

# Texas Water Conference<sup>sm</sup>

## 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**.<sup>sm</sup>

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](#)
  - a. [Joint Site Selection Committee](#)
  - b. [Convention Center and Hotel Contracts](#)
  - c. [Site Section History and Planned Events](#)
  - d. [Technical Program](#)
    - i. [Room Needs](#)
2. [Convention Center](#)
3. [Exhibition Space](#)
4. [Conference Schedule](#)
5. [Hotel Arrangements](#)
  - a. See also [Catered Events](#)
6. [Local Host Committee](#)
  - a. [Committee Structure](#)
  - b. [Officers Role](#)
  - c. [Meeting Minutes](#)
  - d. [Financial Goals](#)
7. [Exhibits](#)
  - a. [Exhibits Chair](#)
  - b. [Exhibit Hall Incentives](#)
8. [Finance Committee](#)
9. [Gifts for National Officers](#)
10. [Golf](#)
11. [Guest \(spouse\) Program](#)
12. [Publicity and Publications](#)
13. [Use of Conference Name](#)
14. [Opening Session](#)
15. [Catered events and catering needs](#)
  - a. [Board Meetings](#)
  - b. [Exhibitor Set-up](#)
  - c. [Meet and Greet](#)
  - d. [Continental Breakfasts](#)
  - e. [Social Event](#)
  - f. [Awards Luncheon](#)
  - g. [Box Lunch](#)
  - h. [Dinner/Night Out](#)
  - i. [Guest \(spouse\) Program](#)
16. [Awards](#)
  - a. [Luncheon](#)
  - b. [Awards Reception](#)
  - c. [Awards Display](#)
  - d. [Awards Publication](#)
17. [Competitions](#)
  - a. [Shirts](#)
  - b. [Events](#)
  - c. [Schedule](#)
18. [Silent Auction](#)

## **KEY TOPICS**

### **Page 2**

19. [Volunteers](#)
  - a. [Number](#)
  - b. [Shifts](#)
  - c. [Incentive](#)
  - d. [Shirts](#)
20. [Program](#)
21. [Audio Visual](#)
22. [TCEQ Certification Training Hours](#)
23. [Registration](#)
24. [Speakers](#)
  - a. [Opening Session](#)
  - b. [Awards Luncheon](#)
25. [Signage](#)
26. [Transportation](#)
27. [Tours](#)
28. [Other Events](#)

## 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 staff of each organization.

The selection of locations should move geographically around the state in those cities with sufficient facilities, local support and popularity among exhibitors and attendees to support the conference. See the list below:

- 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.

Facility contracts are negotiated and signed by TAWWA and WEAT staff as determined among the respective staff.

## 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	2 rooms – lockable with tables/ chairs
Volunteer room	1 room – with tables, chairs

## Contracts

Contracts are to be negotiated and executed by the staff of TAWWA and WEAT unless the negotiation of a contract, such as golf, is delegated to the specific committee chair. All contracts must be reviewed and approved by either the TAWWA or WEAT staff. This process will be determined among the staff members as needed. For their own protection, Local Host Committee members should not sign contracts or assume liability for any contractual obligation.

## Exhibition Space

The Exhibition requires sufficient space for a 400-450 booths. In addition, space is needed for 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 100,000 square feet or more. This allows for sufficient 10' x 10' or 8' x 10' booths and the 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 Friday but can vary depending on availability of facility. A typical schedule is attached in Exhibit "A" 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 -**  
[Exhibit hall](#) opens at 10:00 a.m. with  
[Refreshments](#) 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  
 YP Reception 5-6pm (Convention Center)  
*[Evening of first full day should be left free for vendors to entertain clients](#)*

**Thursday -**  
 AWARDS Breakfast 7:30 – 9:15a  
[Exhibit hall](#) opens at 9:30 a.m. with

[Refreshments](#) 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 4pm Move out begins

[Technical Sessions](#) end no later than 5pm

[Event](#) at 6:30pm

**Friday -** [Technical Sessions](#) continue until 12 noon

**Facility Tours 8:30 – 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 audio/ visual equipment. It is the responsibility of the conference planners and the local host committee to solicit requirements from the Program Committee and others for all AV needs.

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

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 convention center or facility contract, before contracting for additional AV.

## Convention Center

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

All meal events are coordinated and contracted by staff of TAWWA and WEAT.

## 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 by the TAWWA or WEAT staff. See Contracts above

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 TAWWA & WEAT Staff**

- Total number of comp rooms earned is divided in half with each organization able to use their half as they see fit.
- The Chair of TAWWA and WEAT should each be provided a separate suite level room during the conference. 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.
- TAWWA and WEAT staff are 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. Attendance can be via electronic means when available.

