



Newsletter of the Trinity River Authority of Texas

Fall 2015



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# inTRA

#### **Our shared vision**

The Trinity River Authority of Texas is an innovative, adaptive leader, enriching the Trinity basin as a resource for Texans.

#### **The TRA mission**

The Trinity River Authority's mission is to promote conservation, reclamation, protection and development of the natural resources of the river basin for the benefit of the public.

[trinityra.org](http://trinityra.org)

# A Juxtaposition of the *present, past, future*

Currently, the Trinity River Authority has 69 customers and 450 employees. Our service area encompasses the nearly 18,000-square-mile Trinity River basin. As a conservation and reclamation district, TRA provides water and wastewater treatment, along with recreation and reservoir facilities, for municipalities within our service area. TRA is the largest provider of regional wastewater treatment services in Texas. That distinction is a testament to the work, innovation, commitment and drive of staff, management and our board of directors.

It is impossible not to get nostalgic about TRA's journey. I recently visited each of our facilities to deliver a commemorative 60-year flag and present a certificate of appreciation. Standing there with each group, it was important to me to personally let them know that they are



**General Manager J. Kevin Ward**

who people think of when they hear TRA; they make many of the on-the-spot decisions and take action to ensure that things work and stay true to our business model, mission, vision and core values.

On pages 11 and 12, you will see images of the flag presentations. I hope that you enjoy them. Our final issue for 2015 will bring our 60-year activities to a close with photos from the past and present. Our October board of directors' meeting included a special proclamation presentation from the governor's office and public recognition of the winners of our 60-year poster contest.

For the future, we will stick with what has gotten us this far: A hardworking staff that includes some who have been with TRA for more than 35 years (with one at 45 years) and some up-and-comers who may be able to take the reins. We also will continue to employ the latest technology and best practices and maintain and add to our current infrastructure.

It is an honor to be part of an organization that has a dynamic, involved board of directors. I consider myself lucky to be a part of today's TRA family.

**Here's to the next 60!**

## Partnership solves high-water issue

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District and TRA's Central Regional Wastewater System staff, Northern Region management, collection system group, construction services staff and the planning and environmental services staff were recognized at TRA's August board of directors' meeting for their actions and mitigation in connection with flooding on the Elm Fork of the Trinity River during last May's heavy rains.

After multiple unsuccessful attempts to find the additional places where increased amounts of water were flowing into the plant's collection system, TRA asked the Corps of Engineers to reduce releases from reservoirs that feed the Elm Fork of the Trinity for 48 hours.

The Corps authorized the reduction, which allowed TRA employees to assess the problem, perform inspections at key structures, identify possible failures, take emergency actions, make repairs and mitigate the uncontrolled inflows of river water. Following the fix, the plant resumed normal operations.



## Congratulations, CReWSers, Waste Warriors

TRA's Central Regional Wastewater System's CReWSers, representing the Water Environment Association of Texas, took top honors at the 28th annual Operations Challenge competition with a first-place overall Division 1 win. The CReWSers also won second place in the laboratory, process control and safety segments of the challenge. The fun-filled, high-energy event took place at WEFTEC 2015—the Water Environment Federation's 88th annual technical exhibition and conference—in Chicago.

Team members David Brown, Dale Burrow, Jake Burwell, Raudel Juarez and Steve Price competed against a record-high 44 hardworking teams from the United States, Canada and, for the first time, Germany.

TRA's Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System's Waste Warriors earned a first-place Division 2 win in the laboratory portion of the competition.

As one of the most engaging events on the exhibition floor, Operations Challenge is a unique and fast-paced test of the essential skills needed to operate and maintain wastewater treatment facilities, their collection systems and laboratories—all vital to the protection of public health and the environment.

*Portions of this information are from a Water Environment Federation press release.*



## Wastewater treatment plants recognized

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies has recognized five Trinity River Authority of Texas wastewater treatment systems with Peak Performance Awards. Platinum awards were presented to the facilities for complete and consistent National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit compliance. The Central Regional Wastewater System was recognized for 21 years; Red Oak Creek Regional Wastewater System, 15 years; Ten Mile Creek Regional Wastewater System, 13 years, and the Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System, 10 years. The recognition program consists of three categories: Platinum, Gold and Silver. TRA's Mountain Creek Regional Wastewater System received a Silver Award.



