



NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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GBRA, LCRA WILL WORK TOGETHER TO PLAN FOR HAYS COUNTY WATER NEEDS

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SEGUIN -- The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and the Lower Colorado River Authority will work together to plan for Hays County's long-term water and wastewater needs.

GBRA's and LCRA's respective Boards of Directors have approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that spells out how the GBRA and the LCRA would work together to provide future water, wastewater and related services for residents of Hays County. GBRA directors approved the MOU during a meeting Wednesday. LCRA directors gave their approval Thursday.

All of Hays County, which is experiencing rapid population and business growth, is included in GBRA's statutory area -- but the northern part of Hays also lies within the lower Colorado River basin. These factors, along with formal requests by county officials, prompted the Texas Water Development Board to announce that the county will likely be "split" into two adjacent planning areas mandated by Senate Bill 1 for updating the state's water plan.

According to GBRA general manager Bill West, "Hays County's representation in two planning areas will not interfere with efforts to address water issues, but actually assures that all the county's unique requirements will be considered."

"The memorandum helps ensure the intent of Senate Bill 1 in planning effectively for Hays County's needs," said LCRA general manager Mark Rose. "The LCRA and the GBRA will be able to address water issues in ways that will benefit the entire county, not just part of it. I am excited about this cooperative spirit among our river authorities to transcend boundaries and seek solutions that will truly work for Central Texans."

(more)

“It has been unusual for one river authority to include another in its statutory area of responsibility,” said West, “but it’s time to look at new ways of providing water-related services to rapidly-growing communities within combined service areas.”

According to West, “the rapid growth in Hays County, and the increasing demand on the Trinity Aquifer’s limited supply, is creating serious concerns about the availability of reliable water supplies and wastewater systems needed to sustain long-term and environmentally-sound economic development in the region. The GBRA and the LCRA will be working closely with local officials and residents to help address these pressing concerns.”

West and Rose emphasized that while GBRA’s and LCRA’s primary responsibility is to serve the needs of their respective basins, “there will be occasions when we can best serve our citizens through coordinated regional planning and water management initiatives, such as those included in the MOU.”

Hays County Judge Eddy Etheredge is “excited by this step taken by the GBRA and LCRA boards. This is in Hays County’s best interests, as well as in the best interests of the GBRA and LCRA, and I look forward to working with both river authorities.

“The county government needs to be involved in discussions on water issues,” Judge Etheredge continued, “and the county and city governments must ensure that measures to protect our environment and quality of life will be a central part of planning for our water needs.”

The MOU does not commit the GBRA and the LCRA to specific projects but establishes the criteria for planning such projects, including the use of water resources from GBRA’s and LCRA’s basins, the water demands of the Hays County area, the quantity and quality of water resources, development of area water resources, gathering and sharing of streamflow and weather monitoring data and technology, and working with legislative and regulatory processes to address Hays County’s requirements.

The Highland Lakes would be the logical source of surface water for the portion of Hays County that lies within the Colorado River basin, while Canyon Lake would most likely supply the Guadalupe basin portion of the county. Water and wastewater needs could be served by either the GBRA or the LCRA, within the limits of each party’s statutory authority and the principles of the MOU.