

Texas Water Conferencesm

Guidelines for Developing and Presenting the Conference and the Exhibition

Introduction

In 1996, the Texas Section of the American Water Works and the Water Environment Association of Texas joined forces to combine their members and their talents to present the largest water conference in Texas, the **Texas Water Conferences**.sm

Drawing on their collective experience of presenting their own separate conferences in the years prior to 1996, the two organizations created a joint process that is volunteer based using a Local Host Committee with representatives from the host City/ Utilities/ Consultants / Suppliers. Co-Chairs representing both organizations and a group of equally distributed volunteers who serve as committee chairs and committee members comprise the Local Host Committee.

For purposes of this joint effort, a contract was executed that served a variety of purposes, including outlining in broad terms what each organization would bring to the effort, and for tax reporting purposes, defined the terms of cash flow and distribution. A copy of that contract is included with these documents.

Since that first Texas Water Conference in 1996, various policies have been developed that have facilitated the presentation of the conferences and provided guidance to the Local Host Committees during the planning and presentation each year. These policies and guidelines are what follow in this document.

Every effort has been made to address the complete planning process including sufficient detail to answer questions that may arise during planning meetings. In addition, a project flow chart and other supporting documents have been included to make the development of the Texas Water Conferences both productive and fun for all of those involved.

Though there are some policies that should be closely followed, there are certainly areas where these guidelines are by no means the only answer to a question. And, these guidelines can be forever a work in progress, allowing for changes and updates as new ideas and venues make each conference unique and more productive. Changes to the Conference Structure, Events, etc. require formal approval of both organizations before they become official. See the final page for details of the change process.

While the Texas Water Conferences are a big long-term project, using volunteers gives each conference its own flavor and uniqueness that might not be found in a turnkey contracted effort. In addition, by using volunteers, costs are reduced and the net return from each conference provides additional money for each organization to continue to meet the needs of their members.

It is our hope that these documents and the supporting documents continue to be of value.

Links are provided throughout this document to move to and from key pages.

TAWWA / WEAT Joint Conference Guidelines

Below is a list of Key Topics in this document. Each provides a link to that particular topic. While it is suggested that the entire document be printed and read to get a full picture of the entire Conference, keeping the file available on a PC and linking to Key Topics will allow for quick reference. The Key Topics are listed in relative order of completion date and not alphabetically.

KEY TOPICS

1. [Site Selection](#)
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16. [Awards](#)
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Site Selection

Because of the growing size of the Texas Water Conferences, the selection of which city to hold the conference in is limited to just a few major locations in Texas. The entire conference is broken down into two distinct pieces. The first is the educational technical program. The second is the exhibition. Both are equally important and have significant requirements that must be met. Sites should be determined 4-5 years in advance by the Joint Site Selection Committee.

Joint Site Selection Committee

Each organization is to appoint two or three representatives from areas around the state. The committee will include one staff member from each TAWWA and WEAT. Working four to five years in advance, the Committee is to meet by telephone conference when necessary to determine the progression of cities based on the criteria of facilities necessary to host the annual conference. Once the future cities are determined, at least one representative from each organization shall make a site visit together to tour [hotels and facilities](#) to determine the best available hotel and convention facility that meets the criteria and cost constraints determined by the Boards of TAWWA and WEAT.

- Site location is determined by (not necessarily in rank order)
 - Interest from local group,
 - Ability to meet criteria,
 - Hotel accommodations,
 - Exhibit space,
 - Meeting space,
 - Cost,
 - Time since last conference at that location,
 - Desirable destination,
 - Desire to move conference around state, etc.
 - Impact on volunteers,
 - Population centers and proximity to population centers,
 - Ease of travel, and,
 - Willingness of vendors and attendees to attend.

Once a city and facilities have been tentatively selected, the committee is to report to the officers of each board their determination with an analysis of above criteria. Following approval by each board, staff from the each association will negotiate the necessary contracts.

Site Selection History and planned events

Texas Water '96	Austin
Texas Water '97	Arlington
Texas Water '98	Galveston
Texas Water '99	Fort Worth
Texas Water '00	Dallas
Texas Water '01	Houston
Texas Water '02	San Antonio
Texas Water '03	Corpus Christi
Texas Water '04	Arlington
Texas Water '05	Galveston (New facility planned for 2004)
Texas Water '06	Austin (flipped with Galveston in 2002)
Texas Water '07	Fort Worth
Texas Water '08	San Antonio
Texas Water '09	Dallas
Texas Water '10	Corpus Christi

Technical Program

The technical program is discussed in [detail](#) in another portion of these guidelines. However, during the site selection process, knowing how many technical sessions and meeting rooms are needed for the conference is essential to determine the suitability of a facility.

At this time, the [Program](#) will have up to seven concurrent technical sessions. The format or schedule of events is noted elsewhere in these guidelines. When reserving space in a convention center or large hotel with a convention center, at least 10 meeting rooms for technical sessions should be available. This is in addition to the space necessary for the Opening Session and Awards Luncheon. Two additional spaces should be reserved for securing items near registration and a volunteer room. These should be near the activity but out of normal conference traffic.

Seven of the meeting rooms are for technical sessions. Additional rooms are for various committee and other meetings (scheduled by the respective organization staff) and two rooms serve as a volunteer meeting space and a conference office.

Room needs

Technical Program	7 rooms – capacity of 80-100 classroom style
Meeting space	3 rooms – capacity of 30-60 theater style
Secure Room	1 room – lockable with tables/ chairs
Volunteer room	1 room – with tables, chairs

Exhibition Space

The Exhibition requires sufficient space for a 300-350 booths. In addition, space is needed for 6 competition areas on the exhibit floor. Please see the diagram of a typical exhibit space. The Decorator will assist in the design of the exhibit space. The competitions are discussed elsewhere in this guideline. See [Convention Center negotiations](#).

Generally, the total contiguous space for exhibits should be 75,000 square feet or more. This allows for 300-350 10' x 10' booths and 6 - 30' x 30' competition areas, walkways, space for food service in the exhibit hall and registration.

