



ELEPHANT *in the* ROOM a JCRP Community Roundtable

**COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
HOSTED BY THE JOHNSON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY**

AGING WATER TREATMENT INFRASTRUCTURE: SMALLER CITIES, BIGGER CHALLENGES

JANUARY 3, 2023 @ 6:30 - 8:00 PM

**JOHNSON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY HEADQUARTERS
210 S. MAIN ST., CLEBURNE, TX 76033**

BACKGROUND: The overarching issues with water infrastructure today are aging systems and insufficient funding for replacement. In a new report by Environment America, Texas ranks first among U.S. states for toxic discharges into streams, rivers, and lakes.

Infrastructure includes the various components that pump, divert, transport, store, treat and deliver safe drinking water. Corrosion, crumbling and age not only weaken these systems, but lead to them breaking down or leaching chemicals and other toxins into drinking water supplies and runoff areas.

In 2021, the American Society of Civil Engineers issued a report that gave a grade of C- to Texas' drinking water infrastructure, describing it as "mediocre [and] requires attention."

According to data from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas had 3,866 water boil notices in 2021, the most in the last decade and for many small towns, system repairs won't be cheap. The number of sanitary sewer overflows more than doubled from 2,500 to nearly 6,000 between 2016 and 2019.

Texas' population is projected to grow by more than 1,000 people per day during the next five decades — from 29.7 million in 2020 to approximately 51.5 million by 2070. As population continues to grow in the state, the demand for clean, quality water is going to be a challenge because many wastewater systems aren't resilient enough to withstand this increase in population demand; and with extreme weather events, water supply systems have become increasingly more vulnerable to disasters.

About 80% of Texas has been facing drought conditions most of the year, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. When it gets dry, the soil expands and contracts, and when it does that, it impacts everything underground. Additionally, the last winter storm also caused pipes to freeze and burst all throughout the state.

Water quality and infrastructure are inextricably linked, and this relationship is only going to become more important and tenuous over time without proper funding and attention.

<https://infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/texas/>

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