



# On the Water Front

December 2018 | **A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO**

## CNN report shines spotlight on water reuse

When CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta arrived with a crew at El Paso Water, we shared our successes in conservation and water reuse efforts that have greatly benefited El Paso. Gupta and his CNN crew toured the Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant and the Fred Hervey Reclamation Plant, both of which demonstrate innovations supporting sustainability.

CNN aired their report and published a [story](#) on their website spotlighting EPWater's reuse efforts. The exposure was tremendous, and the reaction was immediate.

### About our project

Support and praise from water experts poured in, with many recognizing and commending our initiatives. We have been handling multiple requests from media organizations and international visitors, who want to visit and learn more about our water reuse efforts now and into the future.

The questions came quickly, with customers asking whether the utility was already treating wastewater and sending it directly into the drinking water system, and whether the practice is safe.

The practice is safe, but let's back up a little. EPWater has been treating wastewater to drinking water standards and recharging the Hueco Bolson aquifer for 30 years at the Fred Hervey plant. This helps stabilize levels in the aquifer, which is pumped heavily in times of river drought. What we are planning is the next logical step. Instead of putting clean, purified water into the ground, we are designing a facility that will send it straight to our customers' taps.

### Well-known in industry

EPWater has a respected reputation as an innovator in the water sector. Just as we built the largest inland desalination plant in the world that is recognized around the globe, many eyes are on us as we plan our Advanced Water Purification Facility. The project will use several rigorous and proven treatment technologies to produce purified water that will flow directly into the water distribution system.

Why is this project important? Because past drought cycles have shown us that river flows can vary dramatically, and we must be prepared for future years when river flows are extremely low. During such times, our desalination and reuse projects fill the gap to keep faucets flowing.

The facility will use a multi-stage process – microfiltration, reverse osmosis, ultraviolet light combined with advanced oxidation, carbon filtration and disinfection – to transform treated wastewater (reclaimed water) into a safe and reliable drinking water supply.

We pilot-tested the treatment process in 2016 and successfully demonstrated to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality that advanced purification delivers water that meets all the standards. An independent advisory panel of health and water quality experts offered full support after fully reviewing the project in great detail.

The project is currently in design and several years away from construction. Our community can be assured that we prioritize health and safety in all of our projects.

I'm very proud that EPWater has become a leader in developing drought-proof, reliable water supplies to meet the needs of our community's children and grandchildren. We are charting a path of long-term sustainability.



CNN reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta interviews EPWater Chief Technical Officer Gilbert Trejo about the water treatment process.



On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water.

Contact Christina Montoya at **915.594.5596** or [cmontoya@epwater.org](mailto:cmontoya@epwater.org) with any comments or questions.

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