 hours straight and then slept on the conference room floor," said Bennett. "Others drove two and a half hours one way just to get home, grab four hours of sleep and come back for another 14-hour day."

### Overcoming frozen pipes, equipment failures

Pipes and other equipment that transport and handle water are vulnerable to severe freezing conditions like those seen in February. Despite their best efforts to insulate and install heat trace, many projects dealt with frozen pumps, broken valves and equipment failures.

Repairing water- and wastewater-spewing equipment under freezing conditions is difficult, to say the least, and can be dangerous.



*A rare view in North Texas: icicles adorn the foul air collection pipe in front of snow-capped gravity thickeners at CRWS. Four days of sub-freezing temperatures in early February challenged operators and maintenance personnel at TRA's regional water and wastewater systems.*

"We checked the plant continuously for frozen pipes and equipment. We had some minor pipe breaks but even those made frozen lakes and waterfalls," said Chavez.

"We turned off pumps and drained them to make repairs, and that made a sheet of frozen wastewater next to the pump," said Bennett. "We had to remove the sheet of ice before continuing with the repair. Our clothes were soaked from the knees down and our hands and any exposed skin were burned in the cold."

At Tarrant County Water Supply Project, operations and maintenance got out ahead of the weather to insulate and heat tape exposed areas.

"That kept problems to a minimum although we did have a broken ammonia scrubber," said TCWSP Operations and Maintenance Chief Sid McCain.

In addition to frozen pipes and various equipment failures, Central Regional Wastewater System solids personnel were tasked with storing biosolids at the plant during the cold weather. Normally, biosolids are hauled to local agricultural sites for beneficial land application on a daily basis. However, regulations prohibit land application on frozen ground.

TRA projects in the southern region dealt with freezing temperatures as well. Huntsville Regional Water Supply System had a frozen pipe or two, but the real challenge came when the city of Huntsville, the system's main customer, lost the ability to obtain water from its water wells for 24 hours. In addition, the Tenaska power generating plant in Grimes County, which HRWSS provides with partially treated water, called for more clarified water than usual to meet increased power demands brought on by the cold weather. HRWSS operated at top capacity to keep the city and the power plant supplied with water.

Despite the challenges posed by the freezing weather, service for TRA's customers continued without interruption. While the frigid conditions of February will not soon be forgotten, this wasn't the first time TRA employees have faced and overcome adversity, and it won't be the last. Thanks to TRA's dedicated employees working together as a team, we can keep water and wastewater flowing to meet customer needs regardless of weather conditions.



*This 8-inch valve on the waste activated sludge pipe at DCRWS broke as the water within froze and expanded during the early February freeze. Project Manager John Bennett, a 25-year veteran of TRA, said he has never before seen this level of freeze damage.*



*TRA's water and wastewater treatment plant operators and maintenance personnel kept the plants in operation under dangerous and difficult conditions during a recent severe cold spell. Here DCRWS Maintenance Mechanic II Eric Benivides thaws out a frozen block of waste near the waste-activated sludge pump. The piping around the pump was insulated and heat traced to keep the pipes above freezing, but the pumps and valves were not. They had to be drained when shut down for normal cycles, and chunks of ice quickly formed around the equipment.*

## Wolf Creek Park launches Facebook page as park opens for 2011 season

The Trinity River Authority's Wolf Creek Park on Lake Livingston has launched a fun and informative Facebook page to coincide with opening the park for the 2011 season.

Visit [www.facebook.com/TRAWolfCreekPark](http://www.facebook.com/TRAWolfCreekPark) to see wall posts announcing everything from area burn bans to local happenings and park activities. Click on the photo and video tabs to view individual park sites and to see what park visitors and staff are up to – don't miss the photo of the 40-pound catfish a park visitor caught during the first week the park was open.

Visitors can also access the page by clicking on the Facebook button in the Wolf Creek Park box on TRA's website at [www.trinityra.org](http://www.trinityra.org). The page shares a great deal of information about the park and its individual campsites, as well as the park's history. By "Liking" the page, visitors can receive updates from Wolf Creek Park through their individual Facebook news feeds and/or share information with their friends.

Wolf Creek Park is a 110-acre

overnight camping and day-use park on the western shore of Lake Livingston. The park has 46 campsites for RVs requiring full hookups and 57 sites with water and electricity. All sites have picnic tables, fire rings and grills. Park visitors have access to a boat ramp and fishing pier, three restroom/shower facilities, a group shelter, playground equipment and a marina store.

