



North Central Texas Chapter  
**TEXAS**  
Section • American Water Works Association

Volume 15, Issue 2

August/September 2026



## NCT TAWWA August Meeting

Thursday, August 20th

Networking: 11:15 am

Lunch and Program: 12:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Texas Star Conference Center

1400 Texas Star Pkwy

Euless, Texas 76040

### Why "Settle" for Conventional Sedimentation? Piloting High-Rate Clarification at Dallas Water Utilities' Elm Fork WTP

Speakers:

Matthew Johnson– Dallas Water Utilities

Rosalyn Miller – Arcadis

Anna Stehouwer, PE – Arcadis



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello NCT TAWWA Members!

Stay hydrated these hot days as we run around with school starting and no break from our high temperatures. Thankful for all our water professionals who keep our water flowing to keep our power on and our taps running.

We have an exciting (and full) set of events coming this fall, so take out those calendars and pencil everything in! Right off the heels of this fun event is our August Chapter Meeting on August 20 at the Texas Star Conference Center to hear from Matthew Johnson with Dallas Water Utilities, and Rosalyn Miller and Anna Stehouwer from Arcadis on piloting a high-rate clarifier! Please help our arrangements committee by sharing with a buddy and signing up early.

Taking us into a packed October, be on the lookout for the details on our annual Casino Night fundraiser, one of my personal favorite events, where we help fund our amazing teams for Top Ops, Meter Challenge, and Hydrant Hysteria. Then our NCT chapter is hosting the first of the state's initiative for Think Tank 2050 events – we're doing "Economics" and it will be a smaller group of water industry and non-industry professionals coming together for a day of planning for our future. Look out for a webinar on all the findings and take-aways from this amazing day. And of course, we have our annual Drinking Water Seminar at the Petroleum Club in Fort Worth on October 23 for a full day of insightful presentations and networking.

Meanwhile, best of luck as we start the busy fall season – and before you know it we’ll need that clean water again to make those pumpkin spice lattes! Thank you for your continued commitment to our industry and our work as the North Central Texas TAWWA Chapter!

Your North Central Texas Chapter President,



Andrea Tom  
President, North Central Texas Chapter  
Texas American Water Works Association (TAWWA)

WE ARE THE BEST!



# TEXAS SECTION

American Water Works Association

We're

# #1!

## TEXAS SECTION

IS NOW THE

# LARGEST SECTION

OF THE AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

Thank you to every member, volunteer, leader,  
Young Professional, utility partner, consultant, sponsor,  
and water professional across Texas.

Together, you've helped make the Texas Section  
the largest in the American Water Works Association!

THIS MILESTONE BELONGS TO EVERY TEXAS SECTION MEMBER!



### STRONGER TOGETHER

A united community of water professionals committed to excellence.



### ADVANCING INNOVATION

Sharing knowledge and solutions to meet tomorrow's challenges.



### PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

Ensuring safe, reliable, and sustainable water for our communities.



### BUILDING A BETTER TEXAS

Leading the way in service, advocacy, and education.



This milestone reflects the dedication, leadership, and collaboration of water professionals across Texas who work every day to advance our industry and serve our communities.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS INCREDIBLE JOURNEY!

 CONNECTING PROFESSIONALS.

 ADVANCING WATER.

 SERVING COMMUNITIES.

## PREVIOUS MEETING RECAP

### ***“A Framework for Condition Assessment and Repair Planning of PCCP Force Mains” Presentation***

Amin Tehrani of NTMWD and Robin Kuma of SGH presented a practical framework for evaluating prestressed concrete cylinder pipe (PCCP) force mains and using condition information to guide repair planning. The presentation focused on assessing existing pipeline conditions, prioritizing areas of concern based on risk, and developing repair strategies to support reliable system operation.

The discussion highlighted how a structured approach to condition assessment and risk prioritization can help utilities make informed decisions about where repairs are most needed and how to plan improvements over time. By connecting condition assessment with repair planning, utilities can better address immediate reliability concerns while supporting long-term asset management goals.

