

A newsletter dedicated to Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention www.abpa-sa.org

NOVEMBER Vol. 34 Issue 11

City of Laredo Cross Connection Issues

Laredo experienced an e-coli contamination event that was detected through routine sampling. This led to a Boil Order being in place for many days. There was flushing of mains and water services along with the maintaining of chlorine residual to assist in allowing the Boil Order to be lifted October 21st. The source of the contamination event is still under investigation at the time of developing this article. The cross-connection surveys conducted in the affected area resulted in discovering over 200 illegal connections, according to the Mayor of Laredo.

He also stated they were still reviewing causes and prevention measures in the future and how to move forward. Determining the source is still being investigated.

The Mayor also stated there would be rebates coming to customers due to all the flushing of home owner system and the inconvenience.

Uniform Test Procedures Across An Area/State

As most of us know there are numerous test procedures for BFPA's. They all vary somewhat and all basically evaluate, to some degree, if a backflow prevention assembly is operating as designed.

However, when enforcing a backflow prevention program, it is <u>critical</u> that the test procedure being used is uniform across the area/state. The reason for this is multiple.

One is the reporting (test and maintenance report form) and sequence of testing. This can be different and confusing to enforcement agencies and testers. The values being reported with one method and not with another, results in an enforcement agency requesting readings, when there may not be a reading with the procedure being used by the tester, e.g., R/P test - #2 check – USC Standard Field Procedure.

Additionally, training courses have a limited amount of time for a tester to concentrate and learn <u>one</u> test procedure for each assembly. The same applies to the hands-on renewal process. We have seen testers actually cross-up one portion of a test procedure with another as they come through CEU hands-on training, while making a comment – "They have a better idea"!

There are many national manuals that have varying test procedures, e.g., Univ. of Southern California's Foundation of Cross Connection Control and Hydraulic Research, AWWA M-14 Manual printed two procedures - one utilized in the NW Section of the U.S. and the other New England Test Procedure, PHCC, etc., etc. ASSE basically recognizes many different test procedures.

Cont. on page 9

November meeting Details

Meetings of the San Antonio Chapter ABPA are held the second Thursday of every month except December. Dinner and refreshments are served at 6:00 p.m. sharp with the meeting starting at 6:15. The next meeting is:

Date: Thursday November 14, 2025

Time: 6:00 PM Pre-registration only

required to receive a meal

Loc: SAWS Bldg. 2 Conference Room

2800 US Hwy 281 North.

Program: "Backflow Prevention Assembly

Installations" by Troy Baird

Meeting Sponsor: BAC-FLO Unlimited

No alcoholic beverages allowed

Next Meeting: January 9, 2025

Big Thanks to

Mid-West Instrument for sponsoring and providing training.

Mike Lueck for presenting the details and advantages of their new 855 digital gauge designed with many new features to prevent downtime.

Mid-West Instrument for the \$50 cash for the Raffle.

November Agenda

5:00 p.m.	General discussion and quorum
	confirmation

5:15 p.m. Call Meeting to order.

5:16 p.m. Secretary's Report. Read and approve the

minutes of the previous meeting.

5:20 p.m. Treasurer's Report. Discussion and

approval of the treasurer's report.

5:25 p.m. Supply Officer's Report

5:30 p.m. Vice President's, Directors', and any other

reports for the good of the chapter.

Comments, new business, any discussion.

5:40 p.m. Training Report. Training & Meal Sponsors

5:45 p.m. Webmaster Report

5:50 p.m. President's Report. New & old business

6:00 p.m. Meal is served.

6:15 p.m. General Membership Meeting & Training

1. Report from the Directors Meeting. President

2. City, regional, and national reports. James Cantrell and/or any City personnel present.

3. Training program for the evening.

4. Raffle prize drawing.

Ongoing Goals of ABPA-SA Chapter

- Educational Outreach with public by presenting at PHCC meetings, engineering firms, schools, and neighborhood associations. Continuing goal.
- Greater use of TCEQ website. Tracking of CEUs, Services available. Personal education.
- Increase member awareness of importance of chapter meetings. Increase attendance and public awareness.
- Increase website resource information.
 More detailed links to more information like TCEQ, COSA, and any place that would be helpful to our members

"Direct Talk" by the President

The Nber 14th meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room in the Tower II building located at 2800 U.S. Hwy. 281. Gauge testing starts at 5:00 PM and is iffy after 5:30 PM. The meal will start at 6:00 PM and the meeting will start at 6:15 PM. You may attend the meeting without preregistering, however, if you would like a meal, you will have to register via the email you will receive before the meeting. Stay safe.

