



# THE Pipeline

Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department

## The Utility of the Future Today Award

by *Caroline G. Vargas*

The Water Environment Federation (WEF), the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), the Water Research Foundation, and the WaterReuse Association will recognize Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) with the *Utility of the Future Today* (UOTF) Award on October 5, 2020. RWRD will be one of 65-2020 honorees at WEF's 93rd annual technical exhibition and conference. The four national water sector organizations, together with input from the Environmental Protection Agency, honors forward-thinking, innovative water utilities that are providing resilient value-added service to communities, particularly in community engagement, watershed stewardship, and recovery of resources such as water, energy, and nutrients. The seven parameters of activity delineated for the UOTF Award focus on beneficial biosolids use, partnering and engagement, energy efficiency, energy generation and recovery, nutrient reduction and materials recovery, water reuse, and watershed stewardship. The ventures and processes RWRD has incorporated into its business are what make RWRD a forward-thinking utility.

The UOTF award program was



launched in 2016, and allows water sector utilities to apply every four years with the assurance that water sector utilities cultivate the seven activity components into its businesses. RWRD was recognized for our state-of-the-art Water Campus, which offers a regional concentration of interconnected organizations and academia to foster collaborative technological, science based research, and innovation. The Citizen Water Academy, which focuses on community engagement and allows the public to see firsthand the vigorous processes and the innovative and efficient technologies deployed for renewable resources and our role as we push forward to address our future water needs in our region.

RWRD's research project to evaluate a nutrient removal

technique at the Tres Ríos Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) was also highlighted. RWRD collaborated with the University of Arizona on a National Science Foundation research project. The project involved an extensive pilot testing and research relating to struvite abatement and anaerobic ammonia oxidation, or Anammox. The innovative process for treating side

stream ammonia flows for improved performance will reduce ammonia loading by 28%, thus saving energy and increasing treatment capacity.

The upgrade of our two largest WRFs has improved water quality and clarity of the effluent discharged into the Santa Cruz River and has significantly reduced the levels of ammonia. Concentrations have declined scientifically more than tenfold, allowing RWRD to be recognized for the return of the Gila Topminnow fish species discovered in 2018. The Gila Topminnow had been absent for 75 years due to the loss of perpetual water flow to the Santa Cruz River, but is back and thriving because of our clean water and our collaboration with the Sonoran Institute and other federal, state, and county departments.

A huge highlight was the

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IMAGINE A DAY WITHOUT WATER

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FIVE FACILITIES RECOGNIZED WITH AWARDS

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## DIRECTOR'S VIEW



I hope everyone is beginning to enjoy his or her pumpkin spice lattes and have noticed the shelves at the stores are filled with Halloween candy, everything is pumpkin and cinnamon flavored, and soon the sidewalks will be covered with autumn leaves. Nevertheless, the cooler weather is a nice change after the blistering heat this summer, but most importantly, who is ready for some football, at least on TV for now! I'll take it and Go Cowboys!

I would like to congratulate Deputy Director **Jeff Prevatt, PhD**, on the NACWA awards, and to all members of RWRD on its national

by *Jackson Jenkins*

recognition and recipient of the *Utility of the Future Today Award*. RWRD was recognized for our advances in beneficial biosolids use, partnering and engagement, energy efficiency, energy generation and recovery, nutrient reduction and materials recovery, water reuse, and watershed stewardship. Wastewater Reclamation is one of 65 water utilities being recognized for transformational work in the seven parameters provided. The *Utility of the Future Today* program was launched in 2016 by NACWA, WEF, the Water Research Foundation, and the WaterReuse Association, with input from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Water and wastewater utilities can only be recognized every four years, and this is the second time RWRD has been awarded two for two since the program's inception. We continue to lead the way in southern Arizona in advance water collection and reclamation processes and research and innovation with our state-of-the-art facilities. I am extremely proud of this recognition and to be part of the great work we do 24-7/365 days a year! Again, congratulations!

As you know RWRD released its [Fiscal Year 2019/20 Report – By the Numbers](#), this report highlights all the accomplishments from every member of our utility. If you have  
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## SUSTAINABILITY CORNER

by *Jeannette Montaña*

# Imagine a Day Without Water

What would it be like if our essential workers were unable to do their jobs because there was no water for drinking, washing your hands, flushing the toilet, or putting out fires? Imagine if water and wastewater systems were unable to continue to do their job 24/7 as America faced the public health threat of COVID-19. Everyone should consider this scenario on October 21, 2020, on the 6th Annual *Imagine a Day Without Water*. Led by the Value of Water Campaign, thousands of organizations across the country will raise awareness about the importance of water and

conservation and the crucial need for investment in our nation's water systems.

