A New Director Joins TRA’s Board
Constitutional Amendment Requires Total Number of Directors to Increase by One

Texas Governor Rick Perry has appointed a new director to the Trinity River Authority’s Board of Directors. Martha A. Hernandez of Burleson, Texas, was appointed to represent Tarrant County. Ms. Hernandez is a retired Nutritionist and Jailor for the Tarrant County Sheriff’s Department. She holds a bachelor of science from Texas Wesleyan University.

TRA has been governed by a 24-member Board of Directors since the Authority was created in 1955. The Governor appointed three directors from Tarrant County, four from Dallas County, one each from the other 15 counties in TRA’s political subdivision, and two directors from TRA’s political subdivision at-large.

In 2008, the total number of directors increased by one for a 25-member Board. The additional Board position is a new at-large position that was created as the result of little noticed legislation and a constitutional amendment requiring political subdivisions, such as the Trinity River Authority of Texas, to have an odd number of voting members on their Board of Directors to minimize the odds of a tie vote.

Lake Livingston Hydroelectric Project Moves Ahead
Application for License Filed, Construction Anticipated to begin in 2010

On March 31, 2009, the East Texas Electric Cooperative filed an application for license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to develop and operate a hydroelectric generating project adjacent to the Trinity River Authority’s Lake Livingston Dam. The final environmental assessment for the project was filed along with the application.

The application for license is the latest step in a multi-step process to develop a hydroelectric generating facility at Lake Livingston Dam. The process was started in April of 2006 when FERC issued a preliminary permit to ETEC allowing the cooperative three years to file an application for license. In December of 2007, ETEC filed a pre-application with FERC as well as other agencies with interest in the project. In February of this year, ETEC filed a draft environmental assessment with FERC and other governmental entities.

ETEC expects to receive the license by March of 2010. Final design of the hydroelectric generating project can begin once ETEC has received the license if FERC issues a license that complies with the primary purpose of Lake Livingston as a water supply source for the city of Houston and small communities around the lake. If all goes as planned, construction could possibly begin by December of 2010 and be complete by October of 2012 with the project coming on-line by December of 2012.

The proposed power generating facility is a 24-megawatt plant capable of generating 124 million kilowatt hours of clean and renewable energy each year with little or no environmental impact. According to preliminary design, the facility would generate electricity using the existing water releases from Lake Livingston. Lake Livingston Dam would continue to operate as usual and the level of water in the lake would not change. ETEC proposes to locate the power generating facility on the east end of Lake Livingston Dam in Polk County.

The environmental assessment included a wide range of factors including geology and soils, water resources, aquatic resources, threatened and endangered species, recreation, land use, aesthetics, cultural resources and developmental resources. Of particular interest was the impact to the area downstream of the dam where Texas Parks and Wildlife gathers brood fish for fingerlings from the annual harvest are used to restock lakes across the state of Texas.
The Trinity River Authority’s Trinity County Regional Water Supply System has acquired an 80-kilowatt portable generator to provide power during severe weather events or other mishaps that result in power outages in the System.

Since 1980, TCRWSS has provided drinking water to the cities of Trinity and Groveton, the Westwood Shores MUD and the Glendale, Riverside and Trinity Rural Water Supply Corporations. Eighteen wells draw raw water from Lake Livingston through a sand and gravel field on the Trinity County side of the lake. The water is filtered and disinfected at the plant before distribution to customer storage.

The new generator was purchased specifically to provide power to the TCRWSS well field. The generator is mounted on a trailer for ease of transport from the plant, where it is stored, to the well-field. Twelve of the 18 wells in TCRWSS’ well field can be powered by the generator. Total cost was $15,800 and plant staff saved thousands of additional dollars by mounting the generator on the trailer themselves.

“We were able to securely mount the generator on the trailer in our shop,” said Steve Lee, TCRWSS Senior Operator. “That saved $7,000.00,” he added.

The last power outage at TCRWSS occurred during Hurricane Ike in September of 2008. The entire System was without utility-supplied power from early Saturday, September 13 until the following Wednesday. TCRWSS was able to keep distribution lines pressurized and water flowing to its customers during and after Hurricane Ike.

