

# WATERWORKS

Provided as a public service for our customers and neighbors

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## Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 Earns Four Industry Awards in 2011!

*A good thing happened because of our continued efforts to push for operational and service excellence; The District won four awards in 2011 as a value-added benefit in recognition of our efforts:*

**1.** Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 (the District) won runner up (2nd place) award for best website in the state from the Association of Water Board Directors (AWBD) at the annual meeting in June! A Houston district selected as the first place winner offers an iPhone application for account and website downloads. However, the runner up award is certainly a source of satisfaction when you consider there are between 1,000-1,100 MUDs within the state of Texas (information provided by AWBD), which places our District in the upper 1% of MUDS within the state. The goal of the District's website has always been to provide the best possible service accessibility to our residents, so to win an award for something implemented to increase service to our residents is very satisfactory and a win-win for all involved!



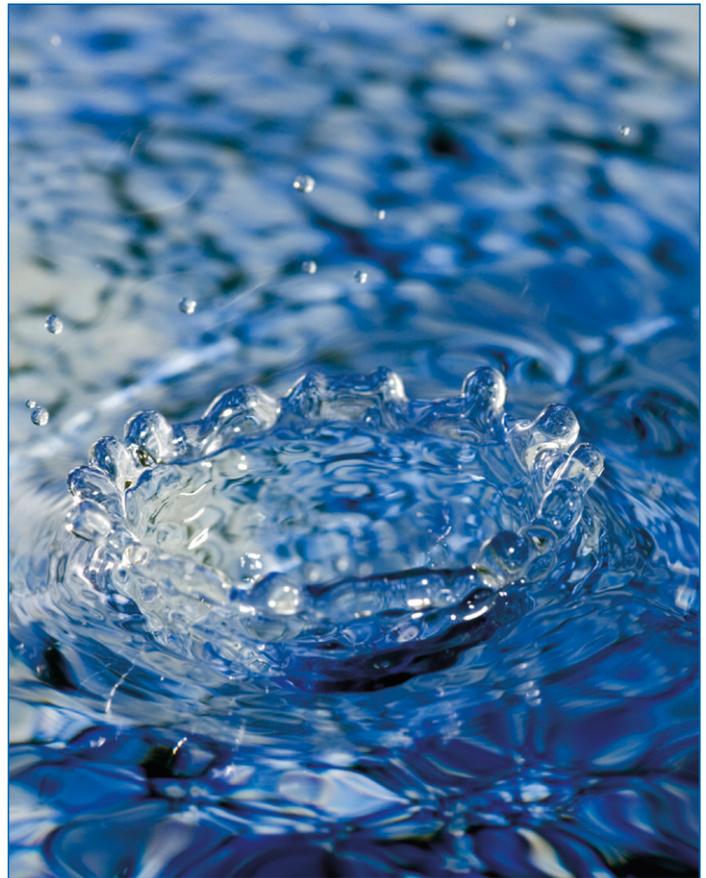
**2.** The District also won an award from AWBD as a Water Smart Partner in 2011. The Water Smart Partner's Program (AWBD, 2011) is intended to:

- (a) Acknowledge Districts who have implemented water smart practices within their district;
- (b) Assist Directors to take concrete steps to help customers learn to value the water used;

- (c) Encourage the practice of conservation methods year round and not just in times of drought;
- (d) Encourage District involvement in their respective communities.

**3.** The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality issued an award to the District as an Outstanding Public Drinking System Award in 2011! The award recognizes overall excellence in all aspects of the operation of a public drinking water system (PWS). The criteria for eligibility to earn this award includes:

- (a) Met the criteria for being recognized as a superior or approved PWS as established by rule in Title 30, Texas Administrative Code, Subsection 290.47 (a), Appendix A;
- (b) Met the criteria for Total Coliform Rule Program Award;
- (c) Exceeded capacity requirements for storage for total storage and production or pressure storage;
- (d) Promoted year-round water conservation;
- (e) Implemented a source water protection program;
- (f) Developed and implemented a vulnerability assessment and emergency response plan;
- (g) No major violations or enforcement actions



against the PWS for the calendar year of recognition;

- (h) No Total Coliform Rule Violations for 2008 or 2009;
- (i) Implemented source water protection activities (SWP) to include Emergency Response Plan (Contingency Plan) and at least one other SWP Best Management Practices (BMP).