Thank you to Amin and Robin for sharing their experience and practical approaches with our North Central Texas water community!



**Amin Tehrani, PhD, PE** is an award-winning Wastewater Conveyance Professional Engineer at the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), specializing in pipeline rehabilitation, trenchless technology, pipe structural analysis, and condition assessment. He has led and supported numerous rehabilitation projects for municipalities, DOTs, and water authorities, and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Texas and a NASSCO-certified pipe inspector. Dr. Tehrani has authored more than 30 technical publications, received multiple national and international awards for his work in Trenchless Technology, and serves on several AWWA committees. He is also a lecturer, technical reviewer, and active contributor to the underground infrastructure industry.



**Robin Kumar, PE** is a consulting engineer with SGH's EMI group, specializing in pipeline repair design, condition assessments, field engineering support, and quality assurance during pipeline repairs, particularly with CFRP. He earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from IIT Roorkee and his master's degree in Structural and Earthquake Engineering from the University at Buffalo. Since joining SGH in 2018, he has supported a variety of water and industrial infrastructure projects involving inspections, condition assessment, failure risk analysis, and rehabilitation design.

## CALL FOR SEMINAR SPONSORS

### **NCT TAWWA Drinking Water Seminar needs sponsors!**

- i) **Platinum - \$800 (1 attendee + table)**
- ii) **Gold - \$500 (1 attendee)**
- iii) **Breakfast - \$1,500 – logo and emcee mention (1 attendee)**
- iv) **Morning Break - \$1,000 – logo and emcee mention (1 attendee)**
- v) **Afternoon Break - \$1,000 – logo and emcee mention (1 attendee)**

Be on the lookout for sign-ups soon – there's a limited number of sponsorships available!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Save The Date  
**Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

# Filter Surveillance Workshop

### Classroom & Hands-on Training

Filtration Process  
Filter Optimization Lab  
Lab Results and Q&A

### NTMWD Wylie Water Treatment Plant

Water Operations Building  
851 N Forrest Ross Rd  
Wylie, TX 75098

**\$150 | Limited to 30 Attendees**

Daniel Nix - TAWWA Director  
Brandy Martinez - Brown and Caldwell, AWWA Biological Treatment Committee Chair  
Damon Roth - Brown and Caldwell, AWWA Coagulation and Filtration Committee  
Adam Jones - Brown and Caldwell, AWWA Coagulation and Filtration Committee  
Tyler Hudson - Hazen, AWWA Coagulation and Filtration Committee

# SAVE THE DATE

25th Annual  
**North Central Texas Chapter of Texas AWWA  
DRINKING WATER SEMINAR**

**OCTOBER 23, 2026**

The Petroleum Club of Fort Worth



Save the Date!  North Central Texas Chapter  
**Texas AWWA**  
American Water Works Association

# WOMEN OF WATER 2026

Tues., Nov. 10 from 5:30-7 p.m. | Texas Star Golf Course, Euless



## YP CORNER

**Kayla Nguyen (Freese and Nichols)**

### Past Events Recap

**July Event: YP Texas Rangers Game**



The NCT AWWA Young Professionals enjoyed a fun summer evening cheering on the Texas Rangers at Globe Life Field as they took on the Chicago White Sox. YPs and YPs at heart gathered for a great opportunity to connect outside of the usual work setting, enjoy the game, and spend time with others in the North Central Texas water community.

Before the game, attendees also had the chance to meet up at Texas Live for a casual pregame happy hour. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the evening a success!

**August Event: Two Stepping at Cowboys Red River Dancehall & Saloon**



In August, the YPs traded the ballpark for the dance floor at Cowboys Red River Dancehall & Saloon to come together for an evening of country music, Texas two-step dancing, light bites, and great company.

