

2011 TEEA Winner Innovative Operations/Management, San Antonio Water System

Narrator:

Over the past three decades, San Antonio's population has nearly doubled. The growth prompted the San Antonio Water System to respond to demand with the largest water recycling program in the state.

Robert R. Puente, J.D., President and CEO, San Antonio Water System:

Every drop of recycled water that we use is another drop of fresh water that we don't have to use. It has told our neighbors that also rely on the Edward's Aquifer that we're not going to be water hogs.

Narrator:

More than one hundred miles of pipe deliver treated, recycled water to customers, including the University of Texas Health Science Center.

Raymond Martin, Asst. VP Facilities Management, UT Health Science Center:

We need to recycle water for irrigation and also for our cooling towers.

Last year we were able to save 82 million gallons of water.

Narrator:

Another area of focus is the city's wastewater treatment plant. The water system partnered with private industry to convert waste methane into biogas, a renewable energy product for the open market.

Brandon Guebard, Plant Specialist, Ameresco:

On average we recycle about a million cubic feet of biogas a day. We're recovering it, processing it and selling it to a commercial pipeline.

Narrator:

The water system also transforms more than one hundred tons of biosolids each year into high quality compost, which is used locally to further protect and conserve water.

Pablo Martinez, Planner, Production and Treatment Operations, San Antonio Water System:

It'd give everyone who works in the San Antonio Water System a sense of pride.

Narrator:

These initiatives, along with an aggressive customer education program, enable the utility to serve twice as many customers with the same amount of water. That is one way to measure success.