### **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 assisting in the design of the floor plan with the TAWWA and WEAT staff in coordination with the Exhibit company).
- [Hotel](#),
- [Events](#) (catering),
- [Publicity/ publications](#)
- [Registration](#) (liaison with contract company),
- [Transportation](#),
- [Convention Center](#),
- [Finance](#),
- [Guest program](#),
- [Competitions](#),
- [Program](#),
- [Audio Visual](#),
- [Signs](#),
- [Prizes](#),

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, such as Association staff. 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. Association staff will help craft the line items and amounts. 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 profit desired from each conference is a minimum of \$250,000 (\$125,000 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 MOU between TAWWA and WEAT specifies that WEAT is responsible for providing the jointly controlled conference bank account. To expedite the payments of conference expenses, invoices approved by the Conference Co-Chairs and/or the staff of TAWWA and WEAT should be forwarded to the WEAT book keeper or designee for payment.

TAWWA and WEAT staff should receive reports in a timely fashion from the WEAT book keeper as to the fund balances. 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. No events are to be scheduled that overlap the Awards Lunch.

The second event is the Awards Breakfast. See schedule.

To expedite the presentations, awards 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. Meter Madness is also held after the Awards Lunch on the first day of the conference. All of the other events are held on second full day. These include TAWWA Top Ops, Pipe Tapping and Best Tasting Drinking Water event; and, WEAT's Operations Challenge that includes Safety, Laboratory, Collections, Maintenance, and Process events plus the Texas Shootout event. Other events can be added after a joint review by the Boards of both organizations.

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, generally until 4pm.

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. Competitions can also be located adjacent to the exhibit space to maximize the booth space. Check with each organizations competition chair to determine the minimum space and review the impacts of any location changes including impacts on exhibitors who generally locate near a competition.

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 respective events chair of each organization. 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 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. Association staff can assist in contracting for utilities. TAWWA and WEAT are responsible for the actual competitions and all that is required to conduct them.

## Exhibits

The Exhibition requires sufficient space for a 400 - 450 booths. In addition, space is needed for 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 85,000 square feet or more. This allows for sufficient 10' x 10' or 8' x 10' booths and the 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 sales of booth sales including presales, 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. Much of this work is in conjunction with the TAWWA and WEAT staff and the registration contractor.
- 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 the Door Prize program are finalized by the Local Host Committee in concert with the TAWWA and WEAT staff.
- Local Host Committee should develop process for logistics and expediting of move-in of exhibitors, particularly in where parking and loading dock access is limited.

## Finance

The Local Host Co-Chairs in conjunction with the Association staff are responsible for developing a conference budget and implementing the procedures for approval of expenses including forwarding approved invoices to the WEAT staff for payment.

The TAWWA and WEAT staff are to provide guidelines and accepted practices for this process.

All income for the conference is to flow into and be deposited by the Registration Contractor as per the terms of their contract. Approved payments are to be made by the WEAT book keeper or designee.

The TAWWA staff person or an Officer of TAWWA is to be a signatory on the WEAT joint conference account and is approved as a signatory of checks when necessary or appropriate.

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 WEAT book keeper will provide final reports to both TAWWA and WEAT staff.

### **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 (see schedule). 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 signs, 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)

### **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. Scripts for this event are drafted by the TAWWA and WEAT staff. No events are to overlap with the Opening Session.

### **Hotel**

- The Hotel Committee Chair should serve at the local host committee contact for hotels.
  - Work with the TAWWA and WEAT 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 TAWWA and WEAT STAFF using guidance from the Local Host Committee and previous conferences.**

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.

## **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 TAWWA and WEAT staff.

## **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**

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), wine by the glass; limited light hors d'oeuvres; 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).

## **Morning Refreshment Breaks**

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.

## **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. No key note speaker. 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. 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. Each person who receives a box lunch must have received a ticket for the lunch when they registered or purchased 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. Competitors will use the same lunch lines as attendees.

### **Night out/ TEXAS ROCKS**

The evening of the second day of the conference is reserved for the Conference Night Out event.

In 2010, this event became an extended reception with heavy snacks and drinks. This event was called **Texas Rocks**. During this event the Associations did recognize outgoing Officers and Welcome the Incoming Officers. This was a change from the event previously known as the Conference Dinner.

The **Texas Rocks** event was generally received though it is recognized that improvements can be made as the event is localized for each venue. The Local Host Committee should help build this event into one that attracts as many attendees as possible.

Suggestions include:

- Consider a nearby local venue instead of the convention or hotel facility.
- Venue should be within walking distance if possible to avoid transportation costs.
- Consider scheduling from 6-7:30pm on the second full day evening (generally Thursday night).

