

Splash

Metro Water
Newsletter
Summer 2010

RICHARD FAHRMEYER'S AWARD-WINNING INVENTION



An astute Metro Water employee has been recognized by the State's professional water organization, AZWater Association. Richard Fahrmeier's invention earned third place for the annual Gimmicks and Gadgets Award. He fabricated the invention for less than \$200. As a field technician and competent operator, Richard saw the need to reduce back strain when unloading 20-30 pound traffic sign bases from utility service trucks. With his keen insight and skill, Richard fabricated a swivel mechanism that would allow the sign bases to be tilted out of the truck, thus relieving back stress while unloading. We applaud Richard Fahrmeier's initiative to reduce back strains while making one more task that much easier. ■

COUNTY ACCELERATION OF ROAD PROJECTS IMPACTS METRO WATER

In the last newsletter, we reported that Metro Water was bracing itself for three more Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) funded projects scheduled for 2011. Since then, we have learned that Pima County has added a fourth RTA project to be done by the end of 2011, which is Magee/Cortaro Farms Road from Mona Lisa to Thornydale. The challenge for Metro Water remains that we are required to relocate our infrastructure that is in conflict with the new roadway projects even if the waterlines are in good condition.
(Continued on Page 3)

WILDFLOWERS!



*Countless wildflowers spring to life
atop the James M. Tripp Reservoir*



Andy Zhou

Fruchthendler Student Scores Big at SARSEF

Metro Water District awarded 5th grade student Andy Zhou its top prize at the Southern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair on March 11, 2010. SARSEF is held every year at the Tucson Convention Center where over 1,000 students display the results of their science projects.

Andy attends Fruchthendler Elementary in Metro Water’s Hub Service Area. The title of Andy’s project was “Got Water? Do Water Plants Slow Water Loss?” He has two ponds at his house and became interested in saving water through his class work. Andy wanted to find out if water loss from ponds can be reduced by covering ponds with water plants. He hypothesized that, even though floating plants consume water, because they cover the water surface they will reduce water loss.

Andy tested containers with duckweed, fairy moss, and no plants. Furthermore, he tested locations outdoor in the sun, outdoor in the shade, and indoors. He worked for about a month on his experiment and collected copious careful notes. He said that even though this seems like a complicated project, the key to success is knowing what you’re doing and taking it step by step. He also learned that we can’t expect everything to go the way we want.

Andy determined that his hypothesis was only partly correct. Indoors and in the shade, floating plants do slow down water loss, and fairy moss saves more water than duckweed. However, in the sun the containers with no plants lost less water than those with plants.

So, can we use Andy’s findings to save water at home? Andy said that ponds are nicer with plants, but we need to save clean water – “It depends what you want.”

Andy wants to continue his investigation by testing more types of plants so we have more options to choose from. Additionally, he would like to test year-round to see if the time of year matters.

Metro Water commends Mr. Zhou for his hard work and dedication to water conservation. Andy’s parting message is to let everyone know that “science is fun.”

Metro Water was not the only organization to recognize the quality of his work. Andy also received awards from SciEnTeK-12 Foundation (SARSEF’s supporting foundation), the Arizona Hydrological Society, and the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department.

For more information about SARSEF, please visit www.sarsef.org ■

Information Request

Metro Water is updating its list of critical care customers. This would apply to medical facilities, assisted living homes or private homes with kidney dialysis equipment in use. Please contact the District so that we have the most current information about your location in case of an emergency. In addition, we are updating contact names and phone numbers. Customers in the critical health-care industry can contact the District at 520-575-8100. Thank you!

CURRENT DROUGHT RESPONSE:

**STAGE 1
ALERT**

**STAGE 2
WARNING**

**STAGE 3
EMERGENCY**

**STAGE 4
CRISIS**

METRO BOARD REDEFINES ROLE OF OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Metro Water's Board of Directors decided to increase the responsibilities to the District's Bond Oversight Committee and rename it the Finance Oversight Committee. Specifically, the Board wanted to use the Committee's expertise to look at Metro's overall long-range financial plan and if the rate structure needs revision.