The exhibit space should be designed to facilitate the flow of as many people as possible throughout the entire facility. Every booth should have the opportunity for strong traffic. Food, event and break areas should be strategically located to cause attendees to pass by as many booths as possible. In some facilities, creative design and bridging of separate halls will have to be used to design the space. Booth sales should not commence until the floor plan traffic has been maximized.

Additional discussion of the exhibits chair responsibilities is under the [EXHIBITS](#) area.

Conference Schedule

- Days for the conference are generally Sunday thru Wednesday or Tuesday thru Friday depending on availability of facility. A typical schedule is below:

Sunday/Monday -Decorator assumes control of exhibit space to set up booths
[TAWWA Reception](#) (Monday evening) (not to be published)

Tuesday - [Exhibitors](#) move in until 3pm.

[Golf Tournament](#) at 8:00 am start

[Board meetings](#) in afternoon – time determined by each organization

[Meet and Greet](#) begins at 5pm until 7pm

[TAWWA Officers Dinner](#) (not to be published)

[WEAT Officers Dinner](#) (not to be published)

- Wednesday -** [Incoming Officers Reception](#) (not to be published)
[Exhibit hall](#) opens at 8:00a with
[Continental Breakfast](#) on floor of exhibit hall in more than one location to maximize traffic
[Opening Session](#) at 9:00 – 10am near Exhibit Hall
[Business Meetings](#) 10-10:30am in Opening Session room or other
[Awards Luncheon](#) 11:30- 1pm
[Technical Sessions](#) begin at 1:30pm
[Exhibit Hall](#) closes at 5pm
[Evening of first full day should be left free for vendors to entertain clients](#) (not to be published)
- Thursday -** [Exhibit hall](#) opens at 8:00a with
[Continental Breakfast](#) on floor of exhibit hall in more than one location to maximize traffic
[Technical Sessions](#) all day
[Competitions](#) all day
[Box Lunch](#) in [Exhibit Hall](#) 12 – 1pm
[Exhibit Hall](#) closes at either at 4pm depending on discussion
 - Move out begins
[Technical Sessions](#) end 3:30p late pm
[Awards Reception](#) at 4-5:30pm
[Dinner event](#) at 6:30pm
- Friday -** [Technical Sessions](#) continue until 12 noon
[Exhibitor](#) move out continues until 12 noon

Audio Visual

Most of the activities in the hotel(s), the technical sessions, the exhibit hall and other events require some and sometimes quite a lot of audio/ visual equipment. It is the responsibility of this committee to solicit the requirements for each location, session and event and insure that the appropriate AV equipment is provided.

Some of the [venues](#) provide limited AV in the existing contract. A local AV contractor should provide supplemental equipment. Using past experience, the Committee can determine the total AV needs. Previous suppliers should be contacted to allow them to bid along with obtaining additional bids. Prices for AV vary greatly from city to city and company to company.

In 2006, the AV Committee opted to continue using Technical Express of Saint Louis without using the bidding process.

The Conference generally provides one or two microphones in each technical session. Computer projection systems with screens along with access to overhead projectors are standard. Slide projectors should be available as well as TV's.

Is it recommended to coordinate with the [Program Committee](#) to establish a process for determining what each presenter requires in AV equipment. Some presenters may be asked to bring or arrange for their own equipment.

EACH PRESENTER IS TO BRING THEIR OWN LAP TOP COMPUTER. WE DO NOT PROVIDE LAPTOPS. AV CONTRACTOR MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ADAPT TO MACINTOSH COMPUTERS.

It is advisable to review all venue contracts for exclusivity clauses for AV, and well as what is provided as part of the existing contract, before contracting for additional AV.

Convention Center

[Convention Center and Exhibit](#) facilities will be contracted in advance.

The Convention Center Committee Chair is responsible for all events in the Convention Center including the [Exhibit Hall](#), in conjunction with the [Exhibits Chair](#); the *Opening Session*; the [Awards Luncheon](#) and all other food events in this facility in conjunction with [Events Chair](#).

This person and his/her committee should oversee and coordinate activities in the facility, manage all of the contract issues and be aware of all events to be held.

Hotel Arrangements

[Hotel contracts](#) will be arranged in advance at the same time as the [convention facilities](#). In general, the host hotels are upscale facilities. Using previous year room night numbers and previous experience in the host city, a sufficient number of rooms should be booked at the best rate possible. These contracts are to be negotiated by the organization staff to maximize space, room block, etc. and protect against overbooking. Contracts are to be signed as per the Joint Conference Agreement.

In some cases, food events hosted by the hotel can bring the room rate down. It is recommended to discuss this with the hotel to see if the room rate can be adjusted by food events. Keep in mind that all events are to be held in the convention center or as close to the convention center as possible. When considering holding food events in the hotel to offset room rates, bear in mind the proximity to the convention center. It is preferred to hold events in the convention center.

Other considerations for hotels are:

- Provide overflow hotels, also hotels in different price ranges if not already done.
- **Assignment of comp rooms is determined by AWWA & WEAT Staff**
 - Total number of comp rooms earned is divided in half with each organization able to use their half as they see fit.
 - TAWWA Chair & WEAT President may work together for benefit of conference, for instance in sharing one large suite with two bedrooms. The Suite common area is then available to conference for after-hours events.
- Include staff rooms at a specific reduced rate for organization and contract staff.
- The Local Host committee's [Hotel Committee](#) Chair is responsible for reserving the comp rooms for the use of both organizations. Check with officers of each organization for names, arrival/departure dates, special needs, etc.

Local Host Committee

The Local Host Committee is the operating structure of each conference. Each organization is to appoint one person in the host city to serve as their co-chair of the Local Host Committee. The two co-chairs should then recruit various other committee chairs as needed from interested members who are generally from the local area. In some circumstances, a committee member can serve from their own locale quite effectively as long as they are able to attend meetings when needed.

