



Las Campanas Water Cooperative

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

2020 | SUMMER

# Las Campanas Summer Newsletter

President's Letter | August 2020 | Stephen Raab, President

## “Water Co-op Commitment to Continuous Improvement”

In June 2020, the Board of Directors had two Board Members retire. Ken Kirk, the former Board President, and Robert Taber, Board Director. I would like to thank Ken & Bob for their dedicated service to the community and their countless contributions to the Board. Serving on any of the Las Campanas Boards is very demanding. The time demands placed on a Board member go well beyond the quarterly meetings.

Each and every Board member serves on multiple committees and most Board members chair at least one committee. In addition, there is the annual budgeting process which takes place over several months. A sincere thanks to Ken and Bob for all of the hours that they put in, they will be missed.

I do have the pleasure of announcing the addition of Andrew Resnick who has assumed the position of the Controller for the Co-op. Andrew joined the Water Co-op staff on June 15, 2020 as a permanent part-time employee. Andrew brings an enormous amount of experience to the Water Co-op as well as an exceptionally impressive academic background. Andrew will play a huge role in our budgeting and financial modeling efforts.

As Ken Kirk outlined in his President's Report in April 2020, the staff and Board have accomplished a great deal of work year-to-date which include; a cost-of-service analysis, a refinement of our reserve policy, the development of a three year capital improvement program and the negotiation of a long-term contract with Jacobs Engineering, our operations service provider, to name a few. The question that needs to be asked is what will be the focus of the staff and the Board for the balance of the year?

In support of the Water Co-op commitment to continuous improvement, 2020 will be the year of process improvement with a strong focus on enhancing the budgeting process and refining the modeling for our long-term infrastructure. Believe it or not, the budgeting process for 2021 begins in a few short weeks.

You have our commitment that the Water Co-op's staff, and the Board will continue to dedicate ourselves to managing this vital service in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

Stephen Raab  
Board President





## LAS CAMPANAS WATER COOPERATIVE

### 2020–2021 Board of Directors

At the July 2020 Annual Meeting/Election, the Las Campanas Water Cooperative re-elected Stephen Raab for a three-year term and newly elected Shawn McCoy for a three-year term. Please see listing of all Board Directors/Officers and Committees below:

#### Las Campanas Water Cooperative 2020–2021 Board of Directors

##### **Stephen Raab, President**

Executive Committee Chair

Operations Committee Chair Term Expires: 7/2023

##### **Barbara Shoemaker, Vice President**

Finance Committee Chair Term Expires: 7/2022

##### **James Lightfoot, Treasurer**

Sustainability Committee Chair

Term Expires: 7/2021

##### **Steven Miller, Secretary**

Legal and Governance Committee Chair

Term Expires: 7/2021

##### **Shawn McCoy, Director**

Term Expires: 7/2023

#### Committee Assignments for the Board for 2020–2021

##### **Legal and Governance Committee: Steven Miller (Chair),**

Members: Stephen Raab, Barbara Shoemaker,  
and James Lightfoot

##### **Finance Committee: Barbara Shoemaker (Chair),**

Members: Stephen Raab and Shawn McCoy

##### **Operations Committee: Stephen Raab (Chair),**

Members: James Lightfoot, Steven Miller, and Shawn McCoy

##### **Sustainability Committee: James Lightfoot (Chair),**

Members: Stephen Raab and Barbara Shoemaker

##### **Executive Committee: Stephen Raab (Chair),**

Members: Barbara Shoemaker, James Lightfoot, and  
Steven Miller

##### **BDD Alternate Representative: James Lightfoot,**

#### 44-Acre Development Casitas de la Tierra Development

The Board of Directors wishes to clarify the Water Co-op's position on the 44-acre Casitas de la Tierra as some confusion ensued from the recent open hearing on the development.

##### **Two very important points:**

#1: We (Las Campanas Water Co-op) are required as a publicly regulated utility to provide the 44-acre development with sewer service because the development is within our designated service area. Providing service to all those within our service area was part of the original licensing agreement.

#2: We will not be providing the development with water as existing allocations do not provide for higher density development. The developer has requested water service from the County for their development.

The decision to rezone the 44-acre development rests strictly with the County and is not in the purview of the Co-op. Any concerns over the development need to be taken up with the County.



## WATER SUSTAINABILITY - CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

James Lightfoot

“A successful water conservation and sustainability program cannot be developed overnight. “

As it is often stated, a journey is not necessarily about the destination but rather the journey itself. Being on a journey is our situation with water sustainability, we will never reach the end. Living in a desert climate with frequent drought conditions, limited water resources, and increased population pressures translate into a lifestyle requiring water sustainability.