The event gave attendees a fun and casual way to try something new, catch up with familiar faces, and meet other young professionals across the North Central Texas water community. Thank you to everyone who came out and helped make it such a memorable night!

**Upcoming Events**

The NCT AWWA YP Committee has more events planned for the year, including a philanthropy event and plant tour this fall, kickball in November, and the annual Ugly Sweater Party in December. Be on the lookout for upcoming flyers and registration details.

**Stay Connected with NCT AWWA YPs**

Want to stay updated on what is next? Join the YP email list by reaching out to Kayla Nguyen at [kayla.nguyen@freese.com](mailto:kayla.nguyen@freese.com). Interested in getting more involved with the YP Committee? New committee members are always welcome, and this is a great time to join in on planning future events.

**TECHNICALLY SPEAKING**

**Start Small: Addressing AI Adoption Barriers Through Pilots**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is gaining widespread adoption throughout multiple sectors, while adoption in the water industry remains uneven. Some utilities are actively using AI tools, but many are still working through valid concerns around security, governance, data management, and reliability. Organizations without designated AI governance tend to fall into one of two categories: ad hoc individual use, or complete prohibition of AI. Ad hoc use puts the burden of responsibility solely on individuals, who may not have the expertise to use tools safely. On the other hand, prohibition seems like a simple policy, but it’s a short-term solution for a tool that is here to stay. (Imagine ignoring Excel in the 90’s because of trust issues with software). AI technology has demonstrated clear value for improving efficiency and decision-making, making its use in most organizations inevitable. Therefore, this article doesn’t consider the question “should we use AI?” but instead “how do we test AI tools without introducing unnecessary risk?” This article summarizes common barriers to AI adoption and how utilities can overcome those barriers through practical, low-risk strategies.

**Bypass Uncertainty with a Pilot**

The most common AI adoption barrier we observe is uncertainty. Utilities have questions like: *Which AI provider should we use? What policies do we need? How do we make sure it’s safe? Is our data sufficient?* When you haven’t yet determined which AI applications are valuable, the list of unknowns feels insurmountable. Rather than waiting until these questions have been resolved, utilities can start with a focused AI pilot project that addresses a well-defined problem; this approach allows testing of AI tools in a low-risk environment to identify future governance, data, and technology needs.

To get started, select a pilot question that addresses an immediate need, is well-suited for AI solutions, and produces readily reviewable outputs. For example, AI generally performs well when distilling large quantities of information and generating summaries; conversely, predicting future behavior is more challenging. Consider whether there’s a task that requires substantial staff time to manually pull information from existing reports or datasets. Data summary tasks are also usually easy for experienced staff to check; no one knows your plant operating data better than your most senior operator.

Brown and Caldwell recently worked with York Sewer District (YSD), a small wastewater utility in Maine, to pilot an AI tool. They had limited staff capacity to manually access historical data or regularly review reports, but they knew these sources could provide valuable insights. Through a series of workshops and meetings, we identified critical questions YSD wanted to be able to answer with the available data. Then the YSD pilot focused on answering those questions by

making data and information easily accessible through AI. The resulting tool is an analytics dashboard with a natural language chatbot grounded in their data that allows YSD users to ask questions like:

1. What is the current daily permit threshold for TSS and how many times over the last 10 years was it exceeded?
2. What facilities require upgrades to meet the resilience recommendations in the Climate Adaptation Plan?
3. What does the Sewer Master Plan say about the capacity needs and constraints in our collection system?
4. Show me the most recent year of flow trends at the Long Beach pump station.

The objective of an AI pilot is not to build the perfect tool or establish a complete AI system. A successful pilot helps answer practical questions: *What problems are worth solving? What data do we need? What level of human review is appropriate? Which platforms and tools fit our organization?* Pilot lessons provide a foundation for future AI adoption decisions.

