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San Jacinto River Authority Distributes Contracts for Participation in H2ALL Countywide Water Solution

Contract offers all Montgomery County regulated water systems the opportunity to share costs equally and equitably for achieving countywide compliance with Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District's groundwater reduction mandate.

Lake Conroe, Texas (December 21, 2009) – With the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District's ("LSGCD") final rules approved and the official deadline for compliance drawing closer, the San Jacinto River Authority ("SJRA") began distribution of contracts that would provide an affordable option for bringing all regulated water systems in Montgomery County into compliance with the new regulations.

Currently, Montgomery County gets virtually all of its water supply from underground aquifers. Montgomery County's tremendous growth has resulted in a water crisis, as the growing water demand far exceeds the supply available in the underground aquifers. The voter-approved LSGCD has recently adopted a set of regulations intended to protect the county's underground water supplies by limiting the amount that can be withdrawn each year. LSGCD's rules require a thirty percent (30%) reduction in the use of groundwater in Montgomery County.

"In a sense, Montgomery County's growth is running the well dry," said San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) General Manager Reed Eichelberger. "Montgomery County has to address this shortage, and it has to be done soon, or we will have a critical water shortage. This contract provides an opportunity for all of us to work together and protect each other."

In response to the LSGCD rules, the SJRA is offering a countywide solution that allows all affected groundwater users in Montgomery County to share the cost of bringing the entire county into compliance equally and equitably, rather than a much more costly piecemeal scenario of individual Montgomery County communities each shouldering the burden. The distribution of the contract to join the countywide effort comes as a result of many months of investigating the best solution for Montgomery County.

"We've been studying this issue for some time now," said Jace Houston, SJRA Deputy General Manager. "A countywide plan that initially converts The Woodlands Township and the City of Conroe to a surface water supply to allow other users to remain on groundwater is clearly the most efficient, effective, and least costly solution for everyone in the county. We are fortunate to be in a position to be able to put this plan together for the county as a whole."

"First and foremost, the SJRA's mission is to develop, conserve and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River Basin," said Houston. "Our duty as a government agency is to find a solution to this water problem for the benefit of all of Montgomery County. We believe that this contract offers the least expensive and most efficient option for compliance for everyone in Montgomery County."

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