

On the WATER Front

A Message from Ed Archuleta, P.E., President/CEO



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Planning and Execution Pay Off

El Paso Water Utilities has had a 50-year water resources management plan since 1991, but developing a plan does not guarantee success. The payoff comes with execution.

The plan outlined initiatives that would extend the life of the Hueco Bolson, an aquifer that once provided more than 50 percent of our municipal water supply. We mined the aquifer for many decades, which means we pumped water faster than nature could replenish it. Today, the aquifer level is stable.

The plan recommended a conservation program that combined incentives and education with enforcement and a rate structure that increased the cost of water for high-volume users. The plan also recommended diversifying our water resources.



The new desalination plant gives El Paso an additional source of water.

Painted Dunes Golf Course is irrigated with reclaimed water.



Today, our reclaimed water system delivers highly-treated wastewater to customers for irrigation and industrial use, and our desalination plant treats previously unusable brackish water from the Hueco Bolson. This reduces the amount of fresh water we pump by creating a new source of water.

But a key component in our success is the increased use of river water. In 1990, we could treat 40 million gallons per day (mgd) of river water, but that number has increased by 250 percent. Our plants treat up to 100 mgd of water during the irrigation season, and every gallon of water treated is a gallon that does not have to be pumped from our aquifers.

This year we treated a record amount of river water. In fact, over the last two decades we've tripled the amount of water we take from the river and reduced fresh water pumping in the Hueco Bolson by 75 percent.

Not long ago people thought we would run out of water, but that's no longer the case. We have flexibility, reliability and sustainability. Our planning and execution paid off.

On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water Utilities. If you have any comments or questions contact Editor Christina Montoya at 915.594.5596 or by email at cmontoya@epwu.org