**4.** The District was selected as the winner of the Medium Supplier ~ Water Conservation & Stewardship Award given by the Water Conservation Advisory Council. The award is an annual award under a state authorized organization charged with the responsibilities noted above. Recognition/awards for Water Conservation Stewardship, as a state authorized program, is one that evaluates the progress and programs of all PWS (public water systems) within the state of Texas and evaluates/compares progress within specific categories. Hence, FBCM25 is competing against all PWS, cities and municipalities, within the state of Texas (public water supply systems throughout Texas within specific categories) for this award. The Water Conservation and Stewardship Award is a recognition award presented by the Water

## Good News about a Taxing Situation

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the District's 2011 debt service and maintenance tax rates will remain the same as the previous year. Hence, while growth

can be a challenging and even daunting prospect, the vision of our Board of Directors, who made the decision long ago to manage growth in our District, is paying big dividends to the residents in the form of a stabilized levied tax rate per \$100.00 of valuation.



Conservation Advisory Council. The competition is open to all water suppliers in Texas to include municipalities, wholesale water providers, retail water providers, water supply corporations, water supply districts, cities, and utility districts. Recognition is given to water suppliers that have demonstrated outstanding and innovative commitment to the state's mission of promoting responsible management of water resources as well as conservation of Texas' water resources. The Council hopes, through this recognition, to encourage others to initiate like minded projects and reinforce a commitment of conservation and stewardship of water resources in Texas.

The goal of the District was not to seek awards and recognition. Instead, our goals have always been and remain to strive for customer service and operational excellence based on sound best management practices and fiscally responsible behavior. Are we perfect? No, perfection without glitches is not possible in a world dominated by pumps, motors, electronics, equipment, technology and human beings. Do we have occasional missteps? Yes, we do; that is how we learn to improve our processes. However, we are pleased to report that every day, in every way, we try to make a positive difference for the residents we serve. The awards validate the results of our efforts and industry recognition supports that fact that our District is on the right path. The best news is that our residents reap the benefits of the excellence we diligently strive to attain every day.

## Welcome to the District!

Annexation of the Grand Parkway Baptist Church and Victorian Gardens (north of Aliana on the other end of FM1464, a new 700 home development) is underway and are the newest additions to the District. Please extend a warm welcome to our new neighbors!



**Changes  
Changes  
Changes**

The only guarantee in life is that change is inevitable, particularly when dealing with technology. The District is pleased to announce the implementation of an Exchange Server (email is now in-house and not hosted by an outsourced vendor); Field Operations is fully operational on a paperless system (service orders are dispatched, received and closed via in-the-field tablet computers); and our phone system is now upgraded to a VoIP system, which allows messages to be integrated with email, provides full control and customization capability and direct dial-in extension functions. The changes improve internal efficiency and provide residents enhanced accessibility.

# WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE ... DROUGHTS IN TEXAS HISTORY



It has now been almost a year since we've had any appreciable rainfall...a few showers now and then, but not the gentle, soaking relief that we so desperately need.

"Who would ever think that Texans would be hoping for a hurricane or tropical storm?" folks are asking, shaking their heads in disbelief. Seeing clouds gather in the afternoon...the clouds that used to promise a shower or two... now just get our hopes up. Climatologists tell us that this isn't over yet – not by a long shot.

As devastating and destructive as this current drought is – with its relentless, blistering temperatures, wildfires and the loss of billions of dollars in crops – Texas is no stranger to this climate phenomenon. In fact, paleoclimatologists have found that megadroughts, at least as bad as the 1950's drought of record, have occurred numerous times over the centuries – some lasting 20 to 40 years.