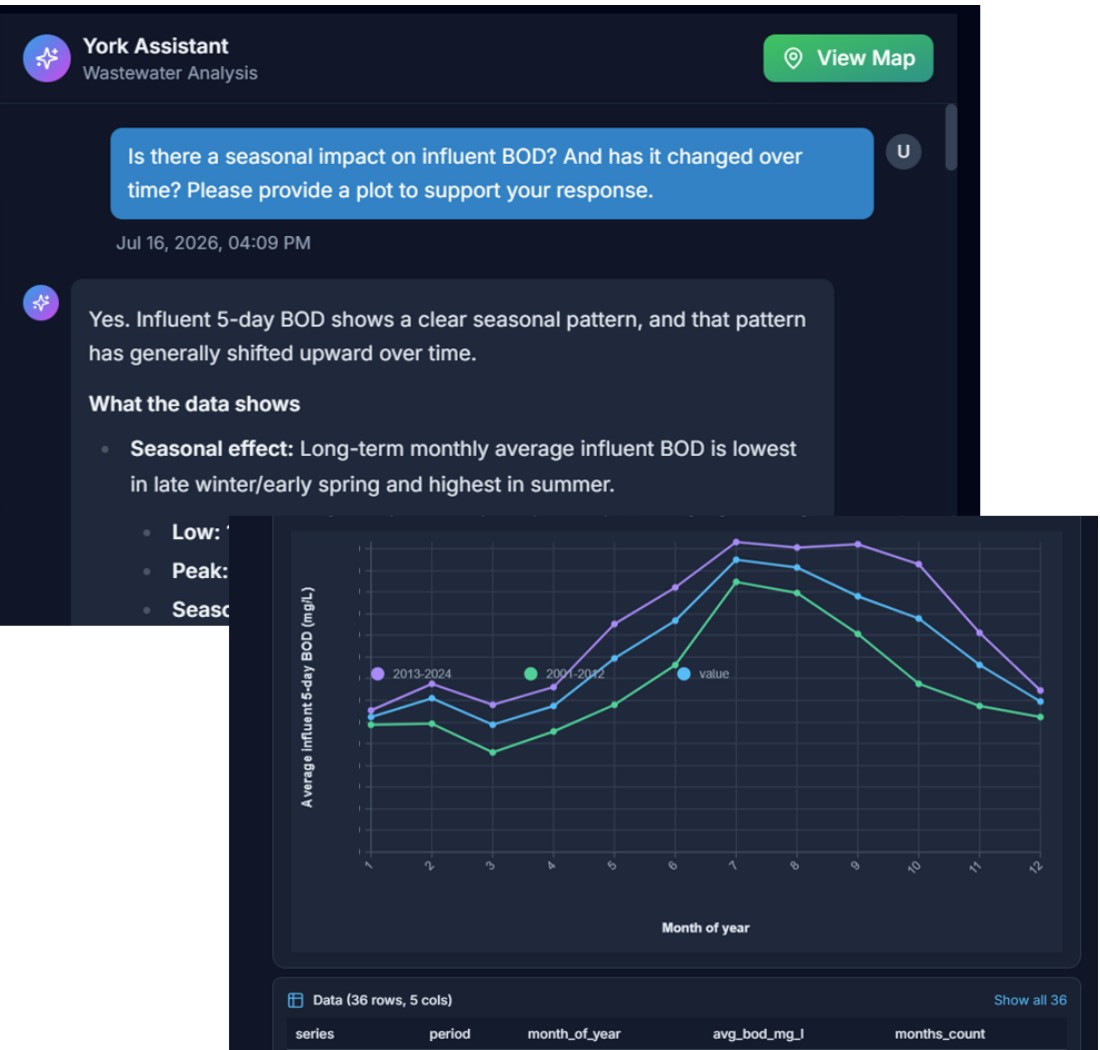


Figure 1. Screenshots of YSD AI Chatbot

Establish Governance to Minimize Risk

Establishing good AI governance is critical to address issues with cybersecurity, data privacy, and acceptable use. However, organizations don’t need a comprehensive AI policy to begin testing AI, you can start with simple requirements that grow with your AI tools. For a pilot, you usually need to establish only a few rules: what data sources can be used, which AI platforms are approved, and what level of human review and responsibility is expected.

