

Compiled by WWD Editorial Director Neda Simeonova



Water & Energy for Texas

Study looks into turning Gulf water into drinking water

A \$2-million effort is studying the feasibility of building a natural gas-fired power plant next to a seawater desalination facility along the Texas Gulf Coast. WWD Editorial Director Neda Simeonova spoke with Michael Lemonds, director of commercial leasing/special projects for Texas General Land Office (TGLO), about the initiative.

Neda Simeonova: What prompted the TGLO and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) to partner for this research?

Michael Lemonds: The impetus for this partnership was Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson's search for new ways to earn money for the state's \$26-billion Permanent School Fund, which helps pay for the state's share of public education and helps keep taxpayers' property taxes low.

TGLO owns land, much of which produces oil and gas. TGLO also has land that has great potential for development, but this potential is limited by a scarcity of available freshwater. TGLO also is one of Texas' largest retail electricity providers for schools, cities and other public partners. This electricity is generated from natural gas produced on Permanent School Fund lands.

GBRA is steward of the water resources in the Guadalupe-Blanco river basins. By creating a new source of freshwater in this area, it helps to alleviate the demand for existing freshwater resources upstream.

This alignment of interests creates a potentially profitable partnership for both the Permanent School Fund, which would see the value of its surface holdings increase with the additional freshwater supply, as well as potential electricity sales, and GBRA.

Additionally, state lawmakers have given the School Land Board, which is chaired by the TGLO commissioner, the authority to invest in land on behalf of the Permanent School Fund.

Simeonova: How is the partnership funding the research effort?

Lemonds: TGLO may invest up to \$300,000 toward the study. GBRA is working with other water utilities, municipalities and industries near the coast to locate additional secondary

partners for the study.

Simeonova: What is the benefit of building a natural gas-fired power plant next to a seawater desalination facility?

Lemonds: Desalination is an energy-intensive process. If you co-locate a dedicated energy source, you can cut your costs and increase your reliability. Other synergies are made possible as well, such as combining water intake and discharge infrastructure, which will avoid doubling the permitting and environmental challenges for facilities of this nature.

Simeonova: How will this project help alleviate water challenges caused by persistent drought and tightening surface water rights for Texas?

Lemonds: This project could potentially bypass the two biggest hurdles for the creation of most new, freshwater resources in Texas: It could create a new source of water that doesn't infringe on private property rights like groundwater, and doesn't face the same environmental and prior appropriation challenges of surface water rights. Seawater desalination is a constant source and not subject to drought conditions, so the potential for a facility in Texas is tremendous and timely.

The ultimate goal of this study is to understand the physical, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities for seawater desalination in Texas. TGLO and GBRA hope to create a roadmap on how to physically, economically and environmentally approach the development and operation of a seawater desalination facility in Texas.

Simeonova: What is the current stage of the initiative?

Lemonds: MHW Global has been selected as the project consultant and has started the initial scoping and data collection. **WWD**

Michael Lemonds is director of commercial leasing/special projects for Texas General Land Office. Lemonds can be reached at 512.463.3881.

Neda Simeonova is editorial director of Water & Wastes Digest. Simeonova can be reached at nsimeonova@sgcmail.com.

For more information, write in 1109 on this issue's reader service form on page 41.

News Briefs compiled by WWD Associate Editor Amy McIntosh

UNSGAB Chair to Deliver Keynote Speech at International Water Week



Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan, the chair of the UN Secretary-General's

Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, will deliver the opening keynote speech at the opening of International Water Week in Amsterdam, Nov. 4 to 8, 2013.

EPA, Coast Guard Reach Agreement With Carnival



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Coast Guard have

reached an agreement with Carnival Corp. to develop emission control technology for use in waters surrounding U.S. coasts. Carnival will develop and deploy a new exhaust gas cleaning system on up to 32 ships over the next three years to be used in Emission Control Areas.

Organizations Launch Online Livability Portal



Several groups, including the American Public

Works Assn. and the National Assn. of Regional Councils, launched an online livability portal at www.narc.org/livability, which offers resources for local governments and regional planning organizations. The project yielded workshops, case studies and a guidebook that identifies funding and financing options and provides communications templates.

Connecticut Water to Reduce Rates



The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority approved Connecticut Water Co.'s request that

will result in lower customer rates starting April 1, 2014. The company will return to customers the benefits of a recent tax law clarification by the IRS, which is expected to result in a federal tax refund for the company of approximately \$10 million for tax years 2010 to 2012.

Siemens Celebrates Chlorine Disinfection



Siemens Water Technologies marked the 100-year anniversary of the first chlorine

gas metering unit for water disinfection. The first commercially produced gas chlorinator was installed in a public drinking water system in 1913 by Wallace & Tiernan, now a Siemens company.

IWA Announces Project Innovation Award Winners

The International Water Assn. announced the winners of the 2013 IWA Project Innovation Awards—Development, to be presented at the Global Awards Ceremony and Reception Oct. 15 in Nairobi, Kenya. The awards cover water supply, sanitation and hygiene in low- and middle-income countries, in urban and peri-urban areas.

Parsons Brinckerhoff to Design CSO Tunnel



Parsons Brinckerhoff will design a new combined sewer over-

flow tunnel in downtown Indianapolis. The advanced facility plan report for the Lower Pogues Run Tunnel Project is expected to be completed by the end of 2013. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2021.

Pittsburgh & Veolia Extend Partnership



The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority board of directors

unanimously voted to extend a partnership with Veolia Water to continue providing interim executive management services through December 2014.

Students Celebrate Protect Your Groundwater Day



Water Replenishment District of Southern California officials

and students from Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School in Paramount, Calif., gathered to celebrate National Protect Your Groundwater Day Sept. 10. More than 160 fifth grade students took the Act, Consider, and Take Action Pledge to help protect and conserve local groundwater supplies.

Brown and Caldwell Awards Scholarships



Brown and Caldwell presented college scholarships to seven

full-time students pursuing careers in the environmental engineering industry under three award programs: the Garr M. Jones Scholarship in Hydraulics; the Dr. W. Wesley Eckenfelder Jr. Scholarship; and the Minority Scholarship Program.

Industry News

- Rex Plaizier was appointed president and CEO of WesTech Eng.
- Gretchen W. McClain stepped down as president and CEO of Xylem Inc.
- Suellen Torregrosa was named president, Americas, of Watts Water Technologies Inc.

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