



## NCT TAWWA February Meeting

Thursday, February 20th

Social: 11:15 am

Lunch & Program: 12:00 pm

Texas Star Conference Center  
1400 Texas Star Pkwy  
Eules, Texas 76040

## “Enhancing Operational Reliability: NTMWD’s Approach to Chemical Tank Management”

Presented By NTMWD’s

Tyler Mott

&

Martina Hanna, PMP

## PREVIOUS MEETING RECAP

*By Tasie Kade*

### **Holiday Dinner: Celebrating 50 Years of the Safe Drinking Water Act**

A warm thank you to all who attended our Holiday Dinner in December! It was a wonderful night to celebrate everything this chapter has accomplished in 2024. The event opened with “human bingo” where all were encouraged to get to know each other to fill in their bingo boards. Winners were rewarded with prizes!

Thank you to our panel who discussed their experience in the drinking water industry and the impact the Safe Drinking Water Act has made on their careers. Our panelists were:

- David Smith, General Manager at the Benbrook Water Authority.
- Mary Gugliuzza, Media Relations and Communications Coordinator at Fort Worth Water.
- Brandon Lacy, Director of Public Utilities at the City of DeSoto.
- Jonathan Reynolds, Life Scientist and Texas State Program Manager, Region 6 with the EPA.
- Sid McCain, Project Manager at Tarrant County Water Supply Project with TRA.

The panelists answered questions about the challenges they have faced in the past, how they are approaching current problems, and what they anticipate changing in the future.

The evening concluded with the silent auction. All proceeds went to the benefit of the NCT TAWWA Scholarship Fund.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*By Tyler Johnston*

EVENT	TIME	LOCATION	SIGN UP
NCT "Tappin' it in Texas" Pipe Tapping Competition	Thursday, February 20 5:30-8:00 pm	DN Tanks Facility 410 E. Trinity Blvd. Grand Prairie, Texas 75050	<a href="#">Register</a>
Texas Water 2025	Tuesday, March 18 – Friday, March 21	George R. Brown Convention Center 1001 Avenida de las Americas Houston, Texas 77010	<a href="#">Register</a> <a href="#">Volunteer</a> <a href="#">Competitions</a>

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**TEXAS SAW CUT 2025**

March 18-21, 2025  
Houston, Texas  
[WWW.TXWATER.ORG](http://WWW.TXWATER.ORG)

REGISTER HERE

The graphic features a large blue and orange background with a stylized saw blade icon. Below the text, there are three small photos showing people participating in the event. A QR code is positioned on the right side, with an orange arrow pointing towards it.

## YP CORNER

*By Tasie Kade*

### YP Events

The young professionals group has had an active fall! The first event was a happy hour at Puttshack where we enjoyed putt putt golf and networking. Later in November, AWWA and WEAT hosted an intramural kickball game at Randol Mill Park. Kickball was a huge success with over 25 in attendance and will continue in future years.

Mark your calendars for the third annual YP Ugly Sweater Holiday Party! The event will be hosted at Turning Point Brewery on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Plus ones are welcome and ugly sweaters are required!



### **AWWA/WEF Young Professional Summit**

Early-career water professionals, students, and water executives and managers who want to connect with young professionals are invited to register for the AWWA/WEF Young Professionals Summit. The conference will take place in Dallas February 9-11<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Scholarships are available through AWWA and WEF, and the NCT chapter will be granting individual scholarships.

### **YP Email List**

Want to come to more upcoming YP events, but you just keep missing the notification about them? Or are you a non-YP member and would like your younger staff to get more involved with NCT AWWA? Send an email to Tasie at [tkade@carollo.com](mailto:tkade@carollo.com) to get your email added to the YP distribution list.

### **YP Committee Invitation**

Interested in getting involved with the NCT AWWA YP Committee? Send an email to Tasie at [tkade@carollo.com](mailto:tkade@carollo.com) to hear more about open positions and get plugged in.

## UTILITY SPOTLIGHT

*By Ashley Van Keer*



### **Jesus (Tony) Bencomo, City of McKinney**

**Position:** Water Utility Analyst

#### **Education and Experience:**

- Bachelor's degree: Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez in geoinformatics (GIS)
- Master's degree: Universidad Tecmilenio in Business Administration with focus on productivity and quality.

My entire career has been focused in project management, data analytics and solving problems.

