



On the Water Front

December 2016 | A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO

Celebrating Our Water Quality Lab and Our People

We recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of the International Water Quality Laboratory. It is an impressive state-of-the-art facility, accredited by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality under national standards. We place the highest priority on water quality here in El Paso, and this celebration served as a good opportunity to reflect on the importance we place in both facilities and in our people to guarantee we have a healthy and safe water supply.

We often talk about our leadership in water supply innovations, but just as essential – if not more so – is the work we do to guarantee the safety of our water supply. With the new facility, we've had the honor of hosting utilities from around the state and country to see how our lab is set up and how it operates.

The 27,000-square-foot facility was built in 2006 to consolidate four specialized labs at our facilities around the city. Our older facilities had outdated ventilation systems and lack of work and storage space, and we were hard pressed to meet changing demands of highly sensitive and complex testing requirements.

The Lab established a national model for water quality laboratories with its centralized location, reduced time needed to complete testing, and improved quality control. It also had the benefit of saving time and money and providing a safer, secure work environment for employees. New high-tech features included an ultra-clean air system, a state-of-the-art water purification system and a dedicated data management system.

A highly sophisticated lab also depends on well-trained, capable professionals. Each year, lab employees, who often have degrees in biology or chemistry, faithfully and diligently review more than 45,000 samples and perform more than 250,000 chemical and biological analyses as part of our water monitoring and testing program.

During the anniversary ceremony, I joined other El Paso Water leaders in thanking Lab employees for their tireless efforts to safeguard our drinking water supply.

Our Lab Manager Richard Wilcox said he and his employees take their role in providing safe drinking water to the community very seriously, and he credits the employees for the Lab's success. "We know we have an impact on everybody. It's a good feeling to know we serve the community in such an important way."



Laboratory Service Manager Richard Wilcox



On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water.
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