An investment in our drinking water and wastewater systems is essential to our regional health, safety, environment, and economic prosperity. Everyday Americans take for granted turning on the tap for clean, safe drinking water, and flushing the toilet without a second thought about what happens beyond the flush. Drought, flooding, and population growth weigh heavily on our water and water reclamation facilities. Most



Americans enjoy reliable water and wastewater service however, our nation's infrastructure is aging and in need of investment.

Over the past six years, *Imagine a Day Without Water* has provided the platform for educating the public and advocating for leaders to prioritize investing in the water today, so in the future, no American will have to imagine a day without water. Learn more at [imagineadaywithoutwater.org](http://imagineadaywithoutwater.org) and follow the conversation on social media at #ValueWater.

Source: "Imagine A Day Without Water," (2020). Retrieved from <https://imagineadaywithoutwater.org/>

## The Pipeline, an Award-Winning Publication

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Caroline G. Vargas

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to protect the public health, safety, and the environment by providing quality service, environmental stewardship, and renewable resources.



**PIMA COUNTY**

WASTEWATER RECLAMATION

### BE A CONTRIBUTOR

Is there something happening in your Division? On your team? In your office? We want to read about it! Share it with us by emailing [pipeline@pima.gov](mailto:pipeline@pima.gov) or call 724-6543.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Please submit your stories for the November issue to [pipeline@pima.gov](mailto:pipeline@pima.gov) by **Friday, October 16**. If you will be submitting a photo, please send as a separate high-res JPEG attachment.

# Keeping Halloween Fun During a Pandemic

This year, parents are naturally worried about how they can safely celebrate Halloween with their kids. Canceling Halloween may seem like the best alternative. I hope we do not do that. At the time of this writing, Tucson still had some fun options. Here are a couple of events that are still going forward and practicing safety guidelines for Halloween:



- [Marana Pumpkin Patch](#): They have put together a list of safety protocols to help ensure the safety and health of their employees and guests.

- [Slaughter House](#): Guests must purchase tickets in advance. They have timed ticketing to help avoid large gatherings and are limiting the amount of walk-up traffic.

At least candy and scary costumes cannot be canceled. Here is a list of things you can do at home to make sure your Halloween is still memorable:

- Create crafts with your kids and decorate the house with paper or tissue ghosts.
- Bake scary Halloween cookies.
- Have a pumpkin-carving contest with friends and show your final masterpiece via Zoom or post

on Facebook.

- Dress up and create treat bags for your kids, include small puzzles or crayons and coloring books with the candy.

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) just recently came out with new recommendations for Halloween safety. One of those recommendations is to skip trick-or-treating this year due to the difficulty in maintaining physical distancing on porches and front doors.

With some creative ideas, you can make Halloween just as fun this year as it has always been and still maintain safety. Happy Halloween!



## National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

by Jenette Lee

October is the Department of Homeland Security's National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM), which raises awareness about the importance of cybersecurity, ensuring that all Americans have the resources they need to be safe and more secure online. **Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart** is NCSAM's theme this year and designed to encourage individuals and organizations to take an active role in protecting their part of cyberspace, stressing personal accountability, and the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity.

RWRD Emergency Response and Planning will be sending out Emergency Preparedness Share emails throughout October containing video links and weekly topics to promote involvement in raising cybersecurity awareness:

**Week 1:** If You Connect It, Protect It

**Week 2:** Securing Devices at Home and Work

**Week 3:** Securing Internet-Connected Devices

**Week 4:** The Future of Connected Devices

The information will also be shared on the [RWRD Emergency Response, Planning, and Security SharePoint](#) site.



# Five Facilities Recognized with Awards

by Jeannette Montañó

On August 13, 2020, NACWA recognized five RWRD WRFs with its Peak Performance Awards. These awards recognize facilities for excellence in regulatory permit compliance.

The Mt. Lemmon WRF has earned a Platinum Peak Performance Award for 12 years of 100% compliance, and Green Valley WRF earned Platinum 16 status for being compliant for more than five



consecutive years. In addition, the Tres Ríos, Agua Nueva, and Avra Valley WRFs earned a Gold Award for no permit violations for the entire calendar year.