Committee Structure

There will be a number of committee members, each generally a chair or co-chair of a subcommittee and with an area of specific responsibility such as

- [Exhibits](#) (responsible for marketing activities and exhibit hall activities - unless otherwise arranged),

- [Hotel](#),
- [Events](#) (catering),
- [Publicity/ publications](#)
- [Registration](#) (liaison with contract company),
- [Transportation](#),
- [Convention Center](#),
- [Finance](#),
- [Guest program](#),
- [Competitions](#),
- [Program](#),
- [Audio Visual](#),
- [Signs](#),
- [Prizes](#),
- Gifts for National Officers.

Each Committee has specific functions as defined later in this document.

Officers Role

An officer from each organization (designated by each organization) will serve as official representatives to the Local Host Committee. It will be their responsibility to attend each meeting of the committee to help with organizational decisions and for guidance. These officers will provide the experience of past conferences to the committee, some of who may not have been involved in prior conferences. If an officer is unable to make a particular meeting, it is his or her responsibility to find someone to take his or her place. At the very least, he should make sure the other designated officer will be in attendance.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of each committee meeting are to be taken and reduced to a written document. They should be distributed as soon as possible to the committee members and to the officer members who can then distribute within their organizations as they see fit. Minutes provide a written documentation of all activities and decisions and also serve to keep any absent members informed as well as for the organizations to assure themselves that all is on schedule.

Financial Goals

The Local Host Committee will be expected to develop a budget for the conference as one of its first duties. The budget should be patterned after previous budgets in order to provide the necessary history to make sound decisions. **Fees should not be changed without approval from both Boards.** Use past fees to start with, then recommend changes only if there is no way to achieve the [financial goals](#) of the conference without fee increases. Each organization depends on the income from the annual conference for a large part of its annual budget; therefore, the financial success of each conference is paramount.

The conference budget is to be approved by the Officers of each organization before expenditures are made.

The profit desired from each conference is a minimum of \$100,000 (\$50,000 for each organization) plus a separate amount of \$8,000 (\$4,000 each) from the scholarship golf tournament. This amount may change each year depending on the needs of the two organizations, growth of the conference and the potential return.

The Local Host Committee through the [Finance Chair](#) is expected to wrap up all conference details, pay all bills, disperse the divided profits and turn the checkbook and account over to the next year's Local Host Committee not later than 90 days after the

close of the conference. If bills are still outstanding, arrangements will be made for one organization to pay and be reimbursed by the other for it's half. **Outstanding bills shall not delay payment of profit or transfer of funds.**

Copies of monthly statements should be sent to the Executive Director or other designated officer of each group. The Officer Liaisons and the Local Host Committee Co-chairs are responsible for monitoring funds committed and/or spent and keeping the conference within the approved budget.

Awards

Both TAWWA and WEAT will determine the number of awards for the Conference. The awardees will be recognized at one or two or possibly more events.

The first will be the [Awards Luncheon](#) where a limited number of special awards will be given.

The second event will be either the Awards Reception prior to the [Dinner/Night Out](#) or during the Dinner/Night Out. The decision of whether to have the Awards Reception or to incorporate the awards into the Dinner/-Night Out is still pending.

In any event, actual awards presentations are to be limited to very brief recognition of individuals and grouped where possible. The goal is to recognize a number of people as quickly as possible at each event to keep the awards presentations from going too long.

In addition to the awards events, an **Awards Display** of awardees will be presented in the exhibit hall. The Awards Chairs from each organization will be responsible for the display.

Also, an **Awards Publication** will be printed and distributed at each event with the full recognition of each awardee.

Competitions

There are a number of competitions held during the conference for both water and wastewater operators. The WEAT Operations Challenge event begins with the classroom portion in the afternoon of the first full day of the conference. All of the other events are held on second full day. These include TAWWA Top Ops, Pipe Tapping and Meter Madness; and, WEAT's Operations Challenge that includes Safety, Laboratory, Collections, Maintenance, and Process events.

The final schedule for the events is determined by how long the exhibit hall is open, though it needs to be open long enough to provide ample time for all events. The schedule should be reviewed by the Local Arrangements Committee in cooperation with the competition chairs from each organization. Every effort should be made to keep most of the competitions on the second full day of the conference in order to maximize operator participation and spectator participation. In order to do that, the Exhibit Hall should be open most of the day.

Space for these events should be in the exhibit hall and spread around the hall to maximize traffic. When space is at a premium, minimum space should be allocated to the events to maximize booth space in the hall. Check with each organizations competition chair to determine the minimum space.

Each organization's competition chair is to provide guidance on materials and set-up needed for each event. The Pipe Tapping will need water and pipe provided on site by the local utility. The Decorator will assist in the set-up. Most of the other events will

provide the necessary materials and set-up. Coordination of all needs should be complete no later than 30-days before the conference.

Each competitor will receive a T-shirt provided by the conference. The color should be somewhat different from the Volunteer T-shirt, although the design could be the same. The addition of "Operations Competitions" can differentiate the competitors' shirts from those of the volunteers. The coordinators of each event should provide the number of shirts and sizes needed to the Local Host Committee for acquisition. The Local Host Committee should give the operations competitions t-shirts to TAWWA and WEAT liaisons for distribution to competitors.

Each competitor will also receive a complimentary badge. The competitor also receives a box lunch ticket. Additional tickets are available for purchase for spouses, etc. Exhibit Hall passes (no food included) for spectators should be available at a reasonable cost.

Each competitor will receive a Certificate of Participation prepared by the Publicity Committee. It is the responsibility of each coordinator (AWWA & WEAT) to gather that information and give it to the Publicity Committee no later than two weeks prior to the conference. No certificates will be prepared on site. Any changes or corrections will be made later and mailed to the individuals.