"The members of the Committee have a lot of talent and knowledge that we wanted to be put to full use," said Jim Doyle, Chair of Metro's Board. "By broadening the role of the Committee, the Board will be better advised by the Committee."

The Bond Oversight Committee was formed in 1997 to meet regularly to review the progress of the Capital Improvement

Program and to ensure that the funds were expended according to the intent of the voter approved bond program. The Committee has remained active through both the 1997 and the 2005 bond elections.

The newly named Finance Oversight Committee is meeting monthly to discuss and develop recommendations regarding Metro's overall finances and the financing of the Capital Improvement Program.

The Committee includes residents from both the Metro-Main and Metro-Hub service areas. The members of the Finance Oversight Committee are Sheila Bowen, Assistant Town Engineer for Sahuarita; Barbara Gelband, Deputy County Attorney; Lee Mayes, Battalion Chief with Rural Metro; Jeffrey Ratje, Budget Analyst for University of Arizona; Jim Stevenson, Retired Program Manager for Hughes Aircraft; Claire Strom, Campus Director of Administrative Services for Pima Community College-Northwest; Tim Thomure, Project Manager for HDR Engineering; and Bernie J.E. Wiegandt, Certified Public Accountant. ■



COUNTY ACCELERATION OF ROAD PROJECTS...

(Continued from Page 1)

Metro Water has encouraged Pima County to design the road improvements in such a way that would minimize waterline relocations. However, we have had little success to date. For example, Pima County's plans for the RTA roadway expansion of Magee Road from La Cañada to Mona Lisa will remove and replace not the usual 2 feet but 5 feet of the subgrade for the road. This will have a significant impact to our water distribution system along Magee Road including relocating a portion of our fairly new 30 inch water main near the Magee and La Cholla Blvd intersection.

While the roadway projects are funded through the RTA, the County designs, plans and constructs the road improvements. The County has accelerated the schedule to have more projects constructed sooner in order to take advantage of the current lower construction costs. Unfortunately, the schedule means additional costs for Metro Water.

The now four upcoming projects include the two above mentioned Magee Road improvements along with the La Cholla Blvd. expansion from Magee to Overton and the widening of La Cañada from Ina Road to River Road. Metro Water's estimates that for each mile of the Pima County roadway improvements costs the District \$750,000 to \$1 million for the waterline relocations and existing pipe removals. Until the road designs are finalized by Pima County, Metro Water does not know the full financial impact of these RTA projects. However, these four road projects will have a significant impact on the District's \$17 million annual budget during 2010 and 2011.

Metro Water is nearing completion of its required waterline relocations along La Cañada Drive between Ina Road and Calle Concordia. These waterline relocations for the La Cañada Drive road widening have cost the District approximately \$1.5 million. Last June, Metro's Board established a \$3.00 fee to cover the costs to relocate waterlines due to these Pima County roadway projects. ■



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Seeking Candidates for Metro Board Seats

If you would like to have a direct voice in the decision-making process of your water utility, here is an opportunity. An election has been called to fill three of the five seats on Metro Water District's Board of Directors. The nonpartisan election is scheduled for November 2, 2010, the same day as the General Election.

All District residents are eligible to be candidates. Nomination petitions must be filed with the Pima County Division of Elections.

Metro Water District is a public water utility, governed by an elected five-member board, similar to a school or fire district. The Board meets regularly the second Monday of each month. Metro Water has 19,500 connections within its service areas.

For more information and/or to obtain nomination petitions, contact the Pima County Division of Elections at 351-6830, or Metro Water at 575-8100. ■

Board of Directors:

James O. Doyle, Chair
James M. Tripp, Vice Chair
Dan M. Offret, Member
Bryan Foulk, Member
Reb Guillot, Member

Summer Board Meetings:

June 14th
July 12th
August 9th

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