## Professional development initiatives, participants introduced

The Trinity River Authority introduced the first group of staff members selected to participate in its new Leadership Development program, which is a component of its overall Organizational Development goals.

Those selected for the program are: Keith Bass, operation and maintenance chief, Southern Region Support Services; John Bennett, Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System project manager; Bill Holder, assistant regional manager, Southern Region; Valery Jean-Bart, Central Regional Wastewater System manager of engineering; James McDonald, engineer, planning and development, Northern Region; Richard Postma, assistant construction services manager; Kim Probasco, operations financial administrator, Northern Region; Melissa Saniuk, accounting manager; Doug Short, chief information officer; and Mark Waters, project manager, Lake Livingston Project.



The one-year development program will help prepare the participants for potential executive management roles in the future. The program's format will use a blend of instructor-led, self-study, web-based sessions, reading, assignments and participant projects.

Several programs have been created to give each staff member an opportunity to participate in professional development. Other programs include:

Executive Development, Management Development and Staff Development.

The program helps strengthen leadership skills, knowledge and hands-on experience.



## The potty challenges, teaches

In September, TRA created a game and activities specifically for a kids' event, the W.A.T.E.R Festival (Water Awareness Through Education and Recreation) organized by the River Legacy Foundation in Arlington. The Peter Potty game has a lid that opens and closes, and eyes that are wide with delight. Peter challenges young minds to help them understand what can and cannot be flushed down a toilet.

To keep it simple, players are given two items – one that goes in the trash (wipes) and one (toilet paper) that goes in the potty. At the festival, players studied each piece of wadded up material and made a toss. Overwhelmingly, the toilet paper was tossed into Peter, and the wad of wipes was put in the trash. The game is reinforced with an activity book, bookmarks and a reminder that wipes and other things can cause plumbing issues at home and drive up the cost of treating wastewater.

Peter got a good review from the event's planner:

"I want to thank the Trinity River Authority for coming to the Water Festival and having such an awesome table setup and game. We appreciated the time spent creating and designing Peter the Potty. Again, awesome idea!"

*-Shannon Porter, Naturalist/Scout Coordinator, River Legacy Living Science Center*





# Creating a Cyber Secure Home

*"As technology becomes more important in our personal lives, so does securing it. Here are some fundamental steps you should always take to help protect yourself and your family."*

Lori Rosenberg - eBay

TO LEARN MORE, SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MONTHLY SECURITY AWARENESS NEWSLETTER [www.securingthehuman.org/ouch](http://www.securingthehuman.org/ouch)

## 1 Securing Yourself

**Cyber attackers have learned that the easiest way to get something is to simply ask for it. As such, common sense is your best defense. If a message or phone call seems odd, suspicious or too good to be true, it may be an attack. Here are some examples:**

Phishing emails are emails designed to fool you into opening an infected attachment or clicking on a malicious link. These emails can be very convincing; they may appear to come from a friend or organization you know. Sometimes cyber attackers even use details from your social media accounts to craft customized phishing attacks.

Someone calls you pretending to be Microsoft tech support. They claim that your computer is infected, when they are really just cyber criminals that want access to your computer or want you to buy their fake anti-virus software.

## 2 Securing Your Home Network

**Your Wi-Fi router (also called a Wi-Fi Access Point) is a physical device that controls who can connect to your wireless network at home:**

Always change the default admin password on your Wi-Fi router to a strong password only you know.

Configure your Wi-Fi network so that if anyone wants to join it, they have to use a password. In addition, always configure your wireless network to use the latest encryption, which is currently WPA2.

Be aware of all the devices connected to your home network, including baby monitors, gaming consoles, TVs or perhaps even your car.

## 3 Securing Your Computers/Devices

**Here are some steps to protect any device connected to your home network:**

Ensure all devices are protected by a strong PIN or passcode and always running the latest version of their software. Whenever possible, enable automatic updating.

If possible, have two computers at home, one for parents and one for kids. If you are sharing a computer, make sure you have separate accounts for everyone and that kids do not have privileged access.

