

SA officials examine 50 water supply alternatives

By **MATT PHINNEY, Staff Writer**
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City officials have identified 50 water supply alternatives for San Angelo and now it's up to the San Angelo Water Advisory Board to rank each source in order of its feasibility.

Each source has 10 criteria, like water quantity, water quality and cost of using the water. City manger Tom Adams asked board members to meet and evaluate the criteria for each source and rank it with a score of 0-10.

A score of 10 "meets almost all of the city's need for an adequate, dependable and low cost supply of water," according to the scoring system. A score of zero fails to meet the city's needs.

The board then will make recommendations to the City Council about which alternative sources make the most sense for San Angelo.

Alternate sources include using local aquifers as a water source and to store water, water conservation, drought rationing, purchasing local water rights, water reclamation, and using storm water.

"This report provides a framework to begin evaluating alternatives and put them in some rank and order as we try to consider a direction we would like to go," Adams said. "It will require additional study, but there is enough data gathered now that we can develop some general direction. We can do some additional study and refining through professional studies to determine actual cost and fine tune the effort."

Board chairman Drew Darby recommended holding a public hearing to gather input from taxpayers. San Angelo water users will pay the cost of finding new water sources and should be included in the planning process, he said.

"The public needs to understand and know the alternatives and appreciate the costs involved in these ideas," Darby said. "We can make all the recommendations we want and the city council can decide what to do, but the taxpayers ultimately will pay through usage and tax fees. We are working for them."

Ideally, San Angelo will expand its water system in one direction, Adams said. Installing a pipeline can cost about \$1 million per mile and stretching out in several directions would not be feasible for the city. However, Adams said "short legs" could extend in different directions and still benefit the city.

Darby also said cost can limit what the city accomplishes in terms of using other sources of water.

"We have resources available to go in a certain direction to maximize those resources," Darby said. "Going in one direction doesn't limit us, but it means we will try and focus resources on one direction. But if another source does come up and offers us an alternative then we would look at that."

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