Being an active volunteer in the Florida Section is often times all about finding unique and creative ways to serve FSAWWA members at the local level. That is what makes the Florida Section such a diverse and energetic organization. What people find interesting or entertaining in one area of the state may not work well in another area.

This month we will share some of the unique ways in which several regions reach out to members and the general public to encourage participation and support of FSAWWA charities, as well as have a good time.

Region X

Model Water Tower Competition

This national competition was the brainchild of Region X member Tod Phinney and originally was developed by the Region X Youth Education Committee. Region X continues to lead the way with its innovative “Water Carnival” portion of the event to further educate students about the water industry (see pages 26-29 for the results of this year’s regional competitions around the state).

Chaired by Seton Katz and a dedicated organizing committee, Region X’s event was held on October 30 and enjoyed record attendance and participation. The Model Water Tower Competition introduces students to water issues and water professionals from their community by challenging them to design and construct miniature water storage towers.

Coincident with the event was a ‘Water Carnival’ in which water professionals staffed interactive displays to engage students, their parents, and teachers. Carnival displays included ‘aquifer in a cup,’ ‘water filter challenge,’ ‘cut-away valve,’ ‘water carry challenge,’ and ‘water treatment laboratory.’ These displays were staffed by water professionals actually engaged in these real-world activities, such as the city of North Port’s utility director, Cindi Mick, and Manatee County’s water plant superintendent, Bruce MacLeod. Students were entered into a raffle if they participated in all the activities.

The model water tower design remained the main event, however, and a record of more than 150 students from 12 schools entered 63 models to compete for $1,200 in prize money.

Water For People Kayak & BBQ Event

That same month, Region X professionals focused their efforts in another unique networking event. A love for the local water resources and fundraising efforts for sustainable global sanitation were combined into one well-attended fun family occasion. On October 2, more than 50 kayakers joined Region X for its second annual Kayak and BBQ Water For People Fundraiser.

Attendees were led on a guided kayak tour of Phillippi Creek, followed by a barbecue lunch at the Phillippi Estate grounds. The event raised over $1,500 for Water For People.

Region IV

What About Blue?

The local Water For People team had its third annual fundraiser this past June 18 in association with the nonprofit organization What About Blue? The fundraiser’s goals were to collect funds for water and wastewater projects in Africa and to create awareness in our community of the global water crisis.

The night of the fundraiser was a complete success. The Water For People team doubled its numbers in attendance and money collected, compared to last year’s numbers, and created awareness by providing information on the current global water crisis and Water For People’s efforts to diminish this problem in a sustainable manner.

A night of food, drinks, and entertainment will be the start of a sustainable and better quality of life for many people in Africa. Region IV Chair Tory Champlin stated, “In my three years as chair, I have learned that the organization’s presence is proportional to its mission; the stronger and bigger it gets, the importance to make an impact increases. Our
main goal is to educate our community by impacting one person at a time.’

Membership Night at the Ballpark
Region IV members who weren’t present for the third annual Night at the Ballpark missed out on a very exciting, family-friendly event. This was the third Region IV general membership meeting to be held at Bright House Network Field, as members networked and watched the Clearwater Threshers play baseball. As in past years, two adjoining suites were reserved, which allowed participants to watch the Threshers play outside while watching the Bucs play inside on TV—it doesn’t get much better than that!

Ninety people attended the 2010 event, all enjoying great food, beverages, friends, family, and a fantastic fireworks display at the end of the game, which lasted more than 30 minutes. When you consider that nearly 80 percent of those attending also came out the previous year, it really says something about how everyone enjoys this event. If you didn’t go this time, make sure to be there next year!

Region III
Wine For Us
Professionals, business owners, community leaders and elected officials came together to make this year’s Wine For Us a resounding success. In all, over 225 people came together at Wine for Us 2010 to support water, sanitation, and health in developing countries through the work of Water For People.

In addition to the great food, fine wines, and musical accompaniment, the event also featured a live auction! Participants bid on everything from jewelry to vacation packages to exotic places (wine tours in Napa Valley, fashion houses in Paris, and cooking classes in Tuscany). We are glad to report that Wine For Us raised over $24,000, all of which will go toward building water/sanitation infrastructure in developing countries.

This year’s event highlighted the role of local utilities in providing reliable water and sanitation every day to the Central Florida community. Volunteers were recognized for their participation in Water For People’s school outreach program, in which they visit local schools and community organizations to share the importance of water/sanitation to our lives and the impact of water/sanitation on the lives of women and children around the world.

The success of events such as these around the state helps the Florida Section meet some of our long-term strategic goals through three distinct initiatives:
1. The visibility of the water/wastewater industry outside our traditional base and its impact both locally and globally.
2. The receptiveness of the water industry message, which opens several doors for outreach, public education, and fundraising.
3. The interest demonstrated by elected officials during and after the events, which will be important as we organize around a public and/or policy dialogue on public utilities and infrastructure.

Thanks go out to Kelly Blake of Region X, Tory Champlin of Region IV, and Rajah Augustinraj of Region III for their input on these events. Be prepared for updates from other regions around the state in future issues of the Journal.

Did You Know...
- One gallon of tap water costs 1/10th of 1 cent?
- One gallon of bottled water = $1.43?
- One gallon of soda = $2.80?
- One gallon of gas = $3.10?
- One gallon of olive oil = $150?
- One gallon of French perfume = $60,160?

Utilities Invited to Host Local “Drop Savers” Contests
The Florida Section of the American Water Works Association will again sponsor the statewide “Drop Savers” Water Conservation Poster Contest during National Drinking Water Week, scheduled for May 2-8, 2011. Since the deadline is March 15, 2011, for local winners to be submitted for judging at the state level, Florida utilities are encouraged to begin preparations for showcasing the creativity of their local school children.

The contest gives children from kindergarten through high school the opportunity to design a poster about water conservation. Early in the year, local winners are chosen in five different age groups, with winning entries advancing for statewide judging. Utilities publicize the local contests, distribute contest materials to local schools, coordinate the judging, recruit prize sponsors, and arrange local awards ceremonies.

Although the state winners will be announced in mid-April prior to Drinking Water Week, utilities should start planning their local celebration now. Interested utilities may download the complete package of “Drop Savers 2011” start-up materials from the “Drop Savers” Florida Section website at www.fsawwa.org. If you have questions or any problem downloading the materials, please contact state coordinator Melissa Velez at (954) 837-0030 or by email at MVelez@carollo.com.

Looking forward to seeing your utility represented this year!