The Clarifier
THE UTILITY NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY

THE CLARIFICATION PROCESS USES GRAVITY TO SETTLE OUT SEDIMENT AND NATURAL ORGANIC MATTER FROM WASTEWATER TO MAKE IT CLEAR
Ongoing Odor Mitigation Efforts Update

Since our last update in the Fall 2020 edition of The Clarifier, San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) staff have continued to make efforts toward addressing citizen odor concerns. The staff of River Authority’s Martinez II Wastewater Treatment Plant and the adjacent Texas Landfill Management, LLC (TLM) composting facility have increased communications to better respond to reports of odor in the surrounding area. There has been a steady decrease in the number of reported odor events since December 2020. Being a good neighbor is always a high priority. In addition to the odor complaint portal available to citizens (provided below), there are a few updates regarding the ongoing odor mitigation efforts.

Monitoring: Both the River Authority and TLM continue to invest in monitoring systems that report odor information. Recently, the River Authority renewed services that include software and hardware that help identify present odors. The systems provide meteorological and sensor data that help locate the source of emissions. The goal is to utilize this information to inform management practices that help address factors that may contribute to odor.

Equipment: Dust generated by operations on the River Authority property is one factor we are looking to mitigate through equipment investments. Recently, staff acquired heavy duty mobile dust suppression equipment. The suppression equipment in combination with a mobile generator allows staff to use water to knock dust down out of the air that may contribute to odor and/or other unfavorable conditions. Both the River Authority and TLM intend on operating mobile dust suppression equipment as part of ongoing operations to help reduce odorous dust that may leave the site. In addition, the River Authority is continuing the use of windsleeves and deodorizers to help alleviate odor concerns.

Staff of both the River Authority and TLM have discussed operational best management practices that can be implemented, and we are committed to doing our part to appropriately respond to complaints related to odor.

As a reminder, you may call the River Authority at (210) 302-4200 for any questions, comments, and/or odor concerns. You may also submit an online odor complaint through the River Authority’s website at sariverauthority.org/services/utilities/odor-information. Upon receiving an odor report, River Authority staff will contact the individual who made the report and attempt to conduct a site visit to observe the reported odor and document any findings.
In previous issues of the Clarifier, the Utility Development Advisory Committee (UDAC) and the Martinez IV Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) expansion were described. This article is intended to explain how the UDAC committee intersects with the planned expansion. With the rapid development around the WWTP and the associated increased sewer flows, the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) Utilities Department identified the need to quickly begin working on expanding the capacity of the Martinez IV WWTP. The first step in this process was to update the 2017 Master Plan that was created for the area. The master plan is a comprehensive, far-reaching plan of action. As a part of the master plan update, the Land Use Assumptions and Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) were presented to the UDAC for their review and comments.

As a reminder, the UDAC is a group of local citizens appointed by the River Authority Board of Directors that represent real estate, builder, and developer industries as well as local rate payers. The committee was formed in late 2020. This group is required by Title 12 subtitle C of the Texas Local Government Code to advise and assist the River Authority with the adoption, implementation, review, and updates of its Land Use Assumptions, CIP, impact fees, and other potential development-related fees.

The Land Use Assumptions and CIP part of the master plan project population growth and identify capital projects needed to support the wastewater treatment for the service area, such as the collection system leading to the plant. The Land Use Assumptions are determined by reviewing undeveloped land to estimate the potential future use. Forecasting future land uses helps estimate what volume of sewer flows the plant may experience. This process assists in informing the River Authority on current and predicted treatment capacity. The River Authority’s Martinez IV WWTP is currently under expansion with a projected completion of late 2022.

After considering the committee’s comments and guidance, a proposed plan was presented at a public meeting held by the River Authority Board of Directors (BOD) on April 21, 2021, and subsequently approved by the BOD on May 19, 2021.

River Authority staff are currently evaluating rate models, Connection Fees, and Pro-Rata Fees to determine if an Impact Fee will be necessary to fund future Capital Improvements. These tools are available through the Government Code to allow entities to more equally spread expansion costs that are required to appropriately respond to area growth and new development needs.

For more information on UDAC or to check out our previous issues of The Clarifier, please visit sariverauthority.org/utilities.
Employee Highlight: Joe Martinez

Joe Martinez started with the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) in January 2013 as a Utilities Crewman. His hard work was quickly recognized as he was promoted to Operations Technician after just one year with the Utilities Department. Joe is known for his leadership, enthusiasm, service to others, honesty, and taking pride in his work. Joe demonstrates his stewardship in the way he cares for equipment and the facilities. He sincerely cares about those he works with and leads by example, as is seen by his commitment to personal growth. Joe continues to educate himself and others, both on and off the job. Within his first 4 years on the job, Joe obtained his Wastewater D, C, and B licenses and is actively working on his Class A license. These certifications require fieldwork, coursework, and examinations. In addition to his dedication to professional growth, Joe often volunteers his time to train new employees, working with them as a mentor and congratulating them on their successes. His coworkers describe Joe as someone who doesn’t take shortcuts, taking pride in completing his work. It’s his extensive knowledge and competence that have elevated Joe within the ranks at the River Authority. In his 8-year tenure, Joe has been promoted 5 times and currently holds the position of Chief Operator. His promotions are indicative of his desire to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the wastewater treatment plants. Joe has developed procedures that have been adopted, not only by other departments, but by other river authorities as well. Just this past year, Joe was nominated and won the 2020 River Authority Star Award (field staff employee of the year)! A well-deserved award and recognition!

In his spare time, Joe enjoys being an active member of his church, working on his garden, playing basketball, and riding bikes with his wife and daughter. Most importantly he loves spending time with his family.