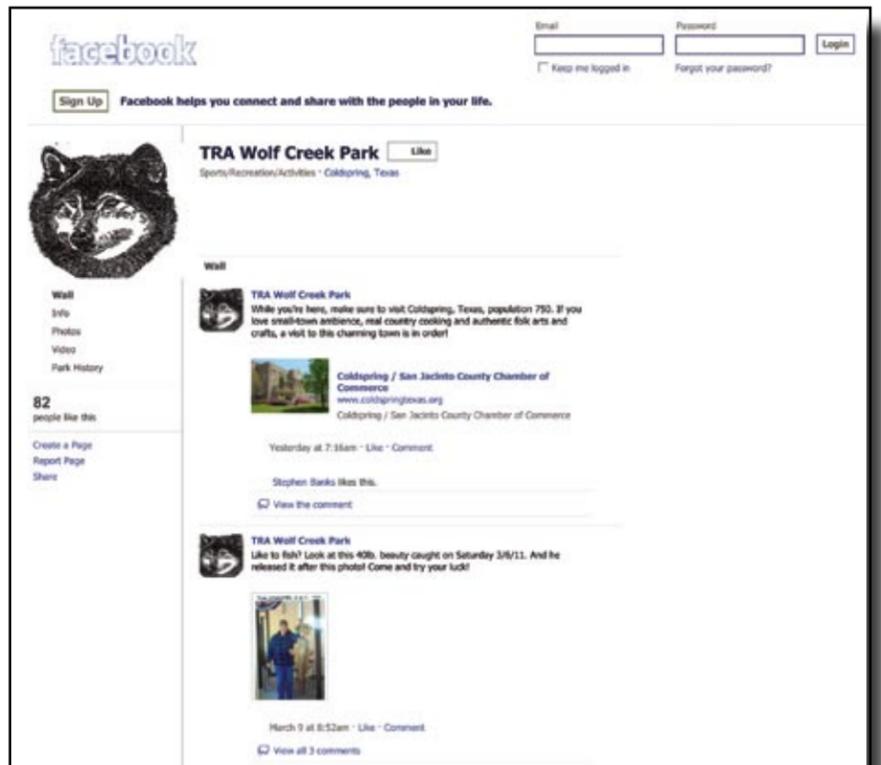
The park opened on March 1 to a steady stream of visitors.

"We had 1435 visitors by March 16," said Park Supervisor Eddie Knight.

Visitors can reserve a site up to 60 days in advance. Reservations can be made online at [www.trinityra.org](http://www.trinityra.org) or by phone at 936-653-4312.

Wolf Creek Park is one of the few campgrounds in Texas that allows visitors to reserve specific sites – site-specific reservations must be made by phone.

Families and groups can reserve a block of sites all in the same area, but Knight urges visitors to plan in advance for popular dates and specific sites. Holidays fill up fast



Visit Wolf Creek Park's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/TRAWolfCreekPark](http://www.facebook.com/TRAWolfCreekPark) or click on the Facebook button on TRA's website homepage at [www.trinityra.org](http://www.trinityra.org).

and waterfront sites are the first to go.

In addition to viewing individual camp sites on the Wolf Creek Park Facebook page, visitors to TRA's website can find the

location of each campsite on the map of the park posted in the Wolf Creek Park section.

For more information visit [www.trinityra.org/wolf-creek-park.htm](http://www.trinityra.org/wolf-creek-park.htm).

## LRWSS begins planning for expansion

TRA's Livingston Regional Water Supply System has initiated planning to expand the system's treatment capacity in response to population increase in the system's service area, coupled with changes in the city of Livingston's water supply resources.

LRWSS originally was constructed to supply up to two million gallons per day of treated water to the city of Livingston. The system was enlarged to three MGD in 1992 to supply water to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Polunsky Unit. Service was extended to the IAH Detention Facility, a privately run prison, in 2006.

Over time, the plant has steadily increased hours of operation in response to increased need for water due to population growth in the system's service area. To meet the water needs of its customers, LRWSS began operating around the clock in 2009.

In addition, Livingston now requires more water after decommissioning four groundwater wells that previously served as an emergency backup supply.

TRA has contracted with an engineering firm to provide water demand projections and evaluate expansion alternatives for the system.

## CRWS sees little impact from Super Bowl XLV

Super Bowl XLV took place at the new Cowboys Stadium in Arlington on Feb. 6 with more than 103,000 people attending the game and many thousands more traveling to North Texas for related festivities. A severe winter storm blanketed the Dallas Fort Worth area in ice and snow the week before the game. Either one of these events could impact wastewater quantity and quality.

TRA's Central Regional Wastewater System serves Arlington as well as 19 other cities and the D/FW International Airport, all located in North Texas. The system, which treats an average of 144 million gallons per day, saw little impact from the game.

