

# Keeping Up with Kerrville

News and Views from the City of Kerrville

By Mark McDaniel

## LONG-RANGE WATER PLAN ENSURES STABILITY FOR KERRVILLE

Ever since Col. Bernie Bruns proposed drilling the first Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) well in Texas in the early 1980s (and just the second ASR well drilled in the United States), Kerrville has been at the forefront of developing new water strategies. Bruns, a Tivy High School and Texas A&M graduate and longtime Air Force veteran, was the first general manager of the Upper Guadalupe River Authority, and his forward-thinking ideas helped shape Kerrville's long-range water supply planning for many years.

While Kerrville has always relied on the Guadalupe River as its main raw water supply source (and will obviously continue to do so in the future), it is vitally important that we plan for more water supply options as the city continues to grow and we face inevitable drought conditions. That is why the use of ASR wells and the development of other innovative water supply options is so important when it comes to water planning.

Kerrville completed that initial ASR well in 1990, has since drilled one more, and is considering additional ASR wells in the future. Combined, our two existing ASR wells have more than a billion gallons of water stored underground, which means it is not subject to evaporation like a surface water storage lake.

Although the city has utilized treated reuse water for irrigation purposes for more than 20 years, 2018 saw a major improvement in our ability to store this raw water supply resource for irrigation use during peak summer demands and drought conditions with the opening of the Water Reuse Storage Facility in east Kerrville. The 95-million gallon reservoir supplies irrigation water to a number of local heavy-use irrigation customers, thereby reducing strain on the city's drinking water supply capacity during peak usage times in hot summer months. Reclaimed water volumes eliminate the need to use approximately 260 million gallons of community drinking water per year for irrigation purposes, which equates to what almost 3,800 households utilize annually.

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In addition, the city has long been a strong advocate for water conservation management. Through our utilities office, the city offers multiple water conservation items, including soil moisture meters, sprinkler/rain gauges, and toilet leak detector tablets. The soil moisture meters assist in determining when to water your grass and plants and help assure that you are not over-watering. The sprinkler/rain gauges are handy tools that can be used to determine how much it has recently rained or how much water your sprinklers are really putting on your lawn, and the toilet leak detector tablets can tell if your toilet is leaking, indicating that repairs are needed. These items are all available free to all city water customers and can be picked up at City Hall during normal business hours.

Finally, an excellent tool available to the city to manage water conservation are our six stages of water restrictions, which can greatly influence the daily output of water in Kerrville. These various stages, which can be found on the City of Kerrville website, are particularly useful during the hot summer months and in drought situations.

Kerrville continues its legacy of proactive water supply management with the City Council recently adopting a Long Range Water Supply Plan with a 100-year outlook that recommends five long-term water supply strategies:

- Promote additional conservation to reduce demand.
- Exploration and development of a local well in the Ellenburger Aquifer.
- Development of a remote Ellenburger Aquifer well field.
- Amendments to water rights currently owned by the City of Kerrville.
- Acquisition of new water rights to improve the reliability of surface water supplies.

By pursuing these recommended strategies, the city remains ahead of the curve in developing reliable long-term water supply sources decades into our future.