For a practical first step, limit pilots to non-sensitive information and run tools on computers or virtual machines completely disconnected from critical controls. For example, you may consider which data can be entered into AI by asking, “would it be okay if this was published in a news article?” Keeping your pilot separate from your other data and critical systems allows utilities to evaluate benefits while minimizing security risks.

The YSD pilot included data that had already been validated and used for regulatory reporting, as well as reports that had also been released to the public. The data were processed and stored in a standalone cloud environment along with the analytics dashboard that the AI could access without risk of interfering with existing YSD data storage or control system.

As utilities gain experience through AI pilots, governance can evolve to address more considerations, and AI systems can be more thoroughly vetted to make sure they are safe and reliable. Begin with the minimal governance required to get your first pilot safely off the ground, then expand over time as new risks and requirements emerge through subsequent pilots. Organizations must be flexible to keep up with technology advances; comprehensive AI governance developed a few years ago is already out of date with current tools.

Make Data Accessible

Most utilities have large quantities of data spread across various systems where access is often challenging and manual. Although a complete and automated data management system is the ideal endpoint, utilities do not need a fully integrated data warehouse to begin using AI. Pilots can start with a limited set of manually exported and processed data or documents.

A good first dataset is operator logs or monthly operating reports (MORs). These sources are often data rich and standardized over several files, but laborious to access multiple months of

data. If you get this data into a structured format (code is a valuable tool here), it will be not only accessible with AI, but for human review of data quality.

The YSD pilot data consisted of MORs that already included lab data and weather data, as well as a corpus of textual data, such as Master Plans and Board of Trustees Reports. Python code organized this information into a structured format, which was then accessible to the AI tool.

Utilities can use AI pilots to inform data management next steps. For example, it can help utilities assess which information sources are most valuable, which data requires regular updates, and whether data gaps or data quality issues exist.

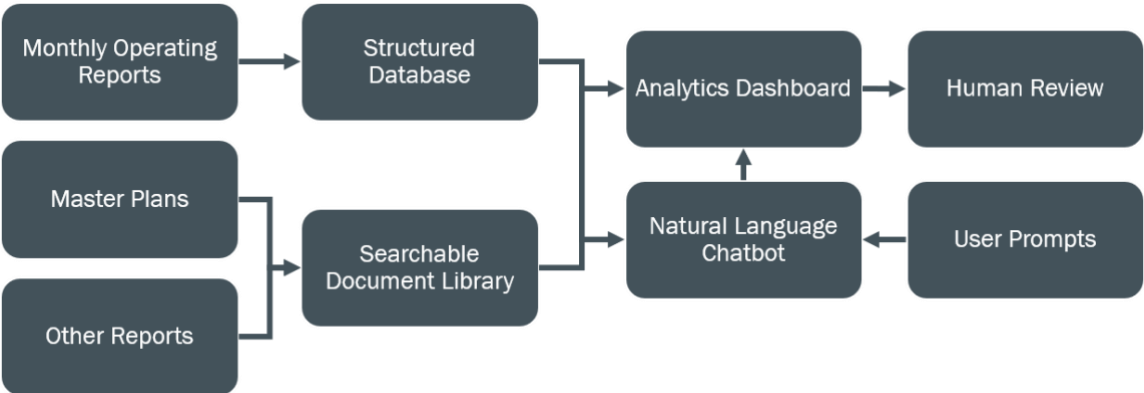


Figure 2. YSD AI Pilot Architecture

Verify Outputs with Guardrails

Once your AI pilot is up and running, you must verify that the outputs are trustworthy. You may have heard that AI will confidently state something that is completely unsupported by data or even invent plausible-sounding citations. This phenomenon, often called a hallucination, can be mitigated with additional guardrails, such as limiting AI systems to approved information sources, requiring references, and making the reasoning process observable for human reviews. Typical user questions with known expert responses can also be used to benchmark quality of AI responses for a range of use cases.

