

# **NBU NEWS RELEASE**

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## **NBU's water stewardship recognized by state organizations**

NEW BRAUNFELS—NBU was the recent recipient of water stewardship awards from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and the Water Conservation Advisory Council (WCAC)

### **2017 Blue Legacy Award**

The 2017 Blue Legacy Award was presented to NBU by the WCAC as part of the Texas Water Day at the Capitol on March 22. NBU was recognized in the Municipal Category for its stewardship of water resources and for demonstrating the benefits of water conservation, as well as recognizing conservation as an integral piece of sage water management. NBU previously received the Blue Legacy Award in 2012 for its highly successful and multi-stage leak detection and valve maintenance program and in 2014 for conservation education efforts made to highlight water stewardship.

The NBU entry for the 2017 Blue Legacy Award featured its complex and expanding rain water harvesting program. The Environmental Protection Agency cites that up to 40% of residential water use is utilized on outdoor watering. Through an internal study, NBU calculated landscape watering to be higher with usage being closer to the 50-75% range at a residential average of 7,500 gallons per month. The NBU rain water harvesting program was developed to help redirect the use of New Braunfels' drinking water supply for landscape watering .

Following the initial rain barrel rebate's success, NBU customers have been offered rebate incentives to remove thirsty turf grass and install permeable patios, as well as a multitude of opportunities for implementing and learning about other water saving techniques. These rebates and educational opportunities complement the rain barrels well and have been very popular with NBU customers. Another beneficial byproduct of rainwater collection is that it slows and reduces runoff in the areas where they are installed, as well as potentially slowing the runoff flow rate that may contain petroleum based chemicals from roads and driveways, and fertilizers and pesticides from yards that can end up in our waterways.

“The conservation education program that has been focused on behavior modification has generated very positive results in our community,” NBU Communications Manager Gretchen Reuwer says. “We needed to change the public perception of water and how customers use water daily. The primary tools of the program are education, public outreach, interaction, and increasing the community's involvement and understanding of water conservation.”

### **2016 Texas Rain Catcher Award**

EA will be receiving the "2016 Texas Rain Catcher Award" from the Texas Water Development Board during their board meeting on March 29. The purpose of this award is to promote technology, educate the public, and to recognize the excellence in the application of rainwater harvesting

systems in Texas and is open to all individuals, companies, municipalities, and other local/state governmental agencies. NBU submitted their rain water collection program that has evolved from (5) 15,000 gallon metal containers for a collective total of 75,000 gallon storage capacity, at the Service Center, that provide the sole water supply to the drip irrigation system for the property. To complement the cisterns and maximize their efficiency, the landscaping surrounding the cisterns is drought tolerant and identified with attractive and educational signage. The cisterns and landscaping have provided an educational opportunity for teachers seeking continuing education credits, children's groups, and visitors. NBU also continues to grow an external rain barrel awareness program that includes rebates, incentives for customers to grow their rain collection systems, and educational outreach classes that are offered to numerous public sectors. These events include DIY presentations that demonstrate how to construct a rain barrel on a limited budget. One of these events expanded into a class that included decorating the rain barrels and then placing them in local elementary school gardens. Lastly, NBU incorporated rain barrels as a new category in its annual Drought Tolerant Calendar Contest that resulted in commercial and residential winners showcasing their collection systems in the 2017 calendar, which is distributed to NBU customers as an educational and behavioral modification tool.

### **2016 Blue Legacy Award**

NBU is being recognized with the 2016 Blue Legacy award for its stewardship of water resources and for demonstrating the benefits of water conservation, as well as recognizing conservation as an integral piece of sage water management. NBU's submission for the award showcased its complex and expanding rain water harvesting program. One of the main reasons NBU developed the program was to help to curb outdoor water usage. The Environmental Protection Agency cites that up to 40% of residential water use is utilized on outdoor watering. Through an internal study, NBU calculated landscape watering to be higher with usages being closer to the 50-75% range at a residential average of 7,500 gallons per month. Following the initial rain barrel rebate's success, NBU customers have been offered rebate incentives to remove thirsty turf grass and install permeable patios, as well as a multitude of opportunities for implementing and learning about other water saving techniques. These rebates and educational opportunities complement the rain barrels well and have been very popular with NBU customers. Another beneficial byproduct of rainwater collection is that it slows and reduces runoff in the areas where they are installed, as well as potentially slowing the runoff flow rate that may contain petroleum based chemicals from roads and driveways, and fertilizers and pesticides from yards that can end up in our waterways.