It's the dawn of a new decade. What better time to reflect on the “state of the water” in San Antonio? Here are a few milestones marking our city’s rise as a national leader in water management over the past 10 years.

In 2010, SAWS became the first utility in the nation to capture methane from wastewater treatment to be sold for energy. SAWS reuses all three sewage byproducts: solids for compost, liquids for recycled water, and gas for energy.

Through an agreement with Schertz and Seguin, SAWS brought the new Regional Carrizo water supply on line in 2013. Leasing unused capacity in the Schertz-Seguin pipeline saved $88 million in infrastructure costs.

SAWS also achieved the highest bond rating in our history by reducing costs and increasing efficiency, saving millions annually.

With this solid financial footing, SAWS was able to negotiate the largest public-private utility partnership in Texas history. In 2020, the Vista Ridge pipeline will become our biggest non-Edwards Aquifer water supply, to meet the demands of a growing San Antonio.

Even with new water on the way, SAWS continues to make the most of existing supplies. Our “water savings account” at the Aquifer Storage & Recovery facility now holds enough to supply all of San Antonio for more than 6 months, ready to use in times of drought.

Of course, water conservation continues to be a cornerstone of our Water Management Plan. San Antonio’s daily water use per capita dropped to an all-time low of 117 gallons in 2016, thanks to programs like free irrigation check-ups and landscape coupons.

That steady commitment to employee and community well-being is one reason SAWS was named to the city’s Top Workplaces in 2019 — for the seventh time since 2011.

In what may have been the most ambitious achievement of the decade, the Bexar Metropolitan Water District, a utility the size of Corpus Christi, was seamlessly folded into SAWS without any disruption to BexarMet’s 94,000 former customers.

So raise a refreshing glass of crisp, clear SAWS tap water. Here’s to the next 10 waterful years — and beyond!
Second Saturday Habitat Cleanup at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, Saturday Feb. 8. Help clean up migratory bird habitats across the 1,200-acre natural area. Details at mitchelllake.audubon.org/events.

Help Rescue a River at Basura Bash
Pull on your long pants and work gloves and come on out to help clean up San Antonio’s rivers and streams during this one-day, all-volunteer event.

The annual Basura Bash is Feb. 15 from 8 a.m. to noon. Join Bastura Bob, everyone’s favorite trash-slashing, fish-faced mascot, and sign up to volunteer.

Visit basurabash.org for more information and to join the clean-up!

Don’t Trash the Tree — Recycle It!
After the holidays, recycle your Christmas tree into nutrient-rich mulch for free.

Bitters Brush Recycling Center, 1800 E. Bitters Rd. and Nelson Gardens Brush Recycling Center, 8963 Nelson Rd. will accept Christmas trees for free throughout the month of January.

For more information, visit sanantonio.gov/swmd or call 311.

Make It Count: Census 2020 Is Coming
Get ready to be counted — Census Day is April 1.

Households will begin receiving invitations to participate in the census in March. Census data is used to determine what will be spent each year on infrastructure and essential services such as schools, hospitals and emergency services.

It is vital that every person living in the San Antonio area be counted alongside the rest of the nation.

Population statistics are often used as a basis for many factors — from the number of seats occupied in the U.S. House of Representatives to critical research and the allocation of billions of dollars in federal, state and county funds that directly affect our lives.

For the first time in history, you can respond to the census online. Of course, you can still respond by mail or phone. Fill out the form and give your community a voice. It’s in your hands.

How Do You Access the Internet?
San Antonio, Speak Up!
The City of San Antonio’s Office of Innovation wants to know how you access the internet. How does it improve your life and your community? Share your experiences by participating in a short survey and be entered to win a $25 H-E-B gift card. Use your smartphone camera to scan the QR code and start the survey or visit any San Antonio Public Library or BiblioTech location. To learn more, visit SASpeakUp.com and click the Digital Divide Survey.