



# Water



**N E W S**

**August 2002**

## Fluoride Project Launched

Mayor Ed Garza was joined by San Antonio Water System (SAWS) and BexarMet officials today at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch the fluoridation of San Antonio's water supply.



*SAWS and BexarMet officials join with Mayor Ed Garza to launch fluoride facilities.*

The event capped an 18-month effort by SAWS and BexarMet to design and construct 34 fluoride facilities located around the city.

San Antonio's fluoridation system is a little different from others around the state due to the number of facilities that were constructed. Because the city's water supply currently comes from water wells located throughout the community, the SAWS-BexarMet team had to build a fluoride station at each one of the utility's water pumping stations.

The total cost of the project for both SAWS and BexarMet is \$4 million.

The construction of the facilities, which meets strict quality and safety standards set by the Texas Department of Health, was completed this past June. SAWS and BexarMet operations crews then worked hand-in-hand with the Health Department in testing the systems in July to prepare the sites for operation. Day-to-day operations include inspections of these facilities seven days a week and daily water sampling to ensure that the proper levels of fluoride are in the system. Electronic monitoring is included at each site.

Fluoride occurs naturally in Edwards Aquifer water at .3 parts per million. SAWS and BexarMet will add .5 parts per million of fluoride to get to the recommended .8 parts per million to provide the health benefits. That is equivalent to taking an eye-dropper and putting one drop of 75% water-diluted fluoride in a bathtub full of water.

According to national statistics, more than half of the people in the United States receive fluoride in their drinking water.

## "Saving It for a Sunny Day...."

### Opening Ceremony Kicks Off ASR Construction

San Antonio Water System today achieved a major milestone in implementing San Antonio's 50-year water plan today as City and SAWS officials broke ground for the construction of an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) facility in southern Bexar County.

ASR is a proven way to store drinking water underground. It is a technology that utilizes existing aquifer formations to store water in an environmentally friendly way. ASR does not create a new supply of water, rather it is a method for efficiently storing existing water.



San Antonio can save water in the ASR facility during wet months, and then pump the same Edwards Aquifer water back out again during dry months.

The main components of the 7.3 billion-gallon storage system are a water treatment plant, a series of 32 water wells, and a 30-mile pipeline that is five feet in diameter.

In addition to this being the city's first major water storage facility, this project also will include the construction of SAWS' first water treatment plant. Initially, the plant will treat Carrizo Aquifer water, but it is being designed to allow upgrades in order to treat other water sources in the future.

"The capability to store water is an integral part of every long-term water plan and this ASR project will give us that ability," said SAWS Vice Chairman Nancy Bohman. "We will be able to store large quantities of water from the Edwards Aquifer during the wet months for use during our hot and dry summers. That



will reduce our pumping from the Edwards during those summer months by about 25 percent and reduce the time we're affected by drought restrictions. That is a major benefit for the entire region."

This project is one of the largest ASR facilities in the United States, second to only Las Vegas and will be completed by the end of next year.

*At Left: Officials pour Edwards Aquifer water into the Carrizo sand, symbolizing the water storage strategy to be used at the new ASR facility.*

## Frequently - Asked Fluoride Questions

Q. I've been taking fluoride supplements. Should I still take them? (Should I still give them to my children?)

A. Individuals should check with their doctor or dentist. Each case is different, and your doctor has the best view of what is best for you concerning fluoride.

Q. If I don't want fluoride in my water, how do I remove it?

A. Reverse osmosis filters are the most effective way to remove fluoride from the water. In recent months they've become very common and can be purchased through plumbers, filter companies, and recently even through home improvement stores. There is a wide range of prices being charged for these, so it's worth your time to shop around.

Q. Will SAWS pay for a reverse osmosis (r.o.) filter?

A. There is no program available to pay for installing r.o. filters.

Q. Will it hurt my pets?

A. Keep in mind that fluoride is being used in the majority of water supply companies across the country. Over 162 million people in the US in 2000 were receiving fluoride. Pets - including dogs, cats, birds and even fish - are also doing fine in these cities.

Q. What day will fluoride arrive at my address?

A. Fluoride is going into pump stations on August 1 and is making a clockwise progression around the city through SAWS 27 pump stations. It's impossible to say what day fluoride will arrive at any particular address since we're not sure how smoothly the start-up will go in any particular area (it could slow down or speed up the process), what the tank size is that's receiving fluoride, and what the varying water demands are in the different areas.

Q. If I don't live in San Antonio city limits, will I still receive fluoride?

A. SAWS and BexarMet supply water to several communities outside the city limits. Unless you live in Castle Hills or most of Live Oak, you will probably receive fluoride if you're receiving a SAWS or a BexarMet water bill.

Q. Can I just buy bottled water to avoid it?

A. If you want to avoid fluoride through bottled water, the same rule about r.o. applies. Make sure the water is not just purified, but r.o. is run as well. Otherwise you could just be buying another city's bottled water that still has fluoride in it.

## SAWS Passport Wrapped Up for the Summer

It's been a great summer for kids who won prizes in SAWS Passport Program. Kids who completed the reading program, as well as those who were selected in a drawing, won VIP tickets to StrudelPalooza at SeaWorld. An event which featured several nationally-known bands whose music is featured on the Disney channel.

Thanks to sponsors of the Passport program; we couldn't have done it without you!

Sponsored by



Q During water restrictions, I've seen information that I need to keep my pool at least 25% covered when not in use. How do I do that?

A One of the best ways to keep your pool 25% covered is to be a little messy. You know those floats and rafts you have so much fun on when you're swimming? Leave them in there to help cover the surface area. Believe it or not, you can reduce evaporation by just leaving some of the floats in place. Give it a try!



### Affordability Programs

SAWS offers a number of programs to help customers having financial hardship with their water bills. To determine if you qualify, please call San Antonio's Community Action Division at 207-7830.

### SAWS Vision: SAWS will be the best water and wastewater utility in the United States by 2006.

Water News is published for customers of the San Antonio Water System. For more information regarding Water News, contact the Public Relations Department at (210) 704-7320.

#### Numbers to Know

Business Office	704-SAWS
Customer Account Information	704-SAWS
Jobline	704-SAWS
T.D.D.	704-1852
CleanStream Hotline	212-5326

#### 24-Hour Emergency

Customer Service/	
Water Waste Reporting	704-SAWS

Visit our website at [www.saws.org](http://www.saws.org)