The Las Campanas Water & Sewer Co-operative (“Co-op”), of which you are a member, encourages water conservation and sustainability within the community. Per the bylaws, “Every residential property served by the Co-operative is allocated an amount of water for domestic consumption and landscape irrigation needs”. During the initial Las Campanas development, water rights were acquired which were then re-assigned to individual lots. You are encouraged to stay within your allocation. In the past, individual overages in water consumption were adsorbed by water rights assigned to empty lots. As our community continues toward build-out, this available water is reducing, which requires each of us to stay within our individual allocations.

A successful water conservation and sustainability program cannot be developed overnight. Several years ago, the Co-op committed to starting sustainability with small steps and today continues to work with members to ensure our precious water resource is available into the future.

A past audit of water consumption indicated that approximately two-thirds of the potable water the Co-op delivers to residences is used for landscape irrigation and only about one-third of our water consumption is used indoors. The landscape irrigation percentage of water usage has been essentially constant since at least 2013. As a result of this audit, the following focus areas were developed and published in past newsletters.

- Irrigation system maintenance
- The selection and care of high desert plants
- Educational programs that will offer seminars on landscaping including guest speakers who are subject matter experts
- Implementation of the Eye On Water program

Some examples of ongoing progress in these areas include individuals replacing older style irrigation systems with current practice drip feeders and The Las Campanas Homeowners Association (“HOA”) redeveloping gate entrance and common areas using best practices in plant selection and irrigation technology. We anticipate positive results as the HOA completes this program and the opportunity to see reduced water usage results in upcoming years.

In past years the Co-op has provided education programs to provide information on landscaping, improved plant selection, and plant care in our high desert environment.



## “While the Co-op has been heavily focused on irrigation water, let us not forget our internal water usage.”

Unfortunately, the current Covid crisis has prevented our opportunities for face to face meetings in 2020. We look forward to resuming these educational seminars when social distancing guidelines permit.

The implementation of the Eye On Water program has been a major Co-op focus over the past two years. This program helps ensure that users are alerted to any water leaks and also provides an opportunity to measure water usage on an ongoing basis. We recently passed 85% participation in this program, demonstrating the vast majority of our residents are willing to participate in this conservation effort.

Irrigation system maintenance will continue to be an important component of the program. Working with your landscape provider to ensure you are using up to date systems with correct water timing and flow will ensure you are maximizing the efficiency of your water use.

While the Co-op has been heavily focused on irrigation water, let us not forget our internal water usage. Appliances have increased their efficiency significantly over the past generation; even the oldest houses in Las Campanas take some advantage of these improvements. If you are progressing with a new build or a remodel of your existing home, take this opportunity to choose appliances that provide the most efficient water usage. Simple steps such as running full loads in your washing machine and dishwasher, or adjusting the machine to the appropriate water level, are steps in the correct direction for a sustainable water future. Creating and maintaining a sustainable water future for Las Campanas requires input and support from each of us. Thank you for supporting our collective effort.





## LONG TERM STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

Steve Miller

Recognizing the need for a strategic plan that projected the needs of the Co-op 5-10 years into the future, the Las Campanas Water Co-op (LCWC) Board of Directors established a strategic planning initiative in the 4th quarter of 2019.

We believe this initiative provides a foundation to align, engage, and motivate limited energy and resources towards the advancement of important, long term goals, acting as a bridge from the long-term goals of the Co-op to annual business planning.

A Strategic Planning Committee chaired by Steve Miller was established to lead the effort. Consultants from Ross Strategic, a premier advisory firm specializing in strategic planning, were engaged to educate and guide the LCWC in this planning process. The initial strategic plan was drafted at a session held on 6 December 2019 that involved all the LCWC Board members and staff as well as several past LCWC Directors. The plan contains long-term goals and objectives that are grouped into 4 areas:

- Community Engagement
- Agile, Optimized, and Sustainable Operations
- Organizational Sustainability
- Financial Health

Strategies were developed to address each of the objectives along with key performance indicators (KPIs) specific to 2020. The KPIs are important as they allow us to measure our progress towards meeting the long-term goals.

The Strategic Plan was finalized on 29 February 2020 and approved at a subsequent Board meeting. More detailed action plans have been developed for each of the Goal areas noted above and integrated into the overall LCWC Goals and Objectives for the remainder of 2020.

The LCWC Strategic Plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated as part of the Co-op's normal business planning cycle each year, with detailed KPIs and action plans developed for the coming year.

A copy of the LCWC Strategic Plan can be found on our web site at; [www.lcwatersewer.coop](http://www.lcwatersewer.coop)



## COMMUNICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Barbara Shoemaker

We are pleased to report that fully 85% of our members have signed up to use Eye on Water to support better water conservation and early detection of both internal and external leaks. We will continue to outreach to new residents and members to encourage the use of this system as part of our emphasis on sustainable water use throughout the community.

Our abatement program will continue to be available to residents who experience unexpected leaks following the same guidelines and documentation requirements as in the past but will now also consider whether or not a Member has signed up for Eye on Water. Abatements are available only once every five years and are offered at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors on a case by case basis.