If you’ve ever told a chatbot “don’t invent an answer”, you are engineering the prompt to control AI reasoning and make the output meet your requirements. A good starting point for establishing guardrails is slightly more advanced, where the additional prompt engineering is handled by the backend of the AI tool, which can not only provide instructions, but additional context that is relevant for the prompt and the desired response.

The primary guardrails in the YSD pilot constrain AI sources and prioritize observability of analysis. The AI is instructed to only reference existing documents and data, and to link directly to documentation in its responses. For observability, when the user asks the AI to generate a plot, it is required to directly query the database, display the code used to create the plot, and show the queried data in a table. This approach allows human reviewers to quickly verify AI outputs.

Techniques for guardrails are rapidly evolving in response to ever-changing AI model behaviors. For example, one promising approach is using a separate AI system to independently audit responses from the primary AI tool. However, no technology can completely eliminate the need for verification. AI providers continue to improve model performance, making outputs increasingly reliable. The result is a double-edged sword; incorrect responses will be less frequent but harder to identify when they happen. Therefore, it is important to continually evaluate verification processes and expectations of human users and reviewers.

Start Piloting Now

While safe and responsible AI use is critical, utilities don’t need a comprehensive plan to start using AI tools. As the YSD example demonstrates, an AI pilot can produce a meaningful result by starting with a single problem, a limited dataset, and clear guardrails. Focused pilots can then be leveraged to help utilities determine where AI provides actual value, determine what governance is needed, identify data needs, and evaluate AI reliability.

As AI becomes more widespread, concerns beyond those listed above are surfacing. Questions include: *How can we train new people when AI automates entry-level tasks? Is over-reliance on AI hindering our critical thinking?* These questions deserve consideration, but don’t negate the real potential of modern AI technology. The challenge for all of us will be to focus on responsible adoption as we keep up with advances; leveraging AI as a tool, but not as a substitute for the professional judgement that remains essential for operating safe public water systems.



**Sierra Johnson, P.E.** is an environmental engineer with knowledge in drinking water treatment process selection and optimization. Sierra specializes in data analysis and modeling using historical and bench/pilot-scale data to support process decisions. (*SJohnson2@BrwnCald.com*)



**Dillon McCormick** is a data scientist at Brown and Caldwell with experience in building data-driven dashboards and tools. He specializes in GenAI powered applications that support water and wastewater utilities in operations and decision making. (*DMcCormick@BrwnCald.com*)

## Upcoming AWWA Webinars

- [Connecting Water Conservation and Resource Management for Stronger Utilities](#)  
August 19, 2026, 12:00 PM
- [Culture, Community, and Compliance in a Changing Landscape](#)  
August 26, 2026, 12:00 PM
- **[FREE]** [Advancing PFAS Removal From Pilot to Plant](#)  
September 3, 2026, 12:00 PM
- [Water 2050: Shared Water Stewardship in the Digital Age](#)  
September 9, 2026, 12:00 PM
- [MDBP Rule Revisions: NDWAC Recommendations, State Insights, and Research Highlights](#)  
September 16, 2026, 12:00 PM
- [Integrating Asset Management into Master Planning](#)  
September 23, 2026, 12:00 PM
- [PFAS: Virtual Roundtable](#)  
September 30, 2026, 12:00 PM

