

## APPENDIX E

### ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The first sentence of *Water Plan: 2000-2050* expressed Tucson Water's commitment to public outreach and customer service:

Water Plan: 2000-2050 was developed to initiate a dialogue between Tucson Water and the community about the water-resource challenges which must be addressed in the coming years.

This engagement with both customers and stakeholders continues to be a primary driver for the Utility.

#### **Presentations, Discussions, and Public Outreach**

Tucson Water had taken elements of *Water Plan: 2000-2050* "on the road" even before it was issued in November 2004. Utility staff and management have provided well over a hundred presentations on all aspects of water-resource planning including the analytical tools that have been developed, the overall Scenario Planning process, the various Common Elements and plan recommendations, financial impacts, and the critical decisions with the primary focus being on *Decision H20*. Audiences have ranged from local community groups and town halls to national conferences and seminars.

Public discussion of water resource availability in the Tucson area has been almost continuous since *Water Plan: 2000-2050* was issued. A subsequent report issued by the University of Arizona's Water Resources Research Center (2006) considered water resource availability throughout the greater metropolitan Tucson region. That report drew conclusions consistent with *Water Plan: 2000-2050* regarding the need to shift to renewable water resources and the growing importance of effluent utilization in the future.

To provide information more directly to its customers, Tucson Water relies on several methods of communication. In addition to the presentations referenced above, the Utility has released a number of Public Service Announcements and bill inserts to explain aspects of the water planning process. Additional printed materials have been distributed throughout the community at various forums. Staff has responded to hundreds of phone calls and e-mails on Plan related topics. Local news media, both print and electronic, were actively engaged as part of the Utility's outreach efforts, resulting in numerous articles and television and radio stories highlighting aspects of the Water Plan. Finally, all aspects of the plan have been posted on Tucson Water's website for ease of information sharing and to elicit comments from the community.

Key decisions and on-going policy direction regarding the Water Plan are provided to the Utility by Tucson's Mayor & Council. To ensure that the governing body has sufficient information to provide this direction, Tucson Water has provided periodic updates to the Mayor and Council, both in session and through individual meetings with the elected representatives. As part of this on-going process, the Utility works closely with the City Manager's Office, the Citizens' Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) and the Mayor & Council's Environment, Planning, and Resource Management (EPRM) subcommittee.

### ***Decision H2O***

One of the largest outreach campaigns ever conducted by Tucson Water has centered on issues associated with Decision #1 of *Water Plan: 2000-2050*. This campaign has been titled *Decision H2O* and is focused on determining the long-term mineral content of the Utility's Colorado River water supply delivered through the Clearwater Program. As additional Colorado River water is added to the Clearwater project, the mineral content of the blended supply will increase over time eventually reaching approximately 650 parts per million (ppm), the average mineral content of the Colorado River water. During the Utility's initial public involvement campaign which was conducted to determine acceptable mineral content of the Clearwater blend, Tucson Water customers selected 450 ppm as the preferred blend. The data collection process being conducted to support Decision #1 is intended to determine whether customers will accept the slow rise in mineral content, or would prefer to pay for a new treatment facility to maintain the minerals at 450 ppm. To support the mineral content decision, comprehensive technical and cost information was developed and shared with Tucson Water's customers through the Decision H2O outreach program.

The outreach effort is centered on determining consumer preferences between two potential future mineral levels of the Clearwater blend and customer's willingness to pay in order to meet discretionary water quality targets. Three investigations were undertaken including a Flavor Profile Analysis (taste tests conducted by a trained panel), structured consumer panels, and an extensive kiosk outreach program.

The most visible part of the outreach program involved direct interaction with Tucson Water customers at information kiosks from October 2006 through January 2007. Tucson Water operated demonstration kiosks at two retail malls and two traveling kiosks that visited locations and events throughout the community. Participants had the opportunity to taste each mineral blend (blind test) and express their taste preference. The participants were then provided additional information about water resources, environmental impacts, health considerations, treatment costs, and potential household impacts of changing mineral levels. After the customers received the additional information and staff responded to their questions, they were asked to provide their overall preference. Over a period of four months, more than 13,000 Tucson Water customers participated in kiosk activities. Throughout the course of the program, weekly results were posted on a *Decision H2O* website established specifically for the program: [www.decisionh2o.com](http://www.decisionh2o.com).

Throughout 2007 and into early 2008, the Utility continued to conduct a number of studies to develop a final recommendation to bring forward to Tucson's Mayor & Council. These

efforts include decision-matrix analyses on the customer surveys and further investigations of the potential treatment technologies and costs to ensure that the information provided to Mayor and Council is as current and accurate as possible. Tucson Water is also in the process of conducting a comprehensive sustainability analysis to determine the environmental, financial and social impacts of the two alternative water qualities and provide a broader context within which to make the mineral decision. Factors such as carbon generation, salt loading, land usage, water efficiency, affordability and social equity are being assessed to compare the various options. It is expected that these remaining steps will be completed in 2008 and a recommendation will be forwarded to Mayor & Council.

### **Continuing the Engagement**

*Water Plan 2000-2050* is an evolving document which will change over time as new circumstances, opportunities and challenges are identified. Tucson Water is committed to continued engagement with customers and other stakeholders to ensure that the community is aware of these changes and is offered multiple opportunities to participate in the decision making process. Through community-wide education, interaction and collaborative planning, the Mayor and Council, the Utility and the community we serve will be better able to identify and meet the water management challenges that lie ahead.