Trinidad Chairez

Here is a good website for emergency information: www.sanantonio.gov/emergency/

Chapter Chatter

By Your, on Vacation Secretary, Greg Shean

The Annual ABPA-SA Fishing Trip. Part Uno. It started out with a crash. The Cast 'n Stay is at Riviera, about 50 miles south of Corpus Christi, on Baffin Bay, about 148 miles from San Antonio. Did you know, just because your ears and brain are being entertained by the radio, doesn't mean your eyes are open? Five miles north of Corpus Christi, I hit an IH 37, three cable medium divider. My first total at age 77. Only injury were the fire ant bites I got getting out of my, now totaled wife's, 2011 Ford Escape. Air bags did not inflate. Made it to Cast 'n Stay about 1 ½ hours later with a rental. Retrieved all the food the next morning from the tow truck's impound lot. Rented a new Chevrolet Equinox. My other rides are a '97 Tacoma and '73 VW. It took several minutes to figure out the Equinox's instrument panel. Suggest, if you are driving an older ride, sit in a new one and be mesmerized. I split the cost of a 2024 Escape with my wife. She got a new ride at half the cost. Relationship restored.

The Annual ABPA-SA Fishing Trip, Part Dux. Great weather and we had better than anticipated fishing. Friday evening: Bruce and son Trenten took over with hamburgers and hot dogs off their Blackstone flat top. Men and their toys. They did the same for Saturday's breakfast with cheese and bacon tacos. Lunch: Greg's recipe of Wendy's chili, without beans, was a hit along with corn chip scoops and cheddar cheese. Dinner: Bruce and Troy, cornmeal coated and deep fried HEB cod and fish caught off the pier. Greg deep-fried scratch hush puppies and large onion rings. More manly toys were used to cook. Sunday breakfast: The menu was sausage gravy and biscuits. However, everyone was packing up and ready to go by 9 AM. They were feasting on the COSTCO Danish, cookies, and Fred's Keurig cup coffee. No breakfast but many biscuits given away. Sausage gravy had not yet been made. Easy clean up and go. Amazing how men can adapt. Thanks to all that helped and those who were very patient.

MINUTES SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER-ABPA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, October 8, 2024

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT	EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – ABSENT
Trinidad Chairez – President	Art Trejo – Treasurer
Greg Shean – Secretary	Jeff Stricker– Vice President
Keith Waldrep – Past President	
OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – PRESENT	OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – ABSENT
Carl Michaud – Gauge Testing/Certification	Bill Hamrick – Membership and Newsletter
Supply Officer	Vacant
Jeff Meeks – Sgt. At Arms	Jim Cantrell – Liaison to SAWS
Joe Young – Program Director	Matthew Wilgen – Webmaster

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Bob Clark - 1 year	Bruce Rathburn – 2 years
	Jeff Hoffman – 2 years
	Robert Stricker – 2 years
	Fred Baird – 1 year
GUESTS PRESENT: Mike Lueck, Mid- West Instrument, Sterling Heights, MI	

Agenda Item #1. Trini started the meeting, asked that all turn off their cell phones and then asked for a moment of silence. INFO.

Agenda Item #2. Secretary's Report: The September minutes were in the newsletter. Keith made a motion to accept. Passed. INFO.

Agenda Item #3. Treasurer's Report: Art was not present INFO.

Agenda Item #4. Supply Officer's Report: We are still looking for a Supply Officer OPEN.

Agenda Item #5. Audit Committee: E-mail from Jeff Hoffman to Art and the directors: In general, the accounting is sound. Art is utilizing income and expense categories for everything that is being reconciled with the bank statements. There are some sorting, filtering, and formatting changes that could help with the P&L reports. I can work with Art on that. There are also a couple of transactions that I will address with Art directly, but no worries......It's all good. OPEN. Jeff Hoffman was not at meeting.

Agenda Item #6. Meeting Sponsor: Mid-West Instrument sponsored the meeting. INFO.

Agenda Item #7. Meal: Mid-West Instrument sponsored the Firehouse sub box meals of turkey, beef, or ham subs with potato chips, pickle spear, and a cookie. Trinidad delivered the water and sodas Art donated for the meeting. Please e-mail Bill before 5 PM on Monday. The order is input at 5 PM. If you do not order – you will only get one If there are any from a no show. INFO.

Agenda Item #8. Raffle: Mid-West Instrument provided a \$50 cash prize. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Training: This is the fourth time, since 2018, that Mike Lueck has presented a very different and informative backflow training. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Webmaster: The chapter website is still online but needs updating. OPEN.