- Nearly 15 years' experience with GIS.
- 5 years in water and local government experience
- 3 years with the city of McKinney

#### **What motivated you to be involved in the water and wastewater utility industry?**

It was destiny. When I was working for Baylor Scott & White, I parked in the downtown square and spotted a sign that said, "City of McKinney." I thought about my father who worked for 30 years as a public servant. I like this city and I knew I wanted to work there.

When McKinney posted for a GIS internship for storm and street department I submitted my application. The team called me and told me that they knew I was overqualified, but I said I wanted to get my foot in the door and so they hired me. When I started, I worked broadly on GIS - storm drains, street, traffic, water, you name it. I worked hard and the city offered me a position on the water side, because that is the department that had budget to pay me.

I was told that nobody likes leak detection, and I was curious why. I enjoyed the challenge of finding leaks and wondered how I could be more efficient. I started using

GIS and historical data to build my own practice. From when I began in May to August of 2022, I found 65 service leaks, 15 fire hydrant, and 2 water main leaks. I was really surprised by the number of leaks and the progress that could be made. By today the number of leaks crosses the mark of 500.

Then I started pushing all the technologies. McKinney Water Utilities was able to reduce nonrevenue water from 28% in 2017 to just 7% in 2023. While I am now a Water Utility Analyst, I search for new technologies including AI doing more data analytics, but also, I use my time as a maintenance guy to inform my practice and continue to think about how we can make things faster and easier for the maintenance team.

**What advice would you give to those who are new to this industry, and what do you wish you could tell yourself back when you started?**

Don't be afraid. Don't shed a single tear at crazy things that happen. I was scared at the beginning. In my past work experience my boss didn't listen to me. The team didn't think my ideas would work. But now that I am older, I see that the things I am doing now are working, and my ideas in the past had merit. Things don't always work how I think they will, but I'm getting results. I encourage young professionals to experiment. And to find a good boss. You need someone in leadership who is curious and will give you the flexibility to execute your ideas. In McKinney, I feel very fortunate to have support all the way up the chain of command from our Superintendent, Eddie Lydon, to the Assistant Director, Michael George, to our Public Works Director, Ryan Gillingham, and from all the city's executive leaders and from city council.

**What is a current challenge you are facing within the water and wastewater utility industry?**

We cannot detect leaks on plastic or poly surfaces like in metal pipes. Water mains are also plastic, so it is hard to identify issues. This infrastructure is built to last 50 years, but what happens when 50 years pass? I want to find ways to help the next generation solve these problems because there will be new issues in the future. I won't be working anymore, but I still think it is something we need to think about.

**What career success are you most proud of?**

My mom taught me to be humble, so this question is a tough one for me. Everything I do in my job I see as my duty, and I work hard for it. I think like most folks in water I am not used to being in the spotlight and I don't think I am doing anything special. I am proud to serve the community and get the best outcomes from the things I'm doing.

City leadership would likely highlight that McKinney Water Utilities team saved millions of dollars because of improved leak detection and multiple more programs that help reduce the non-revenue water.

I see so much potential and how I can improve issues.

**What should people know about the City of McKinney Water Department? What do you find rewarding about your work?**

McKinney Water Utilities has the most effective work culture. It's the best I have seen anyway, and I have been on a lot of jobsites. Everyone here has a strong work ethic. We like to work together. And we aren't afraid to try new things. McKinney is always looking to get the best outcomes with new projects using the best technologies. It is rewarding to help people and improve their quality of life without them knowing it. Reducing the carbon footprint and saving water, the most valuable resource we have is huge. Without water we don't exist.

**Do you encourage members within your industry to pursue licenses and certifications? What benefits have you received from gaining these?**

Absolutely! Knowledge is the base of everything. Licenses and certifications can help you think out of the box. Learning new things will help you make progress not only as a professional but will benefit your whole team.

Water license, pilot license for using drones, data analytics training, GIS training. Take certifications that match your team's goals and needs. Read, attend conferences. You can get anything from the internet. How do you want to specialize yourself and give your gifts to the industry.

**What do you think more people should know about our industry?**

People take water for granted. If we don't take care of water, then future generations will be negatively impacted. Water is a finite resource. We must think about what kind of community we want to leave to the next group. We must inform people, so they understand their part – conserving water, and treating pipes and city systems with care.

