EPWater's engineers give back to community

El Paso Water's engineers make a difference.

During National Engineers Week – Feb. 17-23 – the utility is recognizing the innovative engineers behind key projects in our water, wastewater and stormwater systems. Our engineers embrace their public service roles and design projects that contribute to public safety through flood control, production of high-quality drinking water and reliable drainage of wastewater.

Working for community

For engineers working in the public sector, it is particularly satisfying to deliver to the public a completed project exhibiting an innovative engineering solution for the greater good. The El Paso Times earlier this week featured three exemplary EPWater projects – and the project engineers behind the projects – in their National Engineers Week supplement:

- the Magnolia pump station, which has contributed to reduced I-10 flooding;
- the Canal Street Tunnel Project, which is replacing deteriorating lines under 10 sets of railroad tracks; and
- rehabilitation project to modernize our 95-year old Haskell Wastewater Treatment Plant.

We were also pleased to be notified that two EPWater projects were named 2019 Texas Gold Medal winners by the American Council of Engineering Companies: our Northeast El Paso Aquifer Storage and Recovery Master Plan and Northeast Channel 2 Improvements. In both cases, Moreno Carbajal Inc. was recognized for their work, but our engineering firms work in close association with our in-house engineers.

EPWater engineers work within a multitude of constraints and environments of uncertainty, yet, they are able to overcome hurdles quickly and efficiently. Their skills are key to solving many of the major water system issues we face today. For fiscal year 2019-2020, our top engineering priorities include addressing El Paso’s aging infrastructure while also keeping an eye toward new water supply projects to meet future demand.

However, service doesn’t end there for EPWater’s engineers who know firsthand the importance of community service.

Giving back

What’s less known about our engineers is the time they donate to employee giving drives and community service projects to make our community a better place.

We have an annual program at the utility called Charity of Choice, in which an employee committee chooses a single non-profit for the year and conducts fundraising efforts throughout the year to help meet a specific need of the organization. Our engineers are among the most active employees in this effort. Some lead or serve on the committee while others take the lead on a given fundraiser – whether our annual Fishing Derby, karaoke night, volleyball competition or others. Last year’s Charity of Choice Chair Gerardo Gomez – Engineering Program Administrator – had the privilege of presenting a check for $47,000 to the Assistance League of El Paso.

Aside from campaigns at EPWater, our engineers often volunteer personal time to other social and environmental causes around our region. Engineering Division Manager Giacca Dagroni volunteers as a Girl Scout leader. Utility Engineer Associate Yesenia Castro volunteers for the International Boundary and Water Commission’s Adopt-a-River Program. Also, we have a number of engineers, including Amy Castron, Fred Hernandez, Martin Noriega and Manuel Perez, who volunteer for EPWater’s Tech2O Learning Center events, where they share their experiences and inspire the next generation of future innovators.

Not only are our employees building a better world through local projects with innovative solutions, they are also helping to build more compassionate communities. EPWater’s engineers contribute their problem-solving skills, energy, creativity and ingenuity to improve the way El Paso functions – one project at a time.