Computers should have a firewall and anti-virus installed, enabled and running the latest version.

Before disposing of computers or mobile devices, be sure they are wiped of any personal information. For mobile devices, this can be done by selecting the option for a secure reset of the device.

## 4 Securing Your Accounts/Passwords

**You most likely have a tremendous number of accounts online and on your devices and computers. Here are some key steps to protecting them:**

Always use long passwords that are hard to guess. Use passphrases when possible. These are passwords that have multiple words, such as "Where Is My Coffee?"

Use a different password for each of your accounts and devices. Can't remember all of your strong passwords? We recommend you use a password manager to securely store them. This is a computer program that securely stores all of your passwords in an encrypted vault.

Use two-step verification whenever possible. Two-step verification is when you need a password and something else to log in to your account, such as a code sent to your smartphone.

On social media sites, post only what you want the public to see. Assume anything you post will eventually be seen by your parents or boss.

## 5 What to Do When Hacked

**No matter how secure you are, sooner or later, you may be hacked:**

Create regular backups of all your personal information. If your computer or mobile device is hacked, the only way you can recover all of your personal information may be from backups.

If one of your online accounts has been hacked, immediately log in and change the password to a strong, unique password. If you no longer have access, contact the company.

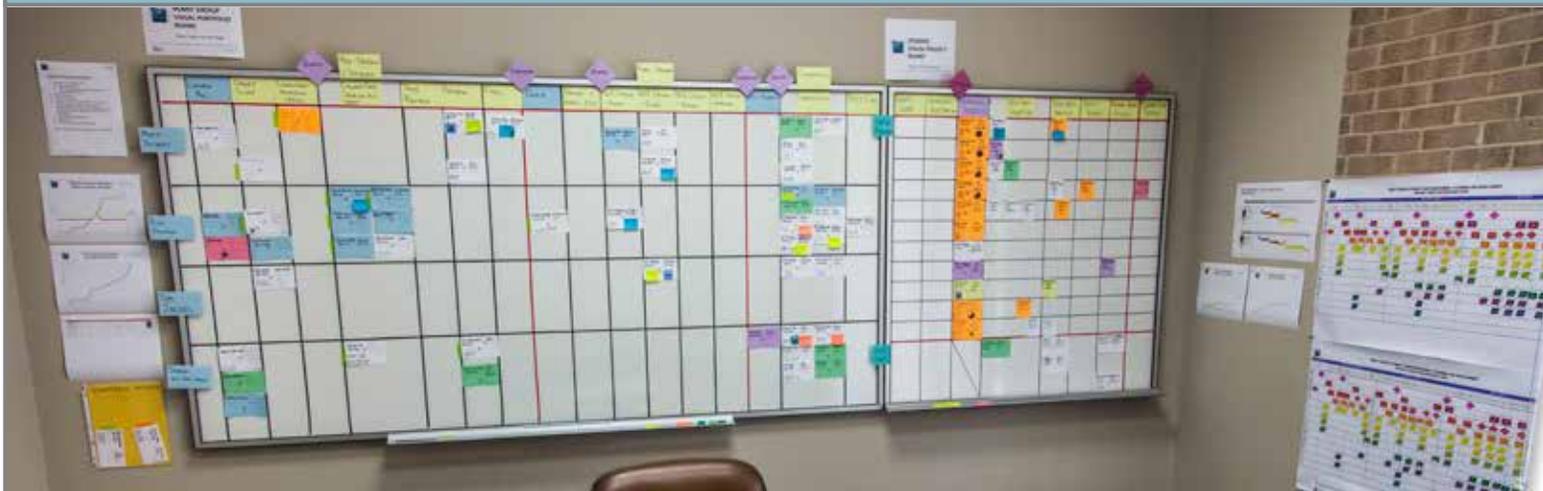
Monitor your credit cards. If you see any charges you do not recognize, call the credit card company right away.



