By Kenneth Welch, Founder, Open Government in Blanco County TX; OGBCTX, LLC; https://www.opengovernmentinblancocountytx.org, February 29, 2024

**Groundwater District Vacancy During Severe Drought is a Concern**

The Blanco Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District (BPGCD) finds itself without a General Manager during our severe drought and just as a shift in District focus was taking shape.

Paul Babb was hired, in part, as a key to the District's succession plan in anticipation of the retirement of the long time former General Manager, Ron Fiesler. Prior to assuming the General Manager duties Mr. Babb focused on migration of well data to a new on-line database to improve the district's ability to manage the data for all the aquifers across Blanco County.

When Mr. Babb assumed the General Manager role he immediately began looking to the future and driving the district's focus with science and data. Much of the available data, however, was incomplete or in paper format, requiring transfer to an electronic format. Other well sites had incomplete data which needed to be updated through labor intensive field investigation and research.

Also, during Mr. Babb's short tenure as General Manager, the BPGCD passed a resolution supporting rainwater harvesting as an alternative water source for all Blanco County users. The District forwarded their resolution to the Blanco County Commissioners and the strong recommendation has now been included in the Blanco County Subdivision Rules and Regulations.

Since Mr. Babb's arrival at the BPGCD a forward looking direction and scientific focus has been established. However, his departure to a higher paying position at the Hill Country Groundwater Conservation District leaves a void that must be filled.

Blanco County is entering a period of rapid growth with uncertainty regarding the future water supply to support residential and commercial operations that seem inevitable.

It is imperative that the forward looking direction be maintained and resources needed to bring all district data up to standard are provided. Only with strong leadership and quality data can the needed modeling and studies be completed to support future water projections and aquifer studies.

Blanco County cannot afford to have a Groundwater District that is not fully staffed. Our District must be prepared to set pay at a level to attract and hold a highly qualified individual. The Board of Directors has established a committee, headed by George Cofran, to conduct a search and recruit a General Manager.

Please contact Mr. Cofran, and offer your support for a wide reaching search to fill the position with an experienced professional. In addition to your verbal support the District will welcome volunteers who can assist through the transition period.

Contact:

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