With the aid of emergency generators, TCRWSS was able to keep distribution lines pressurized and water flowing to its customers during and after Hurricane Ike.
A contract for engineering design services for the relief or replacement of a portion of the Trinity River Authority’s Red Oak Creek Regional Wastewater System collection lines was approved at the Authority’s February meeting of the Board of Directors.

The ROCRWS has been in service since 1991 and provides wastewater treatment services for the cities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Glenn Heights, Lancaster, Ovilla, and Red Oak, all located in northern Ellis County. The System includes twelve meter stations, one lift station and force main, approximately 24 miles of 12-inch to 30-inch gravity pipeline, and a 3.5 million gallons per day wastewater treatment plant that is currently being expanded to a treatment capacity of 6 MGD.

Three main interceptors transport wastewater from the System’s customer cities to the plant; Red Oak Creek line; Little Creek line and; Bear Creek line.

A 2008 Inflow/Infiltration Assessment considered all three ROCRWS interceptors and gave priority to the Red Oak Creek line for further study and relief or replacement.

“The Red Oak Creek line segment for this project carries wastewater from the cities of Cedar Hill, Ovilla and Red Oak, an area that includes 17,300 acres of developed property,” notes Ron Tamada, Manager of Engineering Services for TRA’s Northern Region. “Of the three lines in the system, the Red Oak line has carried the heaviest load for the longest period of time,” he added.

The engineering design services will include a thorough assessment of an 8,800-foot portion of the Red Oak Creek interceptor. A television inspection of the pipe will detail the pipe’s interior condition. With this information, engineers can recommend relief or replacement. If relief is desired, the pipe, ranging in diameter from 18 to 20 inches, will have an additional line placed next to it to provide additional capacity. If the Red Oak Creek line is to be replaced, it will be removed and replaced with a larger pipe.

Design for assessment and rehabilitation/replacement for a meter station that lies within the 8,800-foot section of pipe is also included in the engineering design services contract.

“If required, the meter station will be upgraded to make entry easier and safer,” said Tamada. “The metering equipment will be upgraded to accommodate higher flows expected for the future,” he added.

The Red Oak Creek interceptor relief project is part of a larger project to improve processes and increase capacity at ROCRWS. Phase I of the two phase expansion and improvement project, completed in 2008, was limited to improvements to the system’s solids dewatering and screening processes. Phase II construction is currently underway at the plant and includes the addition of pumping capacity, additional aeration basins and a complete overhaul of the dewatering, screening, grit removal and disinfection processes at the plant. Construction to convert biosolids drying beds into odor-controlling biofilters will begin soon.

As part of the expansion, ROCRWS transitioned from chlorine disinfection to ultraviolet disinfection. UV disinfection reduces the need for chemicals at the plant, which improves safety and security.

Construction began in mid-2008 and will be substantially complete by the end of 2010.
General Manager’s Message

WEAT Awards Speak to Quality, Ethics of TRA’s Business Practices

Everyone likes to hear favorable remarks about the good work they do, and when this recognition comes from peers in the industry, it is a particularly satisfying experience. That is exactly what happened on April 16 at Texas Water 2009 in Galveston when two of TRA’s operating projects and three individual employees were honored.

Texas Water is an annual joint meeting of the membership of the Water Environment Association of Texas and the Texas Section of the American Water Works Association. Thousands of water and wastewater professionals gather at the Texas Water event for professional education, competition and opportunity to network.

TRA’s Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System was the recipient of the George W. Burke, Jr. Award for the year 2009. The Burke Award is WEAT’s honor for a wastewater treatment system’s active and effective safety program. The purpose of TRA’s multifaceted Safety Education Program, beginning with the first day of employment at DCRWS and continuing for the duration of an employee’s tenure, is to ensure the safest possible work environment for all employees. With only five operators and three maintenance technicians, employees must rely on each other to make safe decisions. Because plant operators work independently for the most part, each individual’s safety and life is literally in their own hands. In any industry with so many hazards, staff must maintain safety awareness at all times.

The numbers tell the real safety story at DCRWS. DCRWS has not had a single lost time accident in the years 2006 through 2008.

Another significant award was accepted by TRA’s Central Regional Wastewater System. The Ronald B. Sieger Biosolids Management Award. This award recognizes significant accomplishments in the field of wastewater biosolids technology and management practices within the boundaries of Texas.