**What role have professional organizations played in your career development?**

AWWA has been tremendously valuable in my career growth and development. The organization has given me an opportunity to compare the work I am doing to others in the field. Last year I attended the state conference and learned a great deal from the network the group offers. There are so many variables in water, and it is important to have connections to troubleshoot issues with.

I also use ESRI forums and troubleshoot with water contacts in North Texas.

**Please describe your family and/or hobbies and interests.**

I have been married to my beautiful wife, Gabriela for 8 years and we have a 4-year-old boy named Santiago. He is crazy and curious just like his dad.

For fun I like working with my hands – repairing electronics, welding, disassembling, auto mechanics, and putting together old clocks. I enjoy anything mechanical.

**What is something people would be surprised to know about you?**

When I was a youngster, I was an artist. I played the violin and enjoyed painting and drawing. This was too hard on my ADHD and work in water has given me more variety. While I am no longer in the arts, I enjoy bringing a creative eye to GIS maps and thinking in a different way about how to solve water industry challenges.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

*By Helen Dulac*

### First Graders Imagine a Day without Water

The Imagine a Day Without Water art contest is an annual event organized by the Water Environment Association of Texas (WEAT) and the Texas American Water Works Association (TAWWA). The contest aims to raise awareness of the importance of water and encourage environmental stewardship in the next generation.



Kindergarten through 6th graders draw a picture on the theme “How are you Water Wise?” OR “Why is it important to be Water Wise?”



First grade teacher, Ms. Valejo needed inspiration for her science class. So on October 22nd, Education and Outreach Chair Helen Dulac joined WEAT members in a virtual presentation to 25 bilingual students at DISD's Nathan Adams Elementary School. From WEAT were Katherine Sepassi with Consor and Santos Sotelo with Kimley Horn. The multimedia presentation showed the students that we need water every day and water is so fundamental that it is integrated into our homes. Next, the students toured a garden to learn that the crops that produce our favorite foods can only do so with water. They also saw how these plants feed people and insects. This message was expanded to remind the children that birds and urban wildlife also need water. The presentation wrapped up by sharing simple actions they can all take to conserve water.



This annual contest selects up to 13 winners who will receive prizes and have their artwork included in our Celebration of Water calendar.

## Upcoming AWWA Webinars

*By Jim Estala*

→ [Water Science Lunch Break Seminar – FREE Webinar](#)

January 29, 2025 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

→ [D&I Book Club – Registration Closed](#)

February 21, 2025, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

## North Central Texas TAWWA Officers

Position	Name	Organization
President	<a href="#">Brandy Martinez</a>	Brown and Caldwell
Vice President	<a href="#">Mariana Anguiano</a>	TRA
Secretary	<a href="#">Andrea Tom</a>	CDM Smith
Treasurer (yr 3 of 3)	<a href="#">Ikram Sayed</a>	Garver
Deputy Treasurer	<a href="#">Elaine Hung</a>	TRA
Arrangements Committee Chair	<a href="#">Meredith McCall</a>	LJA
Arrangements Committee Associate Chair	<a href="#">Bella Boddicker</a>	Carollo
Communications Committee Chair	<a href="#">Caitlin Koranda</a>	LAN
Education & Outreach Committee Chair	<a href="#">Helen Dulac</a>	Grow North Texas
Programs Chair	<a href="#">Chris Bitter</a>	JQ Infrastructure
Virtual Programs	<a href="#">Simone Guidry</a>	Kennedy Jenks
Associate Virtual Programs	<a href="#">Claire Yancey</a>	FNI
Membership Committee Chair	<a href="#">Veronica Enriquez</a>	TRWD
Scholarship Committee Chair	<a href="#">Cate Ball</a>	Plummer
Robert F. Pence Drinking Water Seminar Committee Chair	<a href="#">Chad Bartruff</a>	Brown and Caldwell
Chapter Competitions Committee Co-Chair "Lead"	<a href="#">Dario Sanches</a>	Arcadis
Chapter Competitions Committee Co-Chair	<a href="#">Michael McBee</a>	FNI
Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair	<a href="#">Tony Mbroh</a>	Mbroh Engineering
Young Professionals Committee Chair	<a href="#">Zac Bolen</a>	Plummer
Young Professionals Committee Secretary	<a href="#">Conor Mullis</a>	Pump Solutions
Young Professionals Committee Treasurer	<a href="#">Cheyenne Footracer</a>	Plummer
Young Professionals Committee Past Chair	<a href="#">Cat Turner</a>	Garver
Student Design Co-Chair	<a href="#">Nicole Conner</a>	Kennedy Jenks
Student Design Co-Chair	<a href="#">Steven Mendoza</a>	Carollo
Past President	<a href="#">Dustan Compton</a>	TRWD
Section Trustee	<a href="#">Katie Livas</a>	HDR
Section Deputy Trustee	<a href="#">Stefi Massey</a>	AECOM

