60 years, and counting

The Trinity River Authority of Texas was created in 1955 by an Act of the 54th Texas Legislature. Now, 60 years later, I have the honor and responsibility to serve as the third General Manager of the Authority. Today’s TRA is not that different from the one created back then; it has stayed pretty close to its knitting. TRA was created to achieve three basic functions:

• Develop and maintain a basin-wide master plan.
• Sponsor federal water projects.
• Provide water- and wastewater-related services within TRA’s political jurisdiction.

It is inspiring to read narratives written in those early days. A commitment to the people of the Trinity River basin echoes loudly in the pages of the TRINITY VALLEY PROGRESS, a magazine produced six times a year by the Trinity Improvement Association for, as it noted, citizens of the Trinity River watershed. In the 2015 issues of inTRA, I will share thoughts, snippets of articles from publications, and actions and activities from TRA’s past.

This text was included in the inaugural issue of TRINITY VALLEY PROGRESS, July-August 1960:

Thanks to the Trinity River Authority of Texas, we have a ready-made blueprint and pattern in the Trinity River Authority Master Plan of development for the watershed. Thanks to the Trinity River Authority of Texas, we have already underway a program of stream pollution control and abatement, so essential to public health and the conservation of fish and wildlife.

In commenting on an article, “Water for the Future,” the editors of the magazine praised the article for providing reassurance to the residents in the Trinity Valley while shining a light on progressive actions that involved TRA.

From the September-October 1960 issue:

All of us in the Trinity Valley can take pride in the fact that the Trinity Improvement Association and the Trinity River Authority of Texas are right in their
planning, and abreast or ahead of the most advanced thinking. The plans which are being carried out will make the Trinity Valley a model of river basin development.

The magazine spoke highly of TRA’s Central Regional Wastewater System, considered ahead of its time in 1960, which still serves its original customers, Irving, Grand Prairie, Farmers Branch, and a part of Dallas, today.

An article from the November–December 1960 issue with the headline TRA’s Model Plant Combats Pollution: An ultramodern central sewage system serving four cities and capable of expanding has been provided by the Trinity River Authority to relieve mounting sewage-treatment problems in an area which in the past has been a source of pollution on the upper Trinity River.

The article also noted that CRWS would be able to serve a population of 240,000, and with expansion, 800,000. Not bad for the ‘60s. Today, the plant has 21 contracting customers and serves a population of 1.2 million.

The September–October 1961 issue chronicled TRA’s six years of accomplishments:
Six years and one week ago (as of press time) twenty-four Trinity Valley residents were named by the Governor of Texas as directors of a river basin development agency newly created by the Legislature, The Trinity River Authority of Texas.

The accomplishments of the original twenty-four, with six replacements were outlined:

• Prepared and presented a Trinity watershed Master Plan in 1958.

• Negotiated a contractual settlement with the city of Houston which made Trinity water available to the municipality without sacrificing any basic component of the Authority’s Master Plan

• Attacked a problem of river pollution by making four sewage treatment studies in problem areas of the Dallas-Tarrant counties complex, and by building and operating the first multi-city central sewage system in this part of the country.

• Joined with lower river interests and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in proposing a solution, the Wallisville Saltwater Barrier, to the problem of salt-water intrusion in the lower valley.

• Ensured a tremendous increase in new water supply storage by participating in proposed new reservoirs at Navarro Mills on Richland Creek, Bardwell on Waxahachie Creek, and Livingston and Wallisville on the lower main stem of the river.

• Facilitated the beginning of upstream barge navigation by joining with the Corps and the Chambers-Liberty Counties Navigation District in placing a barge lock in the design for the proposed Wallisville reservoir.

The article concluded by noting that the terms of eight of TRA’s Board of Directors would be expiring and that those members should be warmed with pride for the rest of their lives for the tremendous work that they achieved in only six years. To that, I say, “hear, hear.”

The unifying themes of planning, coordination, cooperation and partnerships captured in some of the magazine’s text are ingrained in TRA.

In InTRA’s summer issue, the ‘70s and ‘80s TRA will be explored.
Managing TRA’s assets, long term

In the June/July 2013 issue of inTRA, the Trinity River Authority’s Central Regional Wastewater System was just beginning to delve into using an asset management program. Now, CRWS is taking asset management to the next level by bringing in a consultant to manage a project called the Strategic Asset Management and Reliability-Centered Maintenance program. The project kicked off in January. The steering committee includes Julie Hunt, northern region assistant manager, operations; Valery Jean-Bart, CRWS manager, engineering; Doug Short, chief information officer; Bill Tatum, CRWS project manager; and Mike Young, CRWS manager, systems operations.

