



On the Water Front

September 2022 | A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO

Advanced Water Purification Facility

El Paso Water is on a firm path to building a more modern and sustainable community for El Paso.

The recent awarding of \$20 million in funding from the Department of Interior-Bureau of Reclamation for our planned Advanced Water Purification Plant shows EPWater is leading the way in water reuse



What makes facility special

When the Advanced Water Purification Facility goes online, this innovative facility will be the first of its kind in the country. Expected to produce up to 10 million gallons a day, the facility will transform treated wastewater from the nearby Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant into fresh drinking water. Once treated, purified water will be routed directly into the drinking water distribution system.

The Advanced Water Purification Facility, shown in this rendering, is expected to produce up to 10 million gallons a day.

We have been spearheading water reuse projects for decades to expand our water supply.

EPWater's reuse journey kicked off in the 1960s when we began supplying Ascarate Park Golf Course with reclaimed water for irrigation. Two decades later, we were among the first in the nation when the Fred Hervey Water Reclamation Plant began treating wastewater to drinking water standards and recharging the Hueco Bolson aquifer. Since 1985, the plant has returned more than 30 billion gallons of fresh water to the aquifer.

Taking advantage of an existing water source to diversify our water resources portfolio makes good sense, especially when your growing city is in the Chihuahuan Desert.

It's a reliable drought-proof supply to tap into – as the population increases, we will have more treated wastewater to purify. Furthermore, every gallon of reclaimed water used is one less gallon of water pumped from the Hueco Bolson aquifer or diverted from the Rio Grande.

Increased water usage during the pandemic, along with a continuing river drought, have impacted our water production levels. Pre-COVID-19, EPWater produced a total 38 billion gallons a year. During the pandemic, production surged to 40 billion gallons a year, where it has remained. Growing population and water production levels underscore the need for additional supply.

Innovation leader

EPWater pilot-tested the advanced purification treatment processes in 2016 and successfully demonstrated to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality that the facility will deliver high quality water. An independent advisory panel of health and water quality experts also scrutinized the project and ultimately provided full support.



EPWater President and CEO John Balliew said the Advanced Water Purification Facility will be the next iteration in the utility's water reuse system.

To ensure the removal of pathogens and viruses, treated wastewater is sent through multiple treatment steps, such as membrane filtration, reverse osmosis, ultraviolet disinfection with advanced oxidation and granular activated carbon filtration. This multistage process transforms treated wastewater into a safe, reliable drinking water supply.

The utility's planning process spans 50 years into the future. Diversifying our supply beyond the river and fresh groundwater from the aquifer has served us well. We have built a solid portfolio of water resources that includes desalination, water reuse and conservation. We will diversify our water sources further to include:

- Expanded desalination will draw on vast brackish portions of the aquifer, and strategically placed wells will provide a buffer to protect fresh portions of the aquifer.
- Expanded aquifer recharge will allow us to bank a combination of river water, reclaimed water and stormwater in our Hueco aquifer.
- Expanded conservation programs will focus on commercial and industrial customers.
- Decades from now, we will import water about 90 miles away from an aquifer beneath Dell City, while still safeguarding the sustainability of this Hudspeth County farming community.

EPWater is well prepared to take on drought and prove our resiliency by employing our innovative portfolio of water resources to keep taps flowing in our desert city. The Advanced Water Purification Facility is the next step in our water reuse innovation. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2023.

Because of years of careful investment and responsibly managing our water sources, EPWater is a proven industry leader. This cutting-edge facility helps us to preserve our aquifers, as well as providing a sustainable water supply for our grandchildren. Customers can trust we have drought-proof, reliable options, such as Advanced Water Purification, that will enable our community to thrive for generations.



On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water. Contact Christina Montoya at 915.594.5596 or cmontoya@epwater.org with any comments or questions.

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