Each organization has one person designated as responsible for their operator events. In the Texas Section, that person is the Chair of the Distribution Committee. In WEAT, it is the Operations Challenge Coordinator. Under each of these folks are a number of event coordinators who are the people responsible for all the equipment, supplies, and participants. The Local Host Committee responsible for the Competitions should work with the appropriate person in both TAWWA and WEAT. The Local Host Committee is responsible only for the space and the required services (such as water, electricity, chairs, bleachers, loudspeaker system, etc) for the competitions. TAWWA and WEAT are responsible for the actual competitions and all that is required to conduct them.

Exhibits

(Repeat of above information)

The Exhibition requires sufficient space for a 300-350 booths. In addition, space is needed for 6 competition areas on the exhibit floor. Please see the diagram of a typical exhibit space. The Decorator will assist in the design of the exhibit space. The competitions are discussed elsewhere in this guideline.

Generally, the total contiguous space for exhibits should be 75,000 square feet or more. This allows for 300-350 10' x 10' booths and 6 - 30' x 30' competition areas, walkways, space for food service in the exhibit hall and registration.

The exhibit space should be designed to facilitate the flow of as many people as possible throughout the entire facility. Every booth should have the opportunity for strong traffic. Food, event and break areas should be strategically located to cause attendees to pass by as many booths as possible. In some facilities, creative design and bridging of separate halls will have to be used to design the space. Booth sales should not commence until the floor plan traffic has been maximized.

- The Exhibits Chair is responsible for the physical arrangements in the hall, coordination with the decorator, location of operations events, layout of the hall, booth assignment for exhibitors, arranging for, in conjunction with the publicity committee and the registration contractor, all mailings to exhibitors, marketing and promoting booth sales to vendors, coordination of booth sales, exhibitor registration and packet preparation for exhibitors with registration contractor.

- It is recommended that an Exhibits marketing team (made up of AWWA and WEAT members) be appointed to solicit vendors for participation, make phone calls and personal contacts to promote booth sales.

IN 2005, it was decided to begin presales during the conference for the next year. This practice continues using a separate set of pricing and payment policies available from the registration contractor. Generally, more than 70% of the conference is pre-sold.

- The Exhibit Hall shall be open during the Meet 'n Greet held the evening prior to the conference's formal opening, all day on the first day, and all day the second day until mid to late afternoon. See conference schedule.
- Door prizes are given in the exhibit hall as part of the ongoing exhibit hall bingo program. Details are provided below (*pending*)

Finance Committee

Responsible for the creation of the Conference Budget using historical data as well as input from the Local Host Committee Chairs and various committee chairs. Using this information and the above [financial goals](#) of the conference, the Finance Committee should report to the full Local Host Committee on what the pricing for booths, attendees, tickets, etc, should be before any materials are published.

The budget will need final approval of the Boards of both TAWWA and WEAT before prices are published. Every effort should be made to hold the line on any cost increases. However, some increases may be necessary due to variations of costs in each city and in each facility. Increases due to extenuating circumstances should be documented and passed on to the next year's committee so that increases intended to be "one-time" are not inadvertently made permanent for future conferences.

Once the budget is approved, it is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to monitor all conference expenditures and insure the budget remains on track. **Any deviations from the approved budget must be approved by each organization or through their designated officer.** ([See Officer Role](#))

The Finance Committee should also establish a control process for paying all conference invoices.

The checkbook for the conference will be handed to the Finance Committee Chair after signature cards have been changed. The balance should reflect approximately \$10,000 of seed money.

The finance committee will have sole withdrawal authority of this account. Deposits will be made primarily by the registration contractor. At times, other funds may come directly to the Finance Committee to be deposited.

At the end of the conference, all bills should be paid within 90-days of the close of the conference. It is no longer necessary to leave 'seed' money for the next conference as the conference exhibit presales provide sufficient funds to begin the next year's operations.

Check #1 to TAWWA - One-half of all conference profit other than golf.
 Check #2 to WEAT - One-half of all conference profits other than golf
 Check #3 to TAWWA - One half of all golf profit
 Check #4 to WEAT - One half of all golf profit

Once these checks have been distributed, the Finance Committee will be instructed where to send all records and the Conference Check book.

Golf Tournament

The Golf Tournament is held on the morning of the day before the conference begins. This is the same day as the Board meetings. The tournament is publicized as a tax-exempt charity event benefiting TAWWA's scholarship fund and WEAT's scholarship fund.

The Chair of the Golf Committee is to lead a committee to:

Select the Golf Course

Consider one of the top courses in the area within the budget constraints;

Solicit sponsors for the event

Arrange for giveaways, prizes, etc.

Coordinate with the Registration Chair and the registration contractor to have the Golf Tournament Registration form prepared and distributed with all materials.

Ensure that all monies and records are routed through the registration process.

The golf tournament should net no less than \$8000 (\$4000 for each organization)

Guest Program

We need to provide this program regardless of the number of participants. The Committee needs to determine how to get all spouse participants preregistered in order to make the appropriate arrangements. Suggest a paragraph in conference announcement asking for preregistrations (no on-site registrations). It may be a good idea to provide a Banquet/Entertainment ticket with this registration (and price it to include that) because if the registrant gets one and brings a spouse/guest, it is likely that they'll want one and if not included, is an extra expense. Have spouse activities include a couple of activities that male spouses might attend.

Opening Session

Held the morning of the first full day of the conference. This event should be held in very close proximity to the exhibit hall if possible. The Opening Session is a one-hour event with remarks from the officers of each organization, the visiting national officers, some awards, and the conference Keynote Speaker. See the Conference Schedule.

Hotel

- The Hotel Committee Chair should serve at the local host committee contact for hotels.
 - Coordinate with Organization Staff for all catered events in hotel(s).
 - Work with Organization Staff with other hotel related details.
 - Arrange for location of all signage to be placed in hotel(s).
 - Be aware of other activities within hotels that are related to the conference including receptions, board meetings, officer receptions, dinners and any events

arranged by others but related to the Conference including hospitality suites and events sponsored by consultants/ vendors.

Events, Food and Drink

MENUS AND EXPENSES WILL BE NEGOTIATED BY STAFF.

Most venues control food sales and restrict outside food service. Refer to contracts to determine what rules must be followed.