*Paleoclimatology is the study of past climate. The word comes from the Greek root paleo-, or ancient...and the term "climate", meaning weather conditions over a period of time, usually decades. Paleoclimate, therefore, is the climate that existed before scientists began collecting weather data, such as temperature, precipitation, wind speeds, etc. These scientists reconstruct historical conditions, such as drought, from data that is preserved in tree-rings (which can extend back 300 – 1000*

*years), cores of sediments of sand dunes and lakes, and archeological remains. This proxy climate data, as it is called, can also be extended by written historical documents such as newspaper accounts and personal diaries and family records.*

During medieval times, for example, it appears that Texas endured several megadroughts in the **1100's** and **1200's**; and another struck in the last half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Slightly earlier, when Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Texas in the 1530's, he encountered a population of Native American farmers near the site of present-day Presidio, where it had not rained for at least two years. He was treated as a god by the Indians, and they entreated him to "tell the sky to rain." There is no record of whether or not he succeeded.

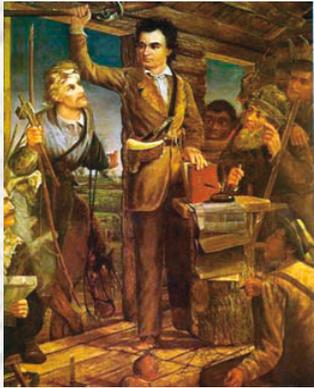


**Cabeza de Vaca**

Droughts also occurred during Revolutionary War times – where tree rings reveal several extended periods of drought around the time when the Roanoke colonists (1587) disappeared, and when settlers were trying to establish Jamestown (1607). These droughts were extreme and lasted between three and

six years; unusual for that region of North America.

Stephen F. Austin's early settlement was impacted by drought, as well. In **1822**, the colony's initial corn crop dried in the fields from lack of water.



Drought struck again around the time of the Civil War in the 1860's. After the state opened new land for immigrant farmers in **1883**, one of the worst droughts in Texas history occurred in 1884-86, forcing most of the settlers to abandon their new

homes, as they were unable to endure the lack of rain. This drought also had a negative impact on the already waning cattle drives, as the herds of longhorns were forced to travel over increasingly dry territory only to find traditional water holes dried up.

Historical records indicate that there has been at least one serious drought in some part of Texas during every decade of the twentieth century. The most catastrophic one occurred during the first two thirds of the 1950s in every part of the state. It began during the spring of 1949 in the lower valley...moved to affect the western parts of the state by the fall...and covered virtually all of Texas by the summer of **1951**. The drought lasted until a slow soaking rain abruptly ended it in the spring of 1956, but only after water shortages had reached critical stages with lakes, rivers and streams drying up completely. Two hundred forty four of the state's 254 counties were declared federal disaster areas.



Since then, several shorter and less severe droughts occurred in the 1970's, usually ended by Tropical Storms. There was, however, a massive heat wave in the early 1980's that was soon accompanied by a blistering drought over much of Texas.

The late **1980's** saw a three-year drought that was remarkable on several accounts: first, not only was it the costliest in U.S. history, but it was also the most expensive natural disaster of any kind to affect the U.S. at that time – with losses in energy, water, ecosystems and agriculture totaling almost \$40 billion. It was during the summer of 1988 that massive forest fires burned across western North American, including the catastrophic Yellowstone fire.



In **2009**, drought gradually crept across the state, with 88 percent of Texas experiencing abnormally dry conditions and 18 percent of the state in either extreme or exceptional drought conditions. While the widespread lack of rain was no laughing matter, folks still tried to maintain a sense of humor. Farmers were asking each other, “Heard the one about the Texas farmer whose land was so dry, his cow was giving powdered milk?”

In this case, a La Nina weather pattern settling over the central Pacific Ocean was behind the drought conditions, as it brought the likelihood of below normal rainfall and above normal temperatures.

Water providers agree that water conservation is the right thing to do. With the drought today, however, water conservation may be the *only* thing we can do. With that in mind, water suppliers are asking everyone to do what they can to use water efficiently to help stretch this precious resource. 💧

# **Mary Moore Hayes Resigns as General Manager**



## **Brian Sebesta Selected to Lead the District's Operations Team**

Mary Moore Hayes, the General Manager for the District since mid-2003 resigned as General Manager for Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25, effective December 31, 2011. Brian Sebesta is the new General Manager for the District, effective January 1, 2012.