This year NACWA will hold a virtual

awards ceremony on October 28, 2020, and will honor the Platinum Peak Performance honorees with a multi-media presentation featuring Pharrell's "Happy," a song that truly captures the emotion of their achievement.

Great job to all employees at our water reclamation facilities for your hard work and dedication to ensure regulatory compliance!  
#RWRDProud

## Pima County - United as a Community

by Jeannette Montañó

Pima County kicked off its 51st Employees Care About Pima County (ECAP) Campaign on September 1, 2020, and runs through November 30, 2020. Last year, Pima County employees raised over \$300,000, and the goal this year is to beat last year's campaign.

There are more than 235 community organizations involved in ECAP, and 100% of the pledges go directly to the agency of your choice. Pima County and United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona work with community organizations to help build resources and community connections for greater stability and needed positive change.

Pledges can be made online at the [United Way/Pima County ECAP site](#), or you can fill out a hardcopy pledge form and submit the form to your division solicitor. Even if you do not plan to participate monetarily, please return the pledge form indicating zero participation in the

"destination box." Thank you!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask any of the solicitors below:

Name	Division	Phone
Mona Orozco, Coordinator	Entire Department	724-6525
Aracely Camelot, Solicitor	CRAO/IWC	724-6200
Barbara Escobar, Solicitor	CRAO/IWC	724-6052
Jackie Belasco, Solicitor	Sub-Regional	724-6150
Laura Arnold, Solicitor	Director's Office	724-6513
Lisa Soto, Solicitor	TS&E	724-6323
Lorraine Simon, Solicitor	Treatment	724-6270
Patti Nelson, Solicitor	Field Engineering	724-8712
Terri Stahl, Solicitor	Conveyance	724-3425

### RWRAC MEETING UPDATE

The Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory Committee (RWRAC) held its regularly scheduled meeting virtually through MS Teams on Thursday, September 27, 2020.

RWRD Treatment Division Deputy Director **Jeff Prevatt, Ph.D.**, began the meeting with a presentation on the state of affairs of the Treatment Division. He discussed the division's operational structure, operations, process optimization, and current projects. He also addressed last month's inquiries regarding microplastics and Wastewater Based

by Jeannette Montañó and Caroline G. Vargas

Epidemiology related to COVID-19.

RWRD Conveyance Division Deputy Director **Jaime Rivera** followed with a Conveyance Division presentation. He discussed the division's structure, safety, CCTV Program, and the Gravity and Vector Programs. He also reviewed the Fiscal Year 2020 Capital Improvement Projects, Odor Control Program, and various software programs utilized in Conveyance.

**Mandy Armenta**, Administrative Support Services Manager for Pima County Finance and Risk Management Department, reported on the Fiscal Year 2020/21 Expense and Revenue

Summary for period two.

RWRD Director **Jackson Jenkins** closed the RWRAC meeting with the Director's Report. He informed the committee members that the [Fiscal Year 2019/20 Report - By the Numbers](#) was published and was included in their packet. He advised the members that the 2019 Effluent Report would be provided in next month's packet. He also provided an update on COVID-19 and its effect on RWRD to-date.

The RWRAC will reconvene on Thursday, October 22, 2020, at 8:00 a.m. in a virtual MS Teams meeting.



by Jeannette Montaña

Tucson Meet Yourself (TMY) is committed to honoring the beauty and dignity of the traditional arts and ethnic community that makes up Tucson. While the cancelation of Tucson's community events has been the norm due to COVID-19, the 47th Annual Tucson Meet Yourself Folklife Festival readjusted its 2020 event. It will include both virtual and socially distanced in-person activities throughout October.

People can experience the live online conversations, demonstrations, and performances with folk artists, musicians, dancers, and cooks on the TMY [website](#), its [Facebook page](#), or [YouTube channel](#). Eight TMY folk artists will feature their work for sale in a pilot online marketplace. There will also be video projections of traditional dancers and manual artists' performances on public walls around Tucson on Friday evenings in October.

TMY will also have over 15-food vendors offer food-to-go at three Tucson Heritage sites on Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., beginning October 10, 2020. While waiting for food, you can enjoy the unique cultural strength

and diversity of our community with musical performances on large LED screens.

The grand finale of TMY will feature an on-screen drive-in concert featuring Gabriel Ayala at 1055 W. Grant Road on Friday, October 30, 2020, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and from 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Space is limited to 120 cars per show.

TMY wants the community to enjoy themselves and follow the COVID-19 safety measures during this annual event, so we can continue to enjoy the culture and diversity of our community.