## We Love Our Water Memes!

By Traci Peterson



### February 9th Super Bowl LIX

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



Enjoy watching the big game with friends and family this weekend. Your local water utility will help you stay hydrated even through overtime!



### February 14th Valentine's Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



**Water makes those yummy chocolates possible!**  
It takes approximately 450 gallons of water to make 3.5 ounces of chocolate.



February 20th  
Love Your Pet Day

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



We love our pets. Our  
pets love water!  
Water professionals  
make sure your pets  
have what they need.

BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH

February  
Black History Month

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



We celebrate the historic  
contributions of our  
African American  
colleagues in the water  
industry and beyond.



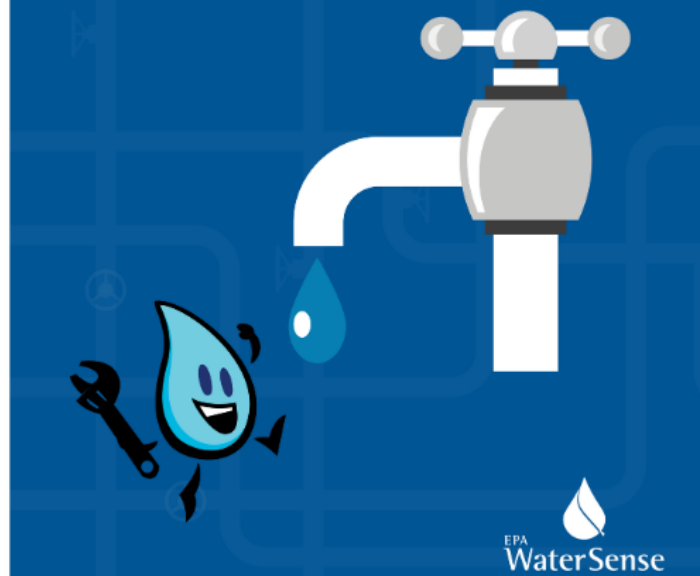
Feb. 16th-22nd  
Engineers Week

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



Engineers throughout the U.S. are essential to the water industry. This week is a great time to learn more about their work and say thanks!

### Take the 10-Minute Challenge



March 17th-23rd  
EPA Fix a Leak Week

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



In just 10 minutes, you can check your house for easy-to-fix leaks. Stopping leaks could shave 10 percent off your water and sewer bill



**March 2nd**  
**Read Across America Day**

Pick up a book  
about water and  
share it with a  
friend today!

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR




**March 20th**  
**First Day of Spring**

Are you ready to get things  
growing in your yard?

Don't forget to look for  
ways to be water-wise!

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR






**WATER IS  
LIFE**

**March 11th**  
**World Plumbing Day**

#TXWATERAMBASSADOR



**Texas AWWA**  
American Water Works Association

Plumbing and public health go hand-in-hand. Take a minute to think about how plumbing affects each part of your day!

**Thank you to our Annual Sponsors!**



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*:

Caitlin Koranda (LAN) • Brandy Martinez Manske (Brown and Caldwell) • Dustan Compton (TRWD) • Simone Guidry (Kennedy Jenks) • Tess Sprague (Brown and Caldwell) • Traci Peterson (City of Arlington) • Quentin Geile (Plummer) • Cat Turner (Garver) • Ashley Van Keer (LAN) • Tasie C. Kade (Carollo) • Clayton Taylor (LAN) • Trey Riggs (LAN) • Paul Swope (LAN) • Ali Kazemi (Kimley-Horn) • Cate Ball (Plummer)

For questions or comments about the newsletter, please contact [Caitlin Koranda](#). We're open to ideas for potential articles and newsletter contributions.

Thanks for reading.  
See you in August for our next issue!

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