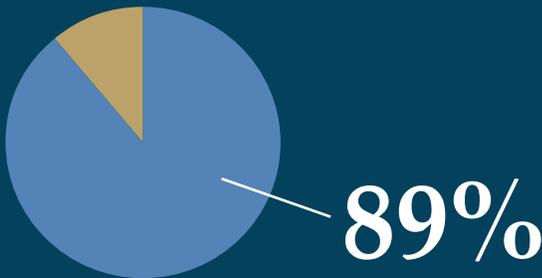
We continue to endeavor to help our membership better understand the many challenges we face as a community in managing water usage for our community, particularly as

we increasingly face drought conditions. We have updated the welcome packet for new homeowners to better explain water allocations. These allocations vary based on lot size and are determined by the original development plan approved by the County. We are pleased to report that over 89% of our community members stay well within their allocations through a combined focus of appropriate use of plant materials and conservation efforts.

The Board of Directors has opted to continue to focus our efforts on education and communication with homeowners who routinely exceed their allocation rather than resorting to the imposition of large fines, publicizing the names of those who exceed their allocation, or cutting off irrigation service. While these alternatives are all available we would prefer to build on the positive response of our members to Eye on Water (and the reduction of surcharges year over year) that indicates most of our members join us in a commitment to the well-being of our entire water community. Thank you for your continued support!

Going forward we anticipate working even more closely with the HOA and Club to provide detailed analysis of water usage (such as the impact of new landscaping at the entrances) and to support our members through more classes and articles that help us all do a better job of plant selection and irrigation in the high desert. We also have a designated representative to the Buckman Water Authority (currently James Lightfoot) to support good communication relative to our water supply and stay in regular contact with both City and County water authorities as well as our elected representatives.

**“We are pleased to report that over 89% of our community members stay well within their allocations .”**





## OPERATIONS UPDATE

Stephen Raab, President

Kim Visser and the staff at the Water Co-op continue to remain on or ahead of schedule for completing the 2020 Operations goals & objectives.

### 2020 Operations Goals & Objectives:

The strong early year focus on our 2020 goals & objectives is going to allow the Operations staff and Operations Committee to better prepare for 2021 budgeting process which begins in early August. In support of the budgeting process the Operations team needs to identify any capital requirements for the coming year, prioritize the operations tasks and make certain that we can management any process improvement scheduled for 2021. The major goals & objectives for 2020 are as follows:

- **Continue with installation of the AMR Implementation System** – The Eye on Water customer sign up program has achieved a remarkable 85% participation rate across the community. Most municipalities are thrilled to have a two-digit participation rate! As 85% of the community already realizes this app that allows every customer the ability to view water usage and, most importantly, determine if they have a leak.
- **Replacement of the Aging Pond Liner** – Our pond liner replacement project has been completed. As a reminder the need to maintain a fully functional liner is a permit requirement with the New Mexico Environmental Department. Our last liner, the original liner for the retention pond, was over 20 years old.
- **Sewer Line Cleaning Project** – A long-term project to clean and inspect the Las Campanas sewer lines will

begin in 2020. The sewer line cleaning and scoping project will begin with Estate 1, our oldest community, with another 10% of the project scheduled for each and every year until the project is complete. The scoping aspect of the project will provide the Water Co-op with valuable information related to the condition of our underground piping. This information will be key to developing a sensible infrastructure repair and replacement program.

- **Implementation of the Asset Management Project** – The Water Co-op will proceed with the roll-out a multi-faceted asset management program which will help the utility to meet the challenges of providing service to the community over the coming years by allowing for a more refined approach to managing the business to better address challenges such as changes in our population and continued economic development, the potential for extreme weather events (droughts) to name a few. The scope for this project was refined by the Operations Committee and Board ultimately saving about 30% of the initial projected cost for the project.

### Support for the Sustainability and the Eye On Water Programs:

As noted earlier in this report and thanks to the Water Co-op staff and our communication efforts the program is exceeding all of our expectations and zing 85% participation rate.



## RECOGNIZING EXCELLENT ACHIEVEMENTS

We would like to take time to recognize the “Excellent Achievements” that the Jacobs Team has been awarded over the past several years. . .

- 2016—Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association George Burkes Jr Award for the Best Safety Program.
- 2017—Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association Plant Performance Award.
- 2018—Jacobs/Las Campanas operations team was featured in the December issue of Treatment Plant Operator magazine.
- 2019—Jacobs 2019 OMFS Team Award Winners
  - Operational Excellence—First Place
  - Award of Excellence—Second Place
  - Individual Operator—Second Place—Jesus González

- 2020—Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association Plant Performance Award.

Jacobs consistently illustrates that they are a top-notch firm by winning award after award over the past several years.

The Las Campanas Board of Directors and Staff are proud to have Jacobs as our Operations Team and are delighted to partner with them. We have recently signed a 10-year contract with Jacobs that we believe will guarantee continuity of excellent service.