"The peak flow, probably caused by inflows and infiltration from the melting snow on Saturday,

was higher than the game flow, but the duration and total flow Super Bowl day was approximately 1.53 million gallons higher than the previous Sunday flows," said Bill Cyrus, technical services manager at CRWS.

CRWS also saw a slight increase in ammonia concentration during the game.

The game's lack of impact can be explained by CRWS' sheer size. With a rated capacity of 162 MGD, it is the fourth largest wastewater treatment plant in Texas, and soon to be the second largest when current construction to increase plant capacity to 189 MGD, is complete. On average, CRWS discharges more effluent per month than any other wastewater treatment plant in Texas.

## TCWSP biologist wins leadership award

Gary Smith, senior biologist at TRA's Tarrant County Water Supply Project, won the 2010 Leadership Award from the Laboratory Analysts' Section of the Texas Water Utilities Association for his contributions to the industry, the environment and public health.

Smith has earned Class "A" Water Operator and Class "A" Wastewater Operator licenses from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – the top certifications granted by the regulatory agency. He also holds a Class "A" Voluntary Laboratory Analyst certification from the Texas Water Utilities Association. At TCWSP, his expertise helps the plant produce the best possible water quality.

Smith has taken several leadership positions within TWUA,



including chair of the statewide Laboratory Analysts' Section as well as chair and vice chair of the North Texas LAS. Smith also currently serves as LAS Best Tasting Water Committee chair.

**Ward.** continued from page 4.

**Ward:** Definitely tinkering – I love to fix things, taking old things and making them new again. I also love fishing and music; I play guitar and sing. I'd stay outdoors as much as I could, preferably on the water – almost like being a boy again.

**What was the last book you read and the last movie you saw?**

**Ward:** The book was *No Country for Old Men* by Cormac McCarthy, which I loved. And I haven't seen a lot of movies lately, but I am really enjoying watching the first season of *24* on DVD.

**If you could be super hero, what would your powers be?**

**Ward:** The ability to travel through time and the power to heal people.

**What exotic country would you like to visit, and what would you do there?**

**Ward:** I'd love to visit the rivers of New Zealand – to raft and fish there.

**Note:** At the conclusion of the spring semester, Ward will be joined in Arlington by his wife Teddie and sons Jacob and Zachary, along with cats Toby and Alley. Jacob currently studies 2-D animation at Austin Community College, while Zachary is concluding his senior year at Vassar College in New York, studying mathematics and neuroscience in preparation for medical school. The Wards also currently count two horses among their family – a Tennessee Walking Horse and an American Quarter Horse, both of whom will go to new homes before the family completes the move to Arlington.



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## *Anniversaries*

### **25 years**

Stacy Rosetta, LLP accounting clerk

### **15 years**

David Dupuy, CRWS chief electronic technician

Richard Postma, CSS assistant manager

### **10 years**

Gregory Hester, CRWS maintenance mechanic II,

Marina Shepelev, CRWS senior chemist

William Taylor, CRWS electrician II

### **Five years**

Sue Beard, CSS executive secretary

Art Encinas, GO maintenance mechanic II

Brenda Porter, land rights research specialist

David Terrill, NR manager, engineering services

### **Three years**

Jeffery Carter, TCWSP operator I

Jennifer Ege, CRWS chemist

Carion Taylor, SRSS coordinator

## *Walter Rhea Clark*

Walter Rhea Clark, 90, former manager of the Devers Canal System for the Trinity River Authority, passed away March 16, 2011.

Walter was born June 20, 1920, in Jefferson County to J.E. Clark Sr., and Vallie Mae Clark, spending most of his youth in rural Liberty County. He attended Liberty County schools, graduating in 1936.

Upon graduation from Texas A&M University in 1942, he entered the U.S. Army Transportation Corps as a first lieutenant. He met Lt. Ruth Dobson while they were both serving in North Africa; they were married December 18, 1945, and spent 62 years together.

Ruth and Walter settled in Stowell, Texas, where he farmed rice and served as administrator over both the Devers Canal System and the American Rice Growers. Walter remained manager after TRA purchased the Devers Canal System, overseeing operation of the system and implementation of metered water sales for irrigation of more than 30,000 acres of rice fields.

In addition, he was an active member of the community, working on numerous agricultural and irrigation boards, and also serving as president of the school board of East Chambers ISD, helping to successfully integrate the schools there in 1966.

Walter is preceded in death by his wife, Ruth Dobson Clark; his parents; and his brother, J.E. Clark Jr.

Survivors include his daughter and son-in-law, Nita and Mike Hoelscher; granddaughter and husband, Jennie Hoelscher and Jody Hughes of Austin; grandson and fiancé Matt Hoelscher and Brandi Price of Houston; niece Beverly and nephews J.E. Clark III and Allen Clark.