### ABOUT THE POSTER

This poster was developed as a community project by the following security professionals:

Lori Rosenberg, eBay - Tonia Dudley, Charles Schwab - Rhonda Kelly, Oshkosh Corporation - Jonathan Matys, GM Financial - Karen McDowell, University of Virginia - Michele D'Anna, JHU/APL - Kitty Berra, Saint Louis University - Sorina Dunose, Ubisoft Divertissements Inc - Mark Merkow, Charles Schwab - Roberto Rodriguez, MySherpa - Antonio Merola, Poste Italiane - Barbara Filkins, skWorks - Vaman Amarjeet - James McQuiggan, Central Florida ISSA - Karla Thomas, Tower International - Tim Harwood, HS and TC - Denise Fredregill - Christopher Sorensen



## *A visual process gets the job done strategically*

Managing and completing projects and tasks that involve disparate parts, pieces and people is a challenge. In 2013, TRA adopted its five-year strategic plan. The plan states that good strategic planning addresses the issues that challenge you today, and more importantly, those that will challenge you tomorrow. TRA's Northern Region planning and development staff are at the confluence of wastewater and water treatment services in North Texas. It's a major position that is compounded by the aforementioned challenge.

"We had to take a look at our policies, our procedures and our behavior to see if we could find the best approach to project development and management," said Patty Cleveland, assistant northern regional manager, planning and development, Northern Region. "We identified a company that had an approach that was different, but it was still project management." The two main strategic plan goals that Cleveland wanted to focus on were Goal 2 – Customer Service Excellence, Objective 2.4 – Accelerate the project planning, development and construction processes, and Goal 5 – Efficient and Effective Operations, Objective 5.4 – Continuously identify and evaluate opportunities for "faster/better/cheaper" service delivery. A consultant was chosen to guide the process. The consultant's recommended approach, called a visual portfolio board, is visual fluidity.

### **Taking an alternate route**

Colored paper and cards on projects boards, which are central to the process, cover the walls in a workroom that has earned the name "showroom." "Paper in a digital environment was like going backwards. I was skeptical at first," said Cleveland. The teams, which included planning and development, land rights, legal, and construction services, took part in a three-

day workshop in early 2015 to learn how it all worked. "About the morning of the second day, seeing the staff totally embracing it and excited and getting involved in activities and exercises that we had to go through so they could understand the difference and terminology of workflow, control, work in progress (WIP) control, sold me even more," Cleveland stated. "We did exercises to help us understand that the overall process is like entering into a lane of traffic."

The instructors explained that there are only so many cars that can occupy a three-lane highway when it's packed. "We realized that for us that meant that we can't pack the lanes with projects without knowing the flow."

### **Creating the roadmap**

Early in the process, the teams had to identify behaviors and discuss improved ways to execute projects to stay on time and budget for ongoing projects. The first test for the new process was a pipeline development project, initiated around March. The emphasis was on collaborative execution, functional alignment, priority control and controlling a WIP. It was done on a smaller scale to help the teams understand what needs to be on the cards, how to prioritize actions, how to visually identify where a project is, date of completion, file numbers, and other related building blocks.

Once the teams saw the progress of the pilot, it created excitement, and they were ready to get moving toward creating other boards. The next board contracted was for the plant group, which started in early summer. It covers all Northern Region water and wastewater projects. Another board devoted specifically to studies was started in August.

## Finding the right intersections

“When the planning and development team uses the word *project*, it could refer to everything from a task to an operating system such as Central Regional Wastewater System, to even a pipeline design,” commented Cleveland. “So, learning and using a common lingo has enhanced the communication. Using the boards, the teams can see the plant location of the project, who is the leader and the status of the project.”

“The boards alleviate the gridlock that can occur when more than one person needs to start a project at the same location,” said Cleveland. “Each person can visually see what is going on from the standpoint of movement because each project stays in cue as it goes through 30 percent, 60 percent, 90 percent to completion and construction. They use this up-to-date visual to plan and coordinate time and processes.”

## Reading the signs

The process leaves little to chance. When a team member needs to know what’s next on a project, they need only read the signs, visually and literally. A green dot denotes when a project needs funds. A blue note indicates a specific milestone for a project. When a blue note reaches completion, it is placed on the back of the current project card and is kept there to chronicle the project’s history. Yellow and red notes are used to signal issues, minor and major, respectively.