The overall project will follow this approach:

Task I  Project Management & Steering Committee
Task II  ISO 55001 Assessment
Task III  Asset Management System Improvement Plan
Task IV  Assessment & Evaluation of Current Maintenance Program
Task V  Asset Identification & Documentation
Task VI  Predictive Maintenance Program Development

“Recently, interviews were conducted with 17 different staff members and groups where the consultant asked questions related to ISO 55001, which is an international standard that pertains directly to asset management,” said Jean-Bart.

“During the second task, we will look at the principles from ISO 55001 so that we can begin to understand how TRA measures up in each rated category,” stated Hunt. “There may be things that we are doing close to 100 percent and other functions that don’t score well and reveal gaps.”

“Identifying gaps won’t necessarily mean that we will address them all,” noted Hunt.

The Steering Committee will work to determine which gaps really mean something, with a focus on targeting and closing gaps that will help prolong the life of assets or make them more productive, efficient or effective.

“Our capital needs are greater than our resources, and asset management helps us strategically look at allocating money to projects that need it,” said Hunt. “A successful reliability-centered maintenance component will lead to continued improvements in cost effectiveness.”

“Throughout the overall project, there will be simple, strategic and tactical tasks and ideas discovered,” remarked Hunt. As an example, she noted that it may be determined that CRWS is not applying a specific technology available in the industry today, and that awareness may expose CRWS to new technologies that aren’t currently in use.

Hunt commented that responding to recommendations may involve creating a subcommittee to evaluate, using a contracted resource, or it could be a mix of internal resources and expertise paired with an external contractor.

“This asset management project crosses into so many areas of the organization that it’s going to take the cooperation of the collective employee base to make it work, not just the single individual,” Hunt emphasized. “That is why it is important to share information about the project so that staff members can track the progress and ongoing activities.”

Hunt expects this to be a multi-year project. Subsequent inTRA articles will provide updates and progress reports.

Asset management provides an assessment of the current state of an organization’s infrastructure by addressing these critical parameters:

- Accountability
- Sustainability
- Risk management
- Service management
- Financial efficiency
Cybersecurity and You

What does the term cybercriminal bring to mind? Is it the fictional young hacker from the movie “War Games” or is it a more menacing character like the cyberterrorist from “Live Free or Die Hard”? In reality, it could be either or anything in between. The Department of Homeland Security defines it this way: There are two types of attackers that can cause harm to the Internet: hostile and nonhostile attackers. The difference is based on their intent. Hostile actors intend to cause harm, like cybercriminal organizations or hackers, while nonhostile actors accidentally cause harm, like an employee, who accidentally downloads malware into a key system.

The news is full of stories about cyberattacks. Fortune 500 companies, governmental agencies, the entertainment industry, financial institutions and cargo carriers are just some of the organizations that have experienced such attacks.

The scale of the threat is captured in a quote from FBI Director James Comey, “There are two kinds of big companies in the United States. There are those that have been hacked, and there are those who don’t know they have been hacked.” The attacks can occur in spite of the number of information technology staff at a company.

Current reports indicate an increase in attacks and activities such as scanning the Internet for servers and attempts to infiltrate industrial control systems. A 2008 pipeline explosion in Turkey was tied to a destructive cyberattack. Hackers shut down alarms, turned off communications, and overpressurized a crude oil line resulting in an explosion that put the pipeline out of commission. In 2010, a computer worm compromised controllers at a nuclear facility and destroyed critical equipment.

These incidents are grim, and unfortunately, new attacks are reported daily. The Trinity River Authority is working to address cybersecurity as well as physical security to protect its employees, customers, and physical assets. However, cybersecurity is not just a task for IT. Cybersecurity requires vigilance on the part of every TRA employee who uses a computer system to help protect the organization’s data and critical processes.

Cybersecurity guidelines:

- Understand and abide by the Authority’s IT policy.
- Cybersecurity involves protecting information by preventing, detecting, and responding to attacks.
- Remember that you are a potential target and that you have a role to play in helping to safeguard TRA data.
- Protect your password and login information. Do not share your credentials with anyone, and do not use your TRA credentials for other systems.
- Verify that email sources and destinations of embedded links are valid.
- Do not allow unauthorized access to TRA systems.
- Report suspicious emails and activity to IT.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact IT.
**Jesse Borries**, CRWS environmental inspector in pretreatment, was recently named 2014 Big Brother of the Year by Tarrant County’s Big Brothers Big Sisters Program (BBBS). He and his “little brother,” Ricky, spent 2014 going on hunting trips, working on cars, watching a ton of football, and doing some public speaking at charity events on behalf of BBBS. He has been matched with his “little brother” for close to five years, and he looks forward to helping him in enroll college as a first generation college student!