## North Central Texas TAWWA Officers

| Chapter Position                     | Name               | Organization       |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| President                            | Andrea Tom         | CDM Smith          |
| Vice President                       | Ikram J. Sayed     | Garver             |
| Secretary                            | Cate Ball          | Plummer            |
| Treasurer                            | Elaine Masters     | TRA                |
| Chapter Deputy Treasurer             | Guadalupe Bailey   | City of Dallas     |
| Chapter Arrangements Chair           | Amir Tabesh        | LJA                |
| Chapter Arrangements Associate Chair | Riley VanZandt     | Garver             |
| Chapter Communications Chair         | Kayla Nguyen       | Freese and Nichols |
| Chapter Competitions Co-Chair        | Kristen Cope       | Freese and Nichols |
| Chapter Competitions Co-Chair        | Andrea Hibbard     | Plummer            |
| Chapter Diversity & Inclusion Chair  | Anthony Mbroh      | Mbroh Engineering  |
| Chapter Education & Outreach Chair   | Dustan Compton     | TRWD               |
| Chapter Membership Chair             | Chris Bitter       | Wade Trim          |
| Chapter Programs Chair               | Dario B. Sanchez   | Arcadis            |
| Chapter Programs Co-Chair            | Brandy Martinez    | Brown and Caldwell |
| Chapter Scholarship Chair            | Isabella Boddicker | Carollo            |
| Chapter Scholarship Co-Chair         | Meredith McCall    | LJA                |

|                                          |                      |                     |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Chapter Drinking Water Seminar Secretary | Jose Puente-Espinosa | City of Dallas      |
| Chapter Competitions Committee Co-Chair  | Cate Ball            | Plummer             |
| Student Design Co-Chair                  | Nicole Conner        | Kennedy Jenks       |
| Student Design Co-Chair                  | <i>Vacant</i>        |                     |
| Chapter Virtual Programs                 | May Aye              | Wade Trim           |
| Chapter Virtual Programs Associate       | Emon Roy             | Civitas Engineering |
| Chapter YP Chair                         | Cheyenne Footracer   | Plummer             |
| Chapter YP Secretary                     | Tasie Kade           | Carollo             |
| Chapter YP Treasurer                     | May Aye              | Wade Trim           |
| Chapter YP Past Chair                    | Conor Mullis         | Preload             |
| Water 2050 Economics Think Tank Chair    | Karen Menard         | TRA                 |
| Water 2050 Economics Think Tank Co-Chair | Katie Livas          | HDR                 |
| Chapter Past President                   | Mariana Anguiano     | TRA                 |
| Chapter Trustee                          | Stefanie Massey      | Aecom               |
| Chapter Deputy Trustee                   | Dustan Compton       | TRWD                |
| Chapter Bingo and Bags Chair             | Conor Mullis         | Preload             |
| Chapter Bingo and Bags Co-Chair          | Zac Bolen            | Plummer             |

We Love Our Water Memes!

Traci Peterson (City of Arlington)





August  
Back-to-School Time

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section • American Water Works Association

Don't forget to add a  
reusable water bottle  
for your learner's  
backpack.



August 16  
National Backflow  
Prevention Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section • American Water Works Association

Safe tap water requires  
the efforts of many  
different water  
professionals. Backflow  
prevention is essential.



August 24  
National Waffle Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section - American Water Works Association

No matter how you mix  
them up, water is  
essential for this  
delicious treat!



September 1  
Labor Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section - American Water Works Association

Thank you to all the  
laborers of our industry  
- a wide variety of  
professionals!