As a matter of practice, some limited vegetarian or non-sugar (for diabetics) meals should be provided. However, we are unable to accommodate special dietary needs without advanced notice at registration by those who need such accommodation for difficult to manage medical reasons only. This accommodation is not to be specifically advertised. The registration form will make a standard ADA accommodation statement with notice that accommodation request must be made at time of early registration. On site registration will be accommodated if possible. Discuss this issue before committing.

Board Meetings

Generally, the Board meetings are held in the host hotel. A coffee, soda, cookie service is provided in each meeting. This should be arranged by the Hotel Committee Chair.

Exhibitor set up day

Periodically there is discussion of providing a continental breakfast or a lunch. Because of the high cost of feeding this many people, it is usually not an option. This could be a sponsored event. However, if nothing else, it is imperative to make sure food and drink are available through the facility concession stands.

Meet and Greet – Note: Could be dropped in lieu of a special breakfast first day of show

At the end of the set-up day, the Meet & Greet begins at 5pm and runs until 7pm. This is the first opportunity for attendees to pick up their registration materials and view the exhibit hall. Beer by the bottle or glass (Kegs, if cheaper), possibly wine by the glass; limited light ordoevres; multiple food locations all over the hall; possibly drinks by ticket (two per registrant in packet). Look for sponsors for this event. This event could have a great prize(s) at end of evening (must be present to win).

Continental Breakfasts

Provided in the Exhibit Hall on the first and second day of the exhibits and should include breakfast foods, fruit, coffee, juice and water. Note: Bottled water is discouraged. The caterer should provide water in other ways. See conference schedule. Past event history will dictate the volume of food to order.

On the last ½ day of the conference, refreshments only will be provided outside the technical session rooms.

Exhibit Hall Social Event – NOT HELD AFTER 2001

~~Held evening of first full day of conference.~~ *(Has been held in some years, but discontinued in 2002 due to belief of lack of interest of vendors.)*

~~The Exhibit Hall Social Event begins at 5pm and runs until 6 or pm. Beer by the bottle or glass (Kegs, if cheaper), possibly wine by the glass; limited light snacks; multiple food locations all over the hall; possibly drinks by ticket (two per registrant in packet). Look for sponsors for this event. Similar to Meet and Greet~~

Awards Luncheon

This event is held on the first full day of the conference. The event is a full sit down meal for 500 plus. Try to hold in same building as exhibits, preferably very close to exhibit hall. After efforts to blend many awards from each organization plus luncheon speakers, this event has been fine tuned to a 1.5-hour event that includes lunch, and key awards from each organization. Scheduled from 11:30 to 1pm.

Breaks in hall

During the afternoon of the first day of the conference, the break during the technical sessions should be scheduled in the exhibit hall, and should allow sufficient time to draw attendees into the hall for a break and refreshments. This should be repeated on the second day for the morning break. Depending on the exhibit schedule, the afternoon break on the second day should be in the hall if it is open, or outside of the technical session rooms if the hall is closed. On the last half-day of the conference, a reduced amount of refreshments should be provided outside of the technical session area.

When the breaks are in the exhibit hall, the refreshments should be placed in various strategic locations to maximize hall traffic.

Breaks should include coffee, sodas, water (not bottled) and possibly cookies or some other snack food. Should be limited in scope. In the past, if the exhibit hall is open during the second day afternoon break, then ice cream bars could be added. However, do not host an "ice cream sundae bar" as they are expensive.

Box Lunch

On the second day of the exhibit hall, a box lunch for 900 or more is set up in the exhibit hall. In the past, the box lunch has been packed in a special Texas Water insulated lunch bag. The purchase of this bag is handled with the purchase of the giveaways to full registrants and is only purchased if it can be managed in the budget.

The lunch is on a first come, first served basis and is distributed from two or more buffet lines placed in strategic locations in the hall to maximize traffic. Tables should be in certain areas of the hall to allow attendees to sit and eat their lunch.

Box lunches vary from \$10-\$20 each including a drink and are a significant food expense. The number purchased should be managed well and based on the registration counts. Each person who receives a box lunch must have received a ticket for the lunch when they registered or bought an additional ticket. Tickets must be surrendered to receive the lunch.

Those who are competing in the hall are entitled to a lunch and should be provided one free ticket per competitor before the lunch begins. These numbers must be factored into the total lunches purchased.

Dinner/Night out

The evening of the second day of the conference is reserved for the Dinner or banquet event. This is usually held away from the conference location and includes a dinner, recognition of special guests and the exchange of leadership of both organizations.

In addition, there is sometimes entertainment if the event is held at a special venue such as a sporting event, museum or feature attraction. When planning this event, keep in mind the purpose of the conference social events; volunteer recognition, networking, social interaction, business development, etc. of attendees.

Numbers attending this event can range from 300 (in a hotel) to 625 (Houston Astros new ballpark). Food costs are generally \$22-25 per person. This makes it imperative to negotiate a good per person rate, make it all-inclusive (i.e.; include tickets to the event) and estimate the target number closely. Staff will negotiate the menu and cost for the committee.

Transportation usually is required for this event so these costs must be factored also. Transportation should have a set range of times for leaving to move attendees to the event, and return them in a timely fashion. Buses should leave at certain times during the event to move those 'early' birds back after the meal and before the entertainment or event. Buses should also be instructed when they must leave (when a fixed number of people are on the bus as opposed to waiting for a full bus)

See more under [Transportation](#).

Guest Program

There will be a guest program every year. The hospitality room for the Guest (Spouse) Program is generally in the host hotel. A continental breakfast and coffee is provided each morning and a light break with coffee, sodas, and cookies in the afternoon. This is for the two full days of the conference. As the schedule is developed, lunches are provided during the events or tours off site.

Program

Both TAWWA and WEAT have separate Program Chairs. Their responsibility is to solicit for the program abstracts, determine which abstracts will be presented, schedule their respective program blocks and then jointly determine which presentations will be presented in the joint tracks.

