

## WATER CONSERVATION ISSUES PANEL DISCUSSION

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### TOPIC: STATE WATER MANAGEMENT AND WATER CONSERVATION - FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Panelist: Mr. Bennett Weinstein, Water Conservation Specialist, Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Synopsis: The Georgia Environmental Protection Division is actively committed to facilitating effective water conservation planning throughout the state. Bennett Weinstein was hired on as a water conservation specialist during January of 1999, to act as a resource for Georgia's water purveyors. His responsibilities also include reviewing water conservation plans, the development of a water conservation plan training document, as well as facilitating workshops on water conservation planning to teach water suppliers about the training document. The goal of EPD's focus on water conservation is not merely the submittal of water conservation plans, but to have those water conservation measures implemented. The EPD is currently assisting Georgia's water systems in exploring the benefits and cost savings available through the implementation of sound water conservation practices. Water conservation measures are simply tools that promote efficient use, and like any other tool must be used properly in order to be effective.

### TOPIC: WATER RATES AND RESEARCH AND HOW THEY AFFECT CONSERVATION

Panelist: Dr. Jeffrey Jordan, Professor, Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics, the University of Georgia

Synopsis: Recent research on water pricing and water conservation indicates that rates can best be used to reduce peak demands and are less effective in reducing "base level" (indoor) water use. This suggests that the

use of permanent or complex increasing rates structures may be less effective than simple uniform rates with excess or seasonal charges. The trend toward bill consolidation among municipal utilities has also lessened the effectiveness of water pricing as an incentive structure to reduce water use.

### TOPIC: REGIONAL WATER CONSERVATION AND WATER SUPPLY PLANS

Panelist: Mr. David Rutherford, Regional Planner, Georgia Regional Development Center

Synopsis: Local governments will soon recognize the necessity of water conservation plans as economic development and other growth pressures continue to place ever increasing demands on local water supplies. The ability to meet reasonable growth demands from "conserved water" will allow communities adequate time to implement the recommendations from their water supply plans. An aggressive water conservation program can produce substantial savings for the citizens and governments. When communities look for alternative sources of water supply, conservation should be the first source to be identified.

### TOPIC: WATER CONSERVATION FROM THE UTILITY PERSPECTIVE

Panelist: Mr. Harry Jue, Water & Sewer Bureau Chief, City of Savannah

Synopsis: For years, older cities watched their water leak rate per mile increase, unaccounted for water percentages continued to escalate, and numerous discrepancies in billings due to a lack of meter maintenance. Now some utilities are faced with water capacity problems and threats of permit cutbacks or expensive measures to seek

alternative sources.

There is a lot a city can do to delay expensive capital projects to ensure adequate water supplies. Identify and reduce your water leaks, meter all unmetered sources, establish and maintain a meter calibration and change-out program, perform annual water audits, and support and implement local water conservation efforts. Besides improving one's customer image, these efforts will significantly save both current and future tax payer dollars as a utility's O&M costs remain stable. For instance, a leak repair program can reduce water lost by two to three million gallons per day. This equals 7,000 to 10,000 new residential customers.

#### TOPIC: THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Panelist: Mr. Fox McCarthy, Water Conservation Coordinator, Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority

Synopsis: An overview of types of programs, from the simple to the complex, that are available at the local, state and national levels.

#### TOPIC: EPA GUIDELINES AND DEVELOPMENT OF STATE WATER CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

Panelist: Mr. Chris Thomas, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Synopsis: Section 1455 of the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act required EPA to publish a guidance document on water conservation for public water supply systems. This guidance was published on August 6, 1998. This panel discussion topic will include a brief overview of the EPA Water Conservation Guidance, the status of its implementation in the EPA Region 4 states, and the status of water conservation efforts by state drinking water programs in the Southeast.

#### TOPIC: HOW WATER CONSERVATION FITS INTO THE TRAINING OF WATER PROVIDERS

Panelist: Mr. Jack Dozier, Executive Director, Georgia Water & Pollution Control Association