Citing personal reasons as a primary factor for the decision, Ms. Hayes noted, "There comes a time when, as a leader, you realize it is time to let go, take a step back and let the people you spent years training take the lead role. That time is now for me." Brian Sebesta has been with the District since 2001, moved up to Chief Operator in 2003, and was promoted to Assistant General Manager in 2009. The promotion to General Manager for the District is the next logical professional step for Brian who has over 20 years experience in the water and wastewater industry.

Brian's support staff includes Steve Kim, Joe Huang, Michael Gonzales, Leonela Ruvalcaba and Nicole Cempa. Steve, Director, Information Technology, brings 25 years of high-level management experience in a government entity to include Information Technology, Inventory Control, and overall Administrative & Operations functions. Steve is also well versed in Business Continuity and Strategic Planning. Joe Huang, CPA, is the District's Director, Fiscal Affairs, and

earned his Master's degree in Accounting and completed his CPA certification in 2010. Michael Gonzales, Assistant Chief Operator, is a double B licensed operator (Water and Wastewater), is scheduled to take the A license exams this year, and brings 25 years experience in water (ground and surface), wastewater and distribution systems. Leonela Ruvalcaba, the District's Manager, Billing, Collections and Customer Service, is in her third year of college and will soon complete a Bachelor of Science, Business Administration degree. Ms. Cempa, Director, Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs for the District, holds two Bachelor's degrees, in Business Administration and Accounting, and will complete her A.R.M. certification this year. More than 80% of the staff are bi-lingual and speak fluent Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Thai languages, which enhances communication with the District's increasingly diverse community.

Brian's promotion to General Manager is effective January 1, 2012. Ms. Hayes will serve as Assistant General Manager to provide training and guidance for Brian for a six month transition period. Once the transition period is complete, Ms. Hayes will begin training existing personnel to serve in the capacity of Assistant General Manager and when complete, will become the Director, Human Resources.

# What's a WATER "FOOTPRINT" and How Big is Yours?



It sounds strange, but water experts have recently begun calculating water usage for individuals, households, communities and even whole countries by considering how much water they directly or indirectly consume in any given time frame. This includes "virtual water"—the amount of water needed to produce everyday things we rely on like food, energy, clothing and shelter.

Did you know that the water footprint of a pound of plastic is 24 gallons? That means that the container of bottled water, juice or soft drink uses three to five times as much water to create as the beverage it contains! Get the picture? Most folks have no idea how much fresh water they consume in a day. That's where the water footprint concept comes in -- it can remind us where our water comes from and its true value as *the* critical component in virtually everything in our lives and lifestyle. Consider all the ways you can use water more efficiently — taking shorter showers, running the dishwasher or washing machine only with full loads, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, water your lawn only when it needs it. Use less....save more!

If you think of your 'footprint' as how much water you use, are you a tip-toer...or a BIG FOOT? Here's a quiz to see what you think "uses" a lot of water to grow, create or make! Guess how many gallons of water each of these items require. The answers are below...no peeking!

**HERE ARE YOUR CHOICES: 25 gallons; 122 gallons; 5,000 gallons; 65 gallons; 400 gallons; 40,000 gallons; 1,400 gallons; 45 gallons; 100,000 gallons; 2,500 gallons.**



loaf of bread



burger, fries & a drink



slow faucet drip



automobile



glass of milk



pair of blue jeans



1 pound of beef



5 minute shower



full load, washing machine



serving of chicken

**ANSWERS:** bread: 122 gallons; burger, fries, drink: 1,400 gallons; faucet drip: 5,000 gallons; auto: 100,000 gallons; milk: 65 gallons; blue jeans: 40,000 gallons; pound of beef: 2,500 gallons; 5 minute shower: 25 gallons; full load of wash: 45 gallons; serving of chicken: 400 gallons.



**FORT BEND**

**C O U N T Y**

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## **UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

Growth within the District places added demands for expanded facilities. Hence, the construction of water plant number 4 is completed and the plant is online. Additionally, wastewater treatment plant no.2 is well underway and should be online within the next year. Finally, construction of lift station no. 9 is underway and the facility is expected to be online within 6 months or less.