The CRWS biosolids facility produces Class A biosolids in the largest EnVessel pasteurization unit in the United States. For many years, CRWS has beneficially reused 100 percent of the biosolids produced during the treatment process as a soil enhancer on agricultural lands.

From a land owners perspective, biosolids cost 86 percent less than commercial inorganic fertilizers. Land applying biosolids results in bigger, lumpier crops that grow 50 percent faster than those grown with commercial fertilizers. Cows and calves have been shown to prefer crops grown with biosolids, and calves fed with biosolids-supplemented crops have demonstrated approximately 30 percent more weight gain. Land applying biosolids improves the soil and results in less soil erosion and runoff, a direct benefit for the environment.

Over the last 12 years, more than 600,000 tons of CRWS biosolids have been land applied by contractors to more than 50 individual application sites in over a dozen counties surrounding the DFW area. TRA pays a contractor to haul and spread biosolids on agricultural land permitted for such use by the state.

Regarding the third award, in the wake of Hurricane Ike requests for assistance were made via TXWARN for the coastal community of Bayou Vista. TXWARN is a voluntary data base of assets for many utilities in Texas available on the occasion of an Emergency Management situation. Bayou Vista is located on I-45 a short distance north of the causeway to Galveston.

Two intrepid maintenance employees from TRA’s Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System, Andrew Esquibel and Steve Hodges, immediately volunteered to deploy to Bayou Vista. There was very little information on what their duties would be and their working conditions.

They camped out in a tent and worked laboriously for several days in hot and humid conditions trying to restore water and wastewater service for the citizens of Bayou Vista. Their actions and technical knowledge played a large role in restoring these basic services, and in the process, made a material contribution to the rebuilding of Bayou Vista and the restoration of some level of normalcy to the lives of the residents.

Both Andrew and Steve demonstrated selfless attitudes and moral courage by volunteering. They were tireless in their efforts and diligently worked to benefit others. For these efforts both men received the WEAT Heroism Award at Texas Water 2009.

John Bennett, Project Manager at TRA’s DCRWS, has long served as a force majeure in all activities related to WEAT. WEAT President Brad Castleberry recognized John for his particularly notable contributions to the Operations Challenge competition in Texas with a 2008-2009 Presidential Service Award.

All of TRA’s award winners reflected great credit upon themselves, TRA and WEAT.

Andrew Esquibel, Maintenance Mechanic II at the Trinity River Authority’s Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System, reconnects water service to a Bayou Vista resident in the days after Hurricane Ike. Andrew and Steve Hodges, DCRWS Electronic Technician II, were honored with WEAT Heroism Awards for their efforts to restore water and wastewater services in Bayou Vista, a community on the Texas coast that was devastated by Hurricane Ike.

The CRWS biosolids facility produces Class A biosolids in the largest EnVessel pasteurization unit in the United States. For many years, CRWS has beneficially reused 100 percent of the biosolids produced during the treatment process as a soil enhancer on agricultural lands.
Employee Milestones

New Hires
Donald Rueger joined CRWS as Maintenance Mechanic.
I. CRWS welcomes Michael Ramirez as Operator I. Skye Stapleton joined ROCRWS as Operator I.
I. LRF welcomes Geoffrey Cook as Park Ranger.
Allan Hughes joined LWRSS as Operator I. DCRWS welcomes Thomas Spindor as Operator I. James Mallory joined DCRWS as Operator I.

Promotions
Claud Lesly Jr. was promoted to Senior Maintenance Mechanic at ROCRWS.

Osvaldo Robles was promoted to CSS Construction Inspector II.
George Bacon was promoted to CSS Construction Inspector II.

Connie Jones, GO Executive Secretary has a new granddaughter. Leah Fay was born on April 8, 2009 weighing 6 pounds and 13 ounces and was 18 inches long. Baby Leah’s parents are Timothy and Melissa Jones. Timothy is serving in the U.S. Navy on the US John C. Stennis.

Steven Daniels, CRWS Senior Chemist, and wife Mallissa celebrated the birth of a new son. Ian Patrick Daniels was born April 1, 2009 weighing 7 pounds, 10 ounces. Ian was welcomed home by his sister Olivia and brother Marek.