Agenda Item #10. National ABPA: Troy asked all members to re-update their biographical information on the National, ABPA.org, website so they get all National's information. The ABPA Executive Committee is currently working on developing a code of ethics for ABPA. This would be a great thing to have as it would apply to all aspects and all personnel involved with the association. It would help protect the association from Injurious behavior related to board and committee activities. INFO.

Agenda Item #11. SAWS: Dan Crowley, Director of Governmental Relations, DC has received SAWS board permission to take his proposals to the San Antonio City Council in November to change the backflow testing from the current June 30th final due date to spread it out from January through November. These proposals aim to enhance the backflow testing schedule by shifting the final due date from June 30 to a more flexible timeline spanning from January to November. This adjustment came from valuable feedback from our members and other stakeholders, it will establish a rolling 12-month T&M report due date. The new Customer testing date will be assigned as close as possible to when the backflow was last tested. Customers who were out of compliance by June 30 will be assigned a new due date closely aligned with their last backflow test. Additionally, December will serve as a "catch-up" month, allowing for no T&M due dates.

To further improve communication and transparency, the new BSI web portal will enable testers to easily check on their customers and vice versa. This initiative will provide everyone with enhanced visibility into the compliance process. BSI will distribute letters to all testers in November and December to inform them about these changes, with the new web portal set to launch as early as December. Beginning in 2025, all testing questions will be directed to BSI, streamlining the process for everyone involved.

The T&M completion percentage for high-hazard assemblies has shown positive progress, increasing from 70% at the end of 2023 to 71.5% as of October 8th. SAWS is committed to reaching a 100% completion rate and will collaborate with testers to achieve this important goal, ensuring that every high-hazard RP Backflow Assembly is tested.

Dan also highlighted that SAWS is actively recruiting for open positions in the Backflow Department. They are looking for dedicated and conscientious team members to join their ranks. SAWS offers attractive benefits, including medical coverage, paid time off, retirement plans, and a stable work environment.

Emilie Prado, our key contact with SAWS Backflow, has equipped all backflow inspectors with a list of their assigned areas. To streamline communication, Emilie kindly requests that testers leave voicemails to document their calls, as she manages a high volume of inquiries. Last year, SAWS provided about \$40K in credits to customers as an incentive for getting their assemblies tested, and while this year has seen tighter criteria for adjustments, it reflects a focus on quality. She noted that 80% of adjustment requests were linked to tester-related issues. Additionally, she reminded everyone that the test submission deadline is 10 days, rather than 10 months. Looking ahead, SAWS is planning to enhance enforcement measures next year, ensuring compliance and safety for all.

Agenda Item #12. San Antonio Irrigation Association (SAIA): SAIA is sponsoring a Vendor Fair and Competition on October 19th at the SAWS Eastside Operations Center, 403 S WW White Rd, San Antonio, TX 78219. There will be CEU classes. It will be from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. There is no entry fee.

There will be over 20 booths with vendors such as SAWS, Hunter, SiteOne, CPS, KRain, Bobcat, Dig, Eco Centro and Longhorn, showing their latest products and answering any questions! Plus, some free giveaways. INFO.

Agenda Item #13. City of San Antonio (COSA) Plumbing Inspection: No report. INFO.

Agenda Item #14. Membership: Carl reported that Bill told him that membership is down from 86 to 82. INFO.

Agenda Item #15. Gauge Testing: Carl reported that 9 gauges were tested. He thanked everyone for their patience. Testing at SAWS on meeting days starts at 5:00 PM and ends at 5:30 PM so testers can attend the meeting. After 5:30 PM will require a "realistic" excuse. INFO.

Agenda Item #17. Fishing Trip: Cast N Stay's fishing pier suffered no Beryl damage. The fishing trip is from October 11th to 13th. The 17" minimum put a damper on the keepers for the last two years. This led to buying fish at the local Kingsville HEB to supplement the catch. Fish will be bought in San Antonio this year. The more that attend, the cheaper it is for everyone. INFO.

Agenda Item #17. Training: Mike Lueck, Mid-West Instrument, Sterling Heights, MI, provided training on Analog and Digital Backflow Test Kits. Presentation goals were to **1.** Define the main components of pressure-sensing instruments. **2.** Define and discuss two types of test kits - analog pressure gauge elastomer diaphragm / magnetic coupling and digital pressure gauge capacitive differential sensors.

All backflow test kits contain these three main components: **1.** Pressure containing element which keeps the system pressure and process fluid inside the instrument. **2.** Pressure sensing