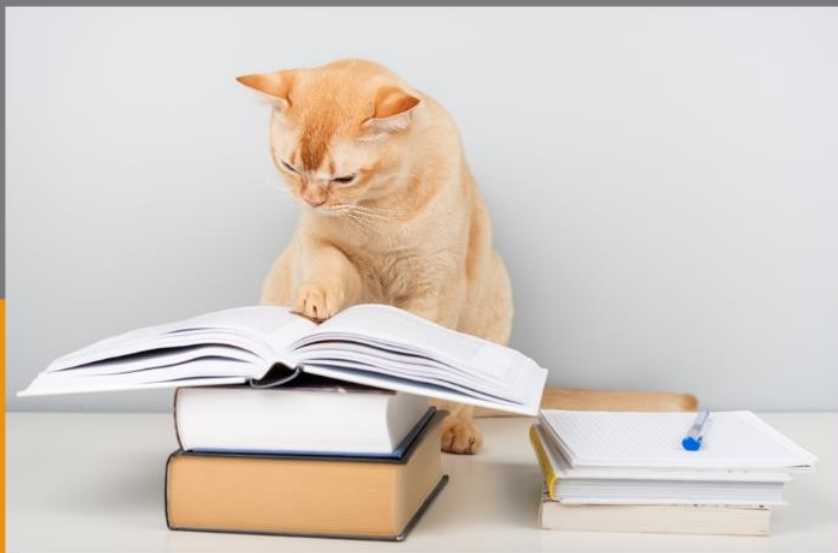
September 5  
National Cheese Pizza Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section • American Water Works Association

Keep the  
celebration simple  
with a warm slice  
and a cool glass of  
water!



September 6  
Read-a-Book Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section • American Water Works Association

Whether you're choosing  
fiction or non-fiction, water  
is a main character in books  
for every age and interest.



September 13  
Peanut Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section - American Water Works Association

Did you know that peanuts have the lowest water footprint of comparable U.S. grown nuts? Based on a UNESCO study, shelled peanuts use 4.7 gallons per ounce of peanuts.



September 22  
First Day of Fall

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



 **TEXAS**  
Section - American Water Works Association

Water is a key part of that fall feeling. Pumpkins need watering a few times a week to be ready for decorations and pies.



Sept. 27 - Oct. 3  
Source Water Protection Week

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



**TEXAS**  
Section - American Water Works Association

If we keep our rivers, lakes and underground wells free from pollution, it's easier and less expensive to keep water safe and healthy.



September 29  
National Coffee Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



**TEXAS**  
Section - American Water Works Association

Isn't it amazing what water can do for coffee beans? Enjoy a cup!

Traci Peterson with the City of Arlington has been instrumental in creating these up-to-date memes. Thank you, Traci!

Thank you to our 2026 Chapter Sponsors!









# Sponsorship Opportunities

## Calendar Year 2026 Chapter Sponsorship

### NCT TAWWA Program Sponsor

NCT TAWWA Program Sponsor: \$2,000 – Recognized at TWO bi-monthly Chapter Lunch Meetings (June and August), Women in Water November Event\*, and Casino Night Event\*, and have their name included on the website and in the bi-monthly newsletter The Lake and thanked at each meeting.

Individual Chapter Meeting Sponsorships: \$500 – Includes 1 registration and logo on event advertisements and thanked at the meeting.

\* Includes logo on event advertisements and slide show and thanked at the meeting.

### Special Chapter Events

#### North Texas Drinking Water Seminar (October 2026)

The 2026 Drinking Water Seminar proceeds will benefit our local and state scholarships.  
Sponsorships available soon.

#### Holiday Dinner (December 2026)

Sponsorships available soon.

Note: Chapter sponsorships are shifting to a fiscal calendar year to help our sponsors and members to better support the chapter. 2027 sponsorships will be announced at the end of 2026.

Link to register: [North Central Texas Chapter 2026 Program Sponsor](#)



This newsletter was brought to you by your NCT TAWWA Communications Committee members.

We would like to thank each member who contributed their time to bring you this issue of *The Lake*:

Kayla Nguyen (Freese and Nichols) • Caitlin Koranda (NTMWD) • Andrea Tom (CDM Smith)  
Brandy Martinez (Brown and Caldwell) • Traci Peterson (City of Arlington)

For questions or comments about the newsletter, please contact Kayla Nguyen. We're open to ideas for potential articles and newsletter contributions.

Thanks for reading.  
See you for our next issue!

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You received this email because of your affiliation to the Texas Section AWWA. If you would like to be removed from this email list, wish to edit your information, or be added to our e-mail list, please email [Chris Bitter](#).



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