Charles and Karen Barnes are celebrating the birth of a new baby girl. Christine Ruby Barnes was born on February 12, 2009 weighing 8 pounds, 14 ounces. Christine was 19.75 inches long and came with a full head of hair at birth. Charles is an Information Systems Analyst and administers the Maximo maintenance software.

Kelly Hunter, Senior Electronic Technician, and his wife Melissa, are celebrating the birth of a new daughter. Savannah Lee Hunter was born on April 3, 2009 weighing 8 pounds, 14.2 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Wade Sims, son of Jim Sims, Southern Region Manager, graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. in Sports Management in December 2008. Wade will continue his studies at the University of Texas at Austin pursuing a Masters Degree in advertising this fall. Wade attended Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas and Angelina Junior College in Lufkin, Texas on baseball scholarships before finishing his B.S. at Texas A&M.

Above: This aerial photo shows the footprint for the expansion of the Trinity River Authority’s General Office in Arlington.

The parking lots are substantially complete except for some minor landscaping. The addition to the building is seen here on the right. Grade beams and floor joints are in place and columns and I-beams to support interior structures have been installed. Above right: Galvanized floor decking was installed and welded wire fabric placed on top to reinforce the concrete slab. Two hundred yards of concrete will be poured for the concrete slab as soon as the weather permits. Steel workers are in the process of installing columns on the outside edge of the grade beam and I-beams for the roof.

Waterborne Education Center Back on the Water

As of March 5, 2009, the Waterborne Education Center, located in Anahuac in Chambers County, is back on the water despite sustaining Hurricane Ike damage to both boats used by the program.

The WEC employs two vessels that serve as floating classrooms to access the Trinity River, Galveston Bay, and occasionally the Houston Ship Channel and the Neches River. The organization conducted field labs in the spring of 1999, serving area school districts, universities and colleges, church groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, and other groups interested in discovering the wonders of their bay system. The mission of the organization is to foster appreciation and stewardship of coastal resources, heritage and culture by providing hands-on waterborne education services.

During Hurricane Ike in September of 2008, 110 mile an hour winds and a 15-foot storm surge swept through Chambers County. Both WEC vessels, Moss Bluff and her sister ship, Smith Point, broke from their moorings in Anahuac Harbor and were carried for approximately 200 yards, colliding with other vessels, trees, storm debris, fences and each other. When the water subsided, the vessels settled down on dry land near a boat ramp that once accessed Lake Anahuac. Smith Point had been pushed on her side, windows broken allowing salty water to spill into her cabins. Moss Bluff came to rest in an up-right position, damaged but not destroyed.

In the months following Hurricane Ike, it was determined that Smith Point was damaged beyond foreseeable repairs. Moss Bluff, despite all she had been through, appeared to have avoided serious damage. In February of this year, repairs began on Moss Bluff. While Moss Bluff was undergoing repairs, the WEC searched for a replacement for Smith Point. With the help of WEC supporters, Jake W. Hershey Bay Ranger, a vessel owned but no longer used by another non-profit organization, was located and readied for service.

TRA’s Clean Rivers Program assists WEC with purchasing educational equipment to outfit the floating classrooms including computers, printed brochures, microscopes, video cameras, TV monitors, plankton nets, seines, boots, containers and jars.

By March 5, both boats were returned to the water. The WEC is now taking reservations for all of 2009. Visit the WEC’s website and to learn about the different types of excursions offered: www.txwaterborne.org. To make reservations contact the WEC field lab coordinator, Wes Kruger at 409-267-3547.
Anniversaries

20 Years
Richard Dennie, Chief Operator, ROCRWS

15 Years
Mark Hrabal, Chief Operator, MCRWS

5 Years
John Wardell, Operator II, TMCRWS
Julie O’Banion, Executive Secretary, GO
John Stockton, Senior Maintenance Mechanic, CRWS

3 Years
Sue Beard, Executive Secretary, CSS
Brenda Porter, Land Records Research Specialist, GO
David Terrill, Manager of Engineering Services, GO
Jack Ward, Operator II, CRWS
Art Encinas, Maintenance Mechanic I, GO