

SAWS showing off businesses' water savings

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It makes sense that installing low-flow toilets or using xeriscape plants to landscape a business can save money.

But how does saving 64 million gallons of water a year sound? That's how much less water the FritoLay plant in San Antonio uses to produce potato chips and corn chips after it partnered with San Antonio Water System to employ conservation methods.

SeaWorld San Antonio, another early partner, estimates that it saves 20 million gallons a year because of a wide range of water-savings methods.

FritoLay and SeaWorld are two of the seven businesses mentioned in a SAWS advertising campaign that begins this week. To run for at least a year, the campaign touts the savings a business can achieve by conserving water.

"Our residential conservation programs are well-known," SAWS director of conservation Karen Guz said, but its programs to help business conserve are only now becoming better known.

"When we started, it was hard to find businesses like FritoLay and SeaWorld," she said.

SAWS now has a waiting list of businesses that want a conservation audit, spurred by support from some key groups, including the San Antonio Manufacturers' Association, that long have been supporters of SAWS' conservation program.

SAWS' advertisement touts the conservation methods not only at SeaWorld and FritoLay, but also at USAA, Coca Cola, Boeing, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas and the Hilton Palacio del Rio hotel.

As word of savings to the bottom line has gotten out, there are seven hotels on SAWS' list that are waiting for a conservation audit, Guz said.

"It's really exciting that we are getting four-star hotels to come on board," she said. The Hilton Palacio del Rio was using 3.5 million gallons of water a month at peak usage times; now it is using 1.5 million to 2 million gallons of water a month, she said.

SAWS will spend \$5.5 million this year on its conservation programs, both residential and commercial. Its annual revenue is \$400 million.

SAWS provides some equipment for free to qualified businesses, including water-saving toilets and showerheads.

Businesses that have participated have saved a combined 331 million gallons of water in 2007, SAWS estimates.

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