[ADDITIONAL information](#) (show "information" in caps) is provided elsewhere in this document.

The Program Committee Chairs are to meet the publication deadlines for the Attendee mailout so the full program can be published.

They are also to keep the Local Arrangements Committee Chairs apprised of their progress and any assistance they need.

They are also to provide the number of volunteers they need, the names of presenters and moderators; and, to provide their signage needs to the Local Host Committee as well as insuring that the correct signage is placed for all technical sessions during the conference.

A separate document has been prepared to give guidance to the Program Chairs. It is available from the previous Program Chairs or the separate organization staff.

In 2005-2006, the Conference began using an online submission process managed by the Program Committee Chairs, organization staff and the registration contractor. This process is to be refined after each conference in a separate post conference meeting with the above named list.

Publicity/ Publications

- This committee's responsibility is to work closely with the Local Host Committee Chairs and the Publications Contractor (Registration Contractor) to develop and have printed all

of the conference promotional material including the Exhibitor Prospectus, the Conference Announcement, the Conference Program and exhibitor list, tickets, stationery, etc.

In 2005, the Registration Contractor assumed layout, publication and mailing responsibilities for conference promotion materials. With the advent of exhibit booth presales in 2006, the need for the Exhibitor Prospectus was eliminated. After exhibit booth presales were completed, all remaining booth sales information was posted for download to the conference website.

- This committee is responsible for designing the logo for the conference. The logo is to maintain certain elements each year with certain adaptations to the current conference city each year. **The logo must be approved by officer liaisons.** The logo is provided in a variety of format for T-Shirts, printing, web use, etc. The logo must conform to the copyrighted design standards and should be designed in house at no charge to the conference.
- The committee is also responsible for preparing press releases and coordinating press coverage of the conference.

Use of Conference Name

The name, *Texas Water (followed by the current year)* is a registered service mark of the Texas Section of the American Water Works Association for use for this joint conference. All rights are reserved.

We protect this name with all methods available to us including legal process.

All conference publications must contain the logo in at least one if not more prominent locations in a not less than a 10-point font including the following statement:

The name "Texas Water (year)" is a registered service mark of the Texas AWWA for this joint conference, all rights reserved.

If any questions arise, please refer them to the Executive Director of the Texas Section AWWA.

Registration

- All persons in the facility are to have a badge created by the registration contractor. This is for tracking and insurance purposes.
- The Registration Chair is responsible for coordination of registration with the Registration Contractor. Guided by the approved contract, all registration matters including registration of exhibitors and attendees shall be managed through the contractor. All paying attendees including exhibitors, golfers and golf sponsors and attendees are registered through the registration contractors
- All funds before the conference and during the conference flow through the Registration Contractor including credit card, check and cash payments. This includes golf proceeds.
- Speakers are required to register for the conference.
- Volunteers are provided a half-day registration in exchange for their half-day volunteer time. Volunteer badges are to be coordinated with the registration contractor based on an agreed upon deadline.

- Competition participants are provided with a complimentary exhibit hall only registration and a complimentary box lunch ticket. Their badges are to be coordinated with the registration contractor based on an agreed upon deadline.
- Award winners are comped to the event where they will receive their award. Recipients of awards at the Awards lunch are offered ONE additional comp lunch for a spouse or other guest on an as needed basis. Additional tickets can be purchased or provided at cost by the appropriate conference partner (TAWWA or WEAT).
- The list of award winners is to be provided to the registration team two weeks in advance of the conference.

Signage

A significant number of signs are necessary to guide attendees throughout the conference events. It is nearly impossible to list all of the possible signage needed, as each conference and each facility are different. Some are obvious such as signs for technical sessions. Others include signs directing attendees to the entrance of the exhibit hall, conference schedule signs at conference and at the hotel(s), bus schedules at hotel(s) and in the exhibit facility, sponsorship signs as needed, signs for competitions, golf tournament, etc.

One method for determining signage needs is first to ask each committee what they think may be needed. Then, the Chair of the Signage Committee should walk through all facilities including hotels to see where signs may be needed.

The Chair of the Signage Committee will need to work with every other committee to provide them with a signage order form; determine deadlines for ordering signs; determining how signs will be made; insuring sufficient easels are provided for signs; insuring volunteers are available to change signs in a timely manner; and providing a method for last minute sign preparation.

Signage can be very expensive. The Decorator will provide some signage under the current contract at a fixed price. However, if there is access to large format computer generated printing systems at reduced or no cost, some savings can be realized. This system can be used for last minute signage if necessary.

Silent Auction

TAWWA and WEAT have agreed to co-sponsor a Silent Auction for Water for People, a non-profit organization that provides limited water and waste systems for villages in remote areas of poorly developed countries. The Water for People Committee will solicit and receive donations as well as manage the Auction.

Space for the Auction display board is to be provided in or near the exhibit hall along with some tables to conduct Auction business.

Speakers

In the past, keynote speakers have been provided for the [Opening Session](#) and the [Awards Luncheon](#). However, due to time constraints in the luncheon, the current thinking is to provide a top-level keynote speaker for the Opening Session. Additionally, the national officers from both organizations will make brief remarks at the Opening Session.

TCEQ Certification Training Hours

The Program Committee is responsible for either requesting certification hours from the TCEQ or providing the TAWWA and/or WEAT staff with the complete program to submit for training hours.

The request must be submitted 45-days in advance of the attendee mailing to publish the information in the attendee mailing. If not, then the attendee mailing should note how many hours in the past have been available for attending the conference. The final TCEQ hours should be published in the final Program distributed on site at the conference.

Each attendee is responsible for completing the form to receive credit for their training hours. A TCEQ approved form will be provided for each attendee to report their training hours. The Program Committee must coordinate with the registration contractor to see forms are provided and returned to registration as required.

In 2006, consideration is being made for an advanced electronic reporting process.