Cleveland added that in the showroom, every colored 3x5 card is related to a specific Northern Region project. Red is for Red Oak Creek Regional Wastewater System; yellow is for Mountain Creek Regional Wastewater System; white is for Central Regional Wastewater System; purple is for Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System, green is for Ten Mile Creek Regional Wastewater System, and blue is for Tarrant County Water Supply Project. A light orange card identifies multiple projects, and the number of related projects is written on it.

“Projects cannot cross lines until a checklist is completed, which we all had a hand in developing,” she added. “To help get the most important work done first, Northern Region management uses magnets as priority buttons so that each team’s leadership can prioritize actions within all scheduled projects.”



## Making standard shifts

Every Monday morning at 8:30, team members are encouraged to merge for a stand-up meeting. The project leaders are there to explain and to answer questions, as needed. They do not explain every project, but they do explain red or yellow tags. These tags may be affixed for reasons such as financing, a holdup or delay, flooding that stopped construction, surveying or something else that influences the schedule.

“The stand-ups are where the project boards really become visual, and solutions are developed to help things stay on track. The meetings get those involved out of their silos to communicate as a team,” remarked Cleveland.

“We can only move project cards on Monday mornings; each one is on the board because it is moveable and changeable, with the main focus being on actions that are required to move the project to its next step.”

## Traveling toward the future

“I don’t see this process as a step back, but instead as a step forward, because it has increased communication and progress in a short period of time,” proclaimed Cleveland. “Every week those who come in know exactly what’s going on, which is different from everyone being in their own world and not knowing what others are doing or how it might affect their project.”

“We are seeing positive results. The process delivers consistently using the same behaviors and procedures, and it also has built confidence in staff,” she noted. “And when we complete a project, everyone claps and they give kudos all around.” Other internal teams that have active boards include land rights, TRA’s Clean Rivers Program and geographic information system (GIS).

# Happy Birthday Trinity River Authority



**The Trinity River Authority of Texas was created on Sept. 5, 1955.**

TRA received great birthday wishes from individuals and organizations that have partnered, worked with or simply support the Trinity River Authority of Texas.



*"We heard you streamlined services, kept your head above water, and schooled the competition. We're pumped you're 60, as we're shore you are. Glad we are all onboard the winning ship, we heard all the rest were a dive! Happy Birthday!"*

**Courtney Griffin, Legal Assistant**  
Booth, Ahrens & Werkenthin, P.C.

DFW to Houston, the Holy Trinity is full of charm and grace. A myriad of pipelines, pump stations, and maybe an occasional crack have grown along the way...but poise, elegance and 60 years of wisdom, respect, and hard knocks manage critical systems. They battle daily seeping pipes and foul odors. They produce pampered sludge. They expertly influence the effluence. They maintain an extensive four-letter word vocabulary, including "bond." An essential evil needed to build the massive grid to rid its clients of liquids and solids. All for the convenience of pulling the chain. There is honor and dignity in turning a grand sixty!!! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**From your friends at First Southwest Company**  
Financial Advisor to TRA

*The 54th Texas Legislature could not have imagined in 1955 what a positive and significant impact creation of the Trinity River Authority of Texas would have on the natural resources of this great state. It has been my distinct privilege to represent the Board of Directors and Administration of TRA since 1980 (35 years!) as bond counsel on transactions that have financed and refinanced the infrastructure serving Texans the Legislature entrusted to their care.  
**HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY TRA!***

**Chuck Kobdich / Partner / McCall, Parkhurst & Horton L.L.P. / Bond Counsel**



# CELE



# BRATING



*years 1955 - 2015*



**Central Regional Wastewater System**



**Ten Mile Creek Regional Wastewater System**



**Tarrant County Water Supply Project**



**Red Oak Creek Regional Wastewater System**



**Mountain Creek Regional Wastewater System**



**Denton Creek Regional Wastewater System**



**Livingston Regional Water Supply System**



**Lake Livingston Project**



**Huntsville Regional Water Supply System**



**Southern Region Office**



**Trinity County Regional Water Supply System**



**Wolf Creek Park**



**General Office**





**Marco Ramirez**, engineer, planning and development, and his teammates won first place of the season on the all-men's-over-30-league soccer team. His team, MansCity, went undefeated.