- Consider having local music as a background for the reception. Costs become a consideration and should be within budget.
- Food and Drink offerings should be reasonably adequate to provide a meal should an attendee desire. Some attendees may opt to have dinner on their own.
- Each attendee should be provided two drink tickets with their ticket (part of Full Registration or purchased separately).
- Association staff will help plan the menu as with other food events.
- Volunteers must monitor entry and exit during the entire event.
- Officers of each Association will 'pass the gavel' during this event as programmed by Association staff.

Details of the event should be planned and agreed upon by Local Host Committee and representative staff/Officers.

### **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. *THIS PROCESS IS HANDLED INDEPENDENT OF THE LOCAL HOST COMMITTEE.*

**The Conference uses 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 Program Committee Chairs, organization staff and the Registration Contractor.**

The Program Committee Chairs are to meet the publication deadlines for the Attendee mail out 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.

### **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.

The Registration Contractor is responsible for layout, publication and mailing responsibilities for conference promotion materials. The publications are the Attendee Brochure and Conference Program. With exhibit hall presales, there is no need for an Exhibitor Prospectus document. After exhibit booth presales are completed, all remaining booth sales information is to be posted for download to the conference website.

The Attendee Brochure is created for online use only and NOT mailed. A postcard is mailed to potential attendees to invite them to the Texas Water website to review the Attendee Brochure and register. Posting of the Attendee Brochure and other website management issues are managed by the Association staff.

- 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 as per trademark requirements. **The logo must be approved by the Local Host Committee...** The logo is provided in a variety of formats for T-Shirts, printing, web use, etc. The logo must conform to the trademark 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 complementary 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. Spouses and friends of competitors must purchase an exhibit hall only or greater registration plus any tickets for meals, etc.
- Award winners are comped to the event where they will receive their award. Recipients of awards at the Awards lunch of Awards Breakfast are offered ONE additional comp ticket for a spouse of 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 signage under the current contract at a fixed price per sign. Discounts are available for early submission to the Decorator of needed signs.

### **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.

As TAWWA and WEAT are cosigners to an MOU with WEAT granting them sole authority to represent Water for People within Texas, donations to Water for People are to be processed through TAWWA or WEAT and forwarded to Water for People.

## Speakers

The Conference Keynote speaker will be selected in conjunction with the TAWWA and WEAT officers, staff and the Local Host Committee Chairs. The keynote speaker as well as all other speakers including the representatives from AWWA and WEF will be presented 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. TAWWA and WEAT staff may solicit additional review from qualified individuals to help maximize approved hours for the conference.

This includes TCEQ Operator hours, approval for Licensed Engineers, Attorneys or others who may wish continuing education hours (CEU) for attendance at the conference.

Texas Water will conform to all rules and procedures in effect at the time of the conference for approval and reporting of hours to the appropriate agency.

## Transportation

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

- Night Out Event – 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 affect the return time.

**Tour tickets are required in advance for security and to determine the number of buses needed. Tour tickets can be sold on site if all security and other requirements can be met. 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 at no cost. In exchange for this commitment, volunteers are eligible to receive CEUs equal to the hours they work following the accepted reporting processes. Exceptions including to this practice can be accommodated on a case by case basis. Volunteers are limited to working/attending for one day only.

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.

**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**

TAWWA and WEAT will have Board meetings on the day before the first day of the conference  
TAWWA - 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 or at the end of the Awards Luncheon.

**Awards Luncheon**

Will be held at lunch of first full day.  
TAWWA and WEAT awards will be given

**Awards Breakfast**

To be held the morning of the second full day of the conference.

**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**

Complimentary registrations and lunch tickets will be provided to all participant.

**Dinner/Social or Night Out**

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 approvals)
- Type of banquet/social event/Night Out
- Conference registration 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 Breakfast
- 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 development in conjunction with Association staff.
- Meeting space for pre-conference planning 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 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

Using the approved site and schedule with consideration to costs and moving the conference geographically around the State, the TAWWA and WEAT staff are to enter into negotiations with both the convention center facility and hotels in the selected city.

### Convention Center

- One space with at least 100,000 square feet for exhibits. Two spaces can be combined if there is an acceptable way to join them as one contiguous space. (generally not done)
- Seven technical session rooms in close proximity to exhibit space.
- At least four other meeting rooms.
- Conference office space.
- Space for volunteers to organize.
- Two secure lockable rooms 1) A/V storage 2) Registration gifts
- Space adjacent to the exhibit space for the Opening Session, the Luncheon and Awards Breakfast.

### 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(s) 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.
- Add Internet rate protection clause to contract.
- Negotiate parking rates.
- 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.