Transportation

Transportation is generally only required for three, and sometimes four, events:

- Golf Tournament – most golfers drive to the tournament so only a van or similar vehicle is needed to transport golfers from the hotel to the golf course. The golf registration form should have a check box indicating the need for transportation.
- Dinner Night Out – If this event is located away from the hotel, then bus transportation to accommodate all who are attending is necessary. Busses should be available to take and return from the event. Limited staggered departure times should be arranged with pick up at the top hotels. Return should be provided for those who wish to come back after dinner as well as the between the end of dinner and the end of the event. Some bus companies will only depart if they have a nearly full bus, requiring attendees to sit for a long period before departing. A low number should be set and driver should be instructed as to this number by the bus company, or a fixed return schedule should be determined to avoid having attendees wait long periods if they are returning after dinner and before the entire event is over.
- Tours – Buses should be arranged for tours
- Guest Program – In some cities, a van or small bus may be needed to transport those who are participating in the guest program.

Tours

Tours should be scheduled to two, sometimes three, important facilities relevant to the water and wastewater industry. Tours are scheduled for the last ½ day of the conference. The buses depart at 8 or 8:30am and return no later than noon, if not earlier. Hotel check out time may effect the return time.

Tour tickets are required in advance to determine the number of buses needed. Tour tickets can be sold on site if need be. Transportation costs should be borne by the conference as they are an enhancement to the conference. Companies who host tours are responsible for any amenities provided at their sites.

Volunteers

A number of Volunteers in addition to the Local Host Committee and its subcommittees are needed during the conference. The number can reach up to 120 people. They include

- The Program Committee needs volunteers for room monitors during technical sessions as well as Moderators and Assistant Moderators.
- Program Committee may also need volunteers to manage signage
- The Sign Committee may need volunteers to place and change signs as needed.

- Registration will need volunteers to assist in packet stuffing and onsite registration
- Events may need volunteers to assist in managing crowds for food events, loading buses, taking tickets at events, etc.

Volunteers are expected to work at least four hours. In exchange for volunteering, each volunteer is allowed to attend the conference for the remainder of the day they work.

Each volunteer is given a T-Shirt with the conference design as well as a complimentary one-day badge. The color should be somewhat different than the Competition T-shirts, though the design could be the same. The volunteer coordinator is responsible for totaling the number of volunteer and competition T-Shirts and placing the final order for all T-Shirts.

Shirts are ordered along with the [Competition shirts](#) to realize the best price for the volume. Bids for shirts are to be handled locally.

Other Events

TAWWA Pre-Conference Reception – Held on the day before the Golf Tournament/ Board Meetings. An invitation event but open to all who are in town for the conference. Usually held in the host hotel in the early evening. Arranged and paid for directly by TAWWA and not to be funded as a joint conference event.

TAWWA Officer Dinner – Follows the Meet & Greet and to honor the National Officer. The TAWWA officers will arrange for a dinner event at a location offsite. An invitation only event and not part of the conference. Paid directly by TAWWA.

WEAT Officers Dinner – Follows the Meet & Greet and is to honor the WEAT National Officer. The WEAT officers will arrange for a dinner event at a location offsite. An invitation only event and not part of the conference. Paid directly by WEAT.

Reception for Incoming Officers – Held on the evening of the Meet & Greet, usually 9p – 12 midnight. In the past, this has been hosted by consultants and is not part of the conference budget. However, in 2005, the Conference assumed responsibility for this event and sponsors are solicited during the normal sponsorship process

End of the First Full Day – No conference events are to be scheduled at the end of this day to allow consultants and exhibitors the opportunity to socialize with clients, or to allow clients to attend hospitality suites or sponsored events.

Things Not To Change

Golf Tournament should be held early on the day before the first day of the conference.

Board Meetings

AWWA and WEAT will have Board meetings on the day before the first day of the conference

AWWA - 2 pm - 5pm (Time is subject to change)

WEAT - 2 pm - 5 pm (Time is subject to change)

Meet 'n Greet will be held at the end of the exhibitor set-up day (day before first day of conference).

Opening Session

Will be held in morning of the first full day for one hour.

Business Meetings

TAWWA **will** and WEAT **may** have Business Meetings after the Opening Session.

Awards Luncheon

Will be held at lunch of first full day.

AWWA and WEAT awards will be given

Evening of first full day should be left free for vendors to entertain clients

Exhibition

Hours may be negotiable but are usually two full days plus the Meet n Greet. Hall should generally not close before 4 pm on the last day of exhibits because the operations competitions are still ongoing.

Operations Competitions will be held on second day, all day

Complimentary registrations and lunch tickets will be provided to all participants

Awards Reception & Dinner/Social

Will be held on evening of second full day

Items to be decided by Local Host Committee

- Theme for conference (if any)
- Logo for conference (with Boards' approvals)
- Type of banquet/social event
- Conference giveaways
- Spouse/guest program

TAWWA/WEAT will provide or do the following

- Pre-negotiated contracts for Hotels, Convention Facility, Exhibitor Sales and Registration, and Attendee Registration, including online registration.
- Pre-negotiated contracts for online abstract submittal.
- Negotiate all contracts for food.
- List of who gets comp rooms in order of priority
- List of all awardees for preparation of complimentary badges and provision of complimentary meal tickets if appropriate
- Awards for all recipients
- List of all operations competitions participants for preparation of complimentary badges, provision of lunch tickets, and certificates of participation
- Agendas and scripts for Opening Session, Awards Luncheon, and Awards Reception-Dinner/Social
- TAWWA /WEAT will send out awards schedule to all officers, division and committee chairs, etc. to make sure they have invited their awardees to the appropriate event

Local Host Committee will provide the following:

- Minutes of all meetings to TAWWA and WEAT officer liaisons as soon as practical
- Budget for approval of both Boards prior to final decision about registration fees
- Monthly Bank Statements to TAWWA Executive Director and WEAT Executive Administrator
- Certificates for all operations competitions participants (should be done ahead of conference)
- Meeting space for pre-conference meetings

Changes to Conference Guidelines, Conference procedures, formats and events.