**Jessica Davis**, daughter of **Susan Davis**, CSG office coordinator, graduated from Kennedale High School a semester early in December 2014. She is currently enrolled at Tarrant County College with plans to pursue a sonogram program at Weatherford College. Susan’s other daughter, **Amanda Davis**, is a guard-all-district for Kennedale High School varsity basketball team. She earned her varsity spot as the sixth-man during nondistrict games and soon became a starter after one district game by finishing with 99 points, 60 rebounds, 26 assists, 48 steals and one block.

**Craig Harvey**, CRWS lab division chief, and his wife, **Ginger**, celebrated the arrival of granddaughter, **Emily**, on Jan. 12, 2015. She is the daughter of **Jennifer** and **Collin Harvey**.

**Jesus Gomez**, son of **Jesus Gomez-Longoria**, GO maintenance mechanic I, received the Student of the Month award at Mike Mosely Elementary in Grand Prairie for the months of November and December 2014. He also received a Good Citizenship award and a Perfect Attendance award in February 2015.

**Jessica Davis**, daughter of **Susan Davis**, CSG office coordinator, graduated from Kennedale High School a semester early in December 2014. She is currently enrolled at Tarrant County College with plans to pursue a sonogram program at Weatherford College. Susan’s other daughter, **Amanda Davis**, is a guard-all-district for Kennedale High School varsity basketball team. She earned her varsity spot as the sixth-man during nondistrict games and soon became a starter after one district game by finishing with 99 points, 60 rebounds, 26 assists, 48 steals and one block.

**Ana Luisa Ramirez-Navarrete**, wife of **Marco Ramirez**, engineer planning and development, finally received her bachelor’s degree in Spanish language arts from the University of Texas at Arlington in December 2014. Ana Luisa came to the United States from Mexico in 1999 knowing only Spanish. She juggled being a full-time, stay-at-home mom of three and taking courses at Tarrant County College beginning in 2002. She is now a substitute teacher for the Mansfield Independent School District and is pursuing her master’s degree while continuing to be a stay-at-home mom.

**Marco's son, Maximiliano**, received the Freshman of the Year award for cross country in December 2014. He finished in the top five fastest freshmen runners in the state. He also made the junior varsity soccer team at Mansfield High School.
During DCRWS planning for its maintenance facility expansion, it was discovered that one of their mature trees was in the way of the expansion. At the insistence of Robert (Bobby) Ray, DCRWS chief mechanic, the tree was relocated and saved.

CRWS Service Award Honorees

Pictured:
Debra Davis, lab technician II, 3 years
Sally Snyder, senior secretary, 10 years
Willie Cobb, senior maintenance mechanic, 15 years

Not pictured:
Lucas Janiszewski, senior biologist, 3 years
Jonathan O’Bryant, operator II, 5 years
Matthew Quate, operator II, 3 years

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

35 YEARS
William Holder, southern region assistant manager

10 YEARS
George Garcia, maintenance mechanic II, DCRWS
Jacob Young, area administrator, LLP

3 YEARS
Bradford Beeching, senior maintenance mechanic, DCRWS
Cody Edmondson, operator I, CRWS

PEOPLE NEWS & RECOGNITIONS

WELCOME TO THESE NEW HIRES:

CRWS
Agustin Longoria, biologist
Curtis Naylor, process systems automation analyst
Mitchell Ryan, operator I

CSG
Alberto Castor, collection systems technician II

GO
Matthew Cooper, geographic information technician
Matthew Jalbert, engineer planning and development
Nancy Whitlock, senior secretary
Austin Dudley, environmental scientist
Huong Tran, geographic information technician

TCWSP
Randall Lyons, operator I
Mrugen Patel, operator I

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION:

CRWS
Stephen Bainter, chief operator
Eric Palmer, lab supervisor

CSG
Susan Davis, office coordinator

GO
Shawn Ballard, IT Sharepoint and technical support specialist
Vanessa Liu, manager systems and applications
Brenda Porter, land administrator

HRWSS
Marion Kendall, senior operator

TCWSP
Hector Garcia, senior maintenance mechanic

HAPPY TRAILS TO THESE RETIREEES:

CRWS
Marci Kilgore, buyer, 30 years of service
David Hatley, lab supervisor, 23 years of service

TMCRWS
Sam Colvin, chief operator, 28 years of service
Wolf Creek Park is waiting for you...

Come out and enjoy Lake Livingston!

Open March - November