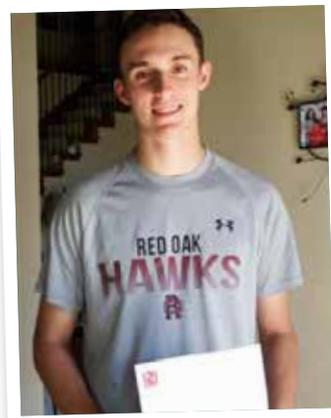


**Georgia Saniuk**, daughter of **Melissa Saniuk**, accounting manager, graduated from UT Southwestern Medical School in May and began her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Parkland Hospital in Dallas on July 1.



**Dominique Eades**, biologist - sewer, had a baby boy on Mother's Day. **Peyton Noah Eades** weighed 6 pounds, 9.5 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

**Austin Dennie**, son of **Richard Dennie**, chief operator at ROCRWS, received the "brilliance" scholarship from Navarro College for 2015. Austin is a junior at Red Oak High School.



While vacationing at Sanibel Island, **Kevin Ward**, General Manager, and his son **Zachary** caught and released this beautiful tarpon.



**Noah Davis**, third grandchild of **Susan Davis**, office coordinator, collection system group, was born on Sept. 26, weighing 8 pounds, 11 ounces, and measuring 21 inches long.



Northern Region and finance staff spent an evening at Painting with a Twist to hang out and have a great time together.



**Sherri van der Wege**, senior engineer, planning and development, along with her husband and oldest son hiked the path of Hadrian's Roman Wall in northern England this past July. Together, they walked from Bowness-on-Solway on the western coast near the Scottish border to Newcastle-upon-Tyne on the eastern coast for a total distance of about 114 gorgeous miles.

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:**

**35 YEARS**

Malcolm Cowdin, maintenance mechanic II, CRWS

**30 YEARS**

Gaylin Grant, chief maintenance mechanic, CRWS

Michelle Harlan, senior real estate specialist, GO

Daniel Sutton, collection system chief, CSG

**25 YEARS**

Michael Chandler, senior operator, TMCWWS

Dennis Querry, inspector supervisor, CSS

**15 YEARS**

Jorge Chaheine, interceptor system specialist, CSG

JoAnn Clapper, senior secretary, CRWS

Connie Jones, executive secretary, GO

Charlie White, park ranger, LRF

Michael Woolsey, process automation engineer, CRWS

**10 YEARS**

Bruce George, operator II, MCRWS

**5 YEARS**

Marco Acosta, maintenance mechanic II, TCWSP

Jason Coles, operator II, TMCWWS

J. Moreno Villagomez, electronic technician II, TCWSP

Christopher Salazar, senior storekeeper, CRWS

Brandon Smiddy, operator I, CRWS

Silvia Zavala, environmental inspector, CRWS

**WELCOME TO NEW HIRES:**

**CRWS**

Sharon Autry, senior secretary

Joshua Deaver, operator I

Zachary Jackson, operator I

Curtis Lallance, operator I

Jacob Quintero, operator I

Virginia Reina, senior secretary

Joshua Rogers, electronic technician I

Juan Santos, operator I

**TCWSP**

Julie Ball, senior secretary

**ITSS**

Wen-Hai Wang, information system analyst

**GO**

Tom Jacobs, senior engineer, Northern Region planning and development

**PES**

Aaron Hoff, environmental scientist II

**LLP**

Tyler Abbey, part-time maintenance helper

**CSG**

Johnny Bradshaw, engineering support analyst

Giovanni Parrilla, interceptor system specialist

**CSS**

Robert Bendkowsk, inspector II

Michael Smith, inspector I

**DCRWS**

Howard Williams, operator I

**LLP**

Garrett Childers, part-time maintenance helper

**CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION:**

**MCRWS**

David Rosnagel, MCRWS manager

**CRWS**

Jimmy Hines, senior maintenance mechanic

**TCWSP**

Elvis Young, senior electrician

**HAPPY TRAILS TO THESE RETIREES:**

**CRWS**

Elaine Sambel, senior secretary - 14 years



Recognitions from May 30 - Aug. 24

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*Enriching the Trinity Basin as a Resource for Texans*



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