To allow for full consideration of proposed changes to the Texas Water Conferences and to avoid unintended consequences, changes to these Guidelines, the Conference Program format/process or the schedule of events, etc, are allowed after an extended review process.

Proposals for change can be made at anytime. However, implementation can only occur after a full opportunity by both the TAWWA and WEAT Boards and a formal record vote by each agreeing to the changes. Following final approval by each Board, implementation is delayed until the conference following the next scheduled conference.

POLICY ON REGISTRATION

The Texas Water Conferences are presented as part of the education and training efforts of two non-profit organizations, the Texas Section AWWA and WEAT. The proceeds of the conference are used to further these efforts and provide a substantial portion of the funding for both organizations.

Because the Conference provides funding for future education efforts of the two organizations, and is operated on a low rate of return to keep costs to a minimum, it has been decided to establish a policy of or very limited comp or free registrations.

This policy applies to everyone including the Officers and staff of both organizations, the members of the Local Host Committee, speakers (except as noted below) and others associated with the Conferences. Some limited access is granted to competitors, volunteers in exchange for their work and as recognition to the local utilities and others for their commitment, and to award winners. Speakers who attend the conference only to make their presentations may, with prior approval by TAWWA or WEAT staff, be given a complimentary badge (no meal events included) for the day of their presentation only. ***All others, unless specified elsewhere in these guidelines, are to pay for registration.***

The National Officers from each organization and the Keynote Speaker are the two notable exceptions. Any member of Governors Office, the Legislature or their staff who desires to attend is also exempted from this policy. On rare occasions, other exceptions may be made. However, only the staff or Officers of TAWWA or WEAT, in consultation with each other, may grant other exceptions. In some cases, either TAWWA or WEAT may decide to pay for an individual's registration out of their own funds.

The Local Arrangements Committee is not able to make exceptions to this policy. This relieves the Local Arrangements Committee of having to be placed in the position of denying a request.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the TAWWA and/or WEAT staff.

Convention Center and Hotel Contracts

After the Joint Site Selection Committee receives approval for a particular city by both the TAWWA and WEAT Boards, representatives of each organization are authorized to enter into negotiations with both the convention center facility and hotels in the selected city.

The dates should be tentatively set at the hotel and the convention facility before approval, so it is likely that some negotiations have already started. Key elements of the items to be included in each contract should include the following:

Convention Center

- One space with at least 75,000 square feet for exhibits. Two spaces can be combined if there is an acceptable way to join them as one contiguous space.
- Ten technical session rooms in close proximity to exhibit space.
- Conference office space.
- Space for volunteers to organize.
- Space adjacent to the exhibit space for the Opening Session and the Luncheon.

Contract Issues and Tips

- Review in detail before signing. Have Exhibit Chair review, also.
- Look for what is included such as tables, partial AV, draping of tables, etc.
- Are there unions in facility? This may impact working relationships.
- Negotiate air conditioning on during set-up at lower rate.
- Negotiate reduced room use if not fully utilized (such as banquet space not needed due to outside event).
- Negotiate to eliminate room rental charges if food is served.

- **Allow sufficient time for decorator set-up and exhibitor move in.** Usually two days. This means exhibit hall space is rented for 4 ½ days. Technical session rooms are only in use 2 ½ days.
- Are there issues that may impact move-in, move-out? Where are loading areas? Any restrictions on street traffic in and out? Will you need special traffic control?
- Determine what exclusive contracts are in place for catering, security, water and electricity for exhibits, AV, etc.
- Are concessions stands open and what are the daily purchase minimums?
- See if local utility can effect some reduction in fees by representing the conference for part of negotiations. Cleaning fees or total fees can be reduced (eliminated) as a concession to other city departments or local contact.

Ask as many questions as possible. Try to reduce costs and resolve problems early.

Hotel

- Locate hotels adjacent to/in walking distance to convention center if possible.
- Determine room nights based on previous experience. Hotels will seek this information from previous conferences. The hotel may not be willing to block entire facility, so additional hotels may be necessary.
- Negotiate State rate rooms if possible.
- Negotiate the lowest room rate possible. It is quite OK to let the hotel know that the attendees are from government and they are not able to pay the resort rate. Don't always accept the first offer. Challenge the rate down. Let them know you are able to bring certain food and beverage events in exchange for lower room rates. Be prepared to commit those food and beverage events in the contract.
- Make sure the single and double rate is the same if possible at all hotels.
- Standard comp room exchange is one comp night for each 50 room nights. Try to negotiate that lower, such a 1 for every 30 or 40 room nights.
- Negotiate the Presidential Suite for free outside of the negotiations for the comp nights. Include the common living area and two separate rooms. If they won't exclude the Presidential Suite outside the comp room's rate, then it will be charged against the comp numbers.
- Negotiate a separate staff room rate for association staff and registration contractors, etc.
- Room rates will vary from city to city and some are not very negotiable.

Gifts for National Officers

The TAWWA Director and the WEAT Directors are the hosts for the visiting National Officers. They are responsible for locating and acquiring the gifts to be presented to the AWWA and WEF National Officers who attend the conference.

Beginning in 2004, artist B. Herd of Salado, Texas, has become the provider of choice for the Texas landscape framed prints provided as gifts.

The gifts ideally should be something reminiscent of Texas, preferably something collectible. Past gifts have included Remington statues, watercolors of the Galveston strand, a gift certificate for a pair of cowboy boots, artwork by local artists, etc.

If the Officer is well known to a member, that member may be able to help with the decision. The particular visiting officer should be kept in mind. If it is someone who wouldn't like any of the above suggestions, do not follow them. The point of the gift is a thank you for their attendance and participation in our conference. However, experience shows that something from the locale of the conference is best.

The gifts for the officers need not be identical, although they may be if appropriate.

For advice, if needed, please contact the AWWA Director (who serves as the AWWA Officer's host) and/or one of the WEAT Directors (who serve as the WEF Officer's host). These Directors will be able to help.

Also, keep the gifts should be about the same in cost, usually \$100-\$150 each, depending on the budget.