Source: Tucson Meet Yourself a folklife festival renamed, (2020). Retrieved on September 25, 2020, from <https://tucsonmeetyourself.org/>

## Turkey Herding at Mt. Lemmon WRF ahead of Thanksgiving

Photos provided by Art Norzagaray, WW Treatment Plant Manager



Everyone is encouraged to wear **PURPLE** for **Domestic Violence** on **October 22** and **PINK** on **October 23** for **Breast Cancer Awareness**.

**SAFETY SHARE**

**We are all in this together.**

- Stop the **spread**. **WEAR** a mask!
- Be **smart**. Stay **6 FEET** apart!
- Keep it **clean**. **WASH** your hands!

For more information, visit [www.pima.gov/covid19](http://www.pima.gov/covid19).

Do you have a Safety Share to share? Email [pipeline@pima.gov](mailto:pipeline@pima.gov)

## "AWARD" FROM PAGE 1

developed and creative solution towards solving the water needs and problems for Arizona's future, the Arizona Pure Water Brew Challenge project. The Arizona Pure Water Team's focus was to introduce and market a statewide campaign on potable water reuse, and the safety of advanced water purification technology available to purify recycled wastewater and produce safe, high-quality drinking water. With increasing demands placed on existing water supplies in the arid southwest, these four water sector agencies recognized our efforts in bringing this advancement to Arizona because of the monumental success of this collaborative project.

RWRD's 2016 Wastewater Facility Plan was recognized. The plan capitalizes the development of financial and capital plans to ensure that the necessary and reliable infrastructure is in place to meet

growing community demand. Over the last three years, the Capital Improvement Program has delivered many projects each year ensuring the capacity allocation for developers' projects through the implementation of capacity augmentation projects in the public conveyance system and the WRFs. It is because of this living document our long-term planning provides guidance to meet our capacity demands through 2050.

As a two-time recipient of the UOTF award, RWRD is proud to be an industry leader and recognized by these prominent national water sectors. Our advancements and processes serve as a model for utilities of all sizes to achieve efficient operations, enhanced productivity, and avenues to establish processes for sustainable and livable communities. Congratulations RWRD on this prestigious award! #RWRDProud

## "DIRECTOR" FROM PAGE 2

not had a chance to review the striking, illustrative, and professional report, please take the time to see the great work each member of this department has accomplished as we continue to protect the public health of the community and the environment. You can find the report on the intranet and the internet under "Reports."

As an organization, we continue to look at best practices and improvements, beginning this month we are curtailing the dissemination of the monthly cellular phone certifications to all employees assigned a department issued cellular phone. I would however, like to preface that each employee issued a department cellular device continue to comply with Administrative Procedure 27-1 and the Cellular Device Employee Usage Agreement Form that is issued yearly. I ask that all employees

utilize the phone for official use only and administration will randomly conduct audits to ensure employees' compliance.

Lastly, I must continue to remind folks that we are still in the middle of a global pandemic. Please follow the guidelines of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the PCHD. Wear your masks, social distance, do not gather in crowds of more than 10 people, wash your hands, and if you are sick – please stay home. Pima County, together with its partners, has made great strides to open testing sites across town. So if you, a family member, or a friend need to be tested, please refer to the PCHD's [website](#) to find testing sites throughout the community. I would like to thank every member of this department for hanging tough through these difficult times. It has not been easy, but together we can continue to make a big difference! Thank you all and enjoy October!

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Patsy Padilla

### NEW HIRES – Welcome!

**Sabrina Darius**

*WW Laboratory Technician*

Technical Services & Engineering Division

**Joseph Harrington**

*WW Laboratory Chemist*

Technical Services & Engineering Division

**Lizbeth Murillo**

*WW Laboratory Technician*

Technical Services & Engineering Division

### PROMOTIONS – Congratulations!

**Randy Ortega**

*WW Heavy Duty Maintenance Mechanic*

Treatment Division

**Jennifer Pearce-Walker**

*WW Laboratory Chemist*

Technical Services & Engineering Division

**Terry Powelson**

*Administrative Services Manager*

Treatment Division

**Mickey Rodriguez**

*WW Heavy Duty Maintenance Mechanic*

Treatment Division

### RETIREMENTS – Good-bye!

**Howard (Chip) Fair**

*WW Heavy Duty Maintenance Mechanic*

Treatment Division

**Donald Kerr**

*Industrial Electrician*

Treatment Division

**Jose Madero**

*WW Heavy Duty Maintenance Mechanic*

Treatment Division

