



On the Water Front

July 2019 | **A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO**

EPWater/UTEP collaborations benefit El Paso

Over the years, El Paso Water has built a well-deserved reputation as a water industry innovator.

Our location in the Chihuahuan Desert drives the necessity to diversify our water resources beyond river water and fresh groundwater. Investment and responsible water management have firmly placed EPWater on a solid path to long-term sustainability, ensuring El Pasoans reliable, high-quality water for years to come.



UTEP students are testing the durability of granular activated carbon (GAC) products.

Along the way, we have received unparalleled support from our stakeholders. More than four decades ago, EPWater forged and cultivated a valuable relationship with the University of Texas at El Paso's Civil Engineering Department that has paid off ever since.

Thriving partnership

At EPWater, one of our strategic operating objectives calls for identifying and prioritizing research and development opportunities that may lead to innovative solutions. Research collaborations with UTEP have produced successful technical solutions suited for our water supply needs as well as saving the utility and ratepayers millions of dollars.

UTEP engineering students understand our arid region's water issues and have a vested interest in developing solutions for El Paso. Research opportunities for UTEP engineering students have proven vital to the community. Through this strategic partnership, students test cutting-edge technologies that may benefit our customers one day.

Research initiatives

Some recent projects include:

- Researchers under the direction of professor Anthony Tarquin are testing the durability of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) products, which would help EPWater maximize river water treatment processes. Students are working in conjunction with our plant operators, who are offering their input.
- Researchers are working on making desalination concentrate management more efficient at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant. The waste is generated during the desalination process when salt and contaminants are removed from brackish water. Tarquin developed the patented Concentrate Enhanced Recovery Reverse Osmosis (CERRO) technology to achieve high recovery by getting back additional drinking water from waste streams. So far, the utility has installed full-scale systems at several area wells that require desalination.
- Under the direction of professor Shane Walker, UTEP researchers were recently awarded a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to fund the two-year study of a high-recovery direct potable reuse piloting system. Researchers are combining a high-recovery component with the advanced water purification process, which transforms treated wastewater into fresh drinking water. The additional high-recovery component will result in more than 90% recovery of water from waste streams. Researchers will work at a trailer facility at the John T. Hickerson Water Reclamation plant near UTEP, with plans to open the trailer to the public for educational tours.

EPWater is committed to supporting research opportunities with UTEP because of our continued success in identifying solutions for water and wastewater utility operations.

We also welcome the added opportunity to train and develop future professionals in the industry, who help make a difference in EPWater's mission.



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