

San Jacinto River Authority Kids Page

What will it be like to live in Texas in 2060?



At one time or another, we all think about what things might be like a year or so ahead...but just try to imagine what changes might occur by the year 2060! How and where will you live? What career will you choose? How will you communicate... and learn about the world around you?

Looking into the future, considering and predicting changes that might impact our lives and quality of living is what “Futurists” do. Their research helps us -- governments, businesses, our educational institutions, our communities -- better understand what may lie ahead so we can positively influence the future by making informed choices.

Think how fast change is happening in our lives, triggered in part by advances in science and technology. Today, instant access to news and communication is available to just about everyone... children around the world have cell phones. Technology has provided faster and more efficient ways to do things; students are able to learn about anything in the world without ever leaving their classrooms. And similar advances in agriculture and medical discoveries are helping to solve some of mankind’s most urgent problems -- how to feed an increasing number of people and how to cure diseases.

In a recent article in the Smithsonian Magazine called “*The Big Think*”, the editors asked key experts from a variety of fields what they expect our world to be like by the middle of the century. Their predictions included: ■ the majority of people in the world will live in urban areas, and live to be older than people today, thanks to advances in genetics and medical research; ■ urbanization will lead to a “reinvention” of the education system as well as how/where we work; ■ the internet will continue to transform the media, changing how “news” is delivered; and, ■ with dramatic increases in global population, people will be increasingly aware of the need to protect finite natural resources and prevent them from becoming polluted.

Water is one of these critical natural resources. The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has the responsibility for identifying water needs across the state and recommending how to balance future water supply and demand. Right at the beginning of the state water plan, *WATER FOR TEXAS, 2012*, TWDB’s chairman points out that, “...in serious drought conditions, Texas does not and will not have enough water to meet the needs of its

people, its businesses, and its agricultural enterprises.” The report states that the state’s population is expected to increase from 25.4 million (2010) to approximately 46 million in 2060. Unfortunately, the state’s existing water supplies (surface water, groundwater, and reuse water) are projected to decrease about 10 percent. This means that if we were to experience a major drought in the years ahead, we could have an immediate need for more water for agriculture (irrigation) and for our homes, cities, and businesses.

Is there anything we can do to improve this outlook? The state water plan suggests that water management strategies -- including conservation, drought management, construction of additional reservoirs, water reuse, and technological options (desalination plants, etc.) could add additional water supplies by 2060. These strategies are expensive, but without taking aggressive action, Texas would face significant economic losses, including jobs.

These are the critical issues that youngsters of today will have to address as they become adults with families of their own. That’s why it is so important to make it a habit to use water wisely!

The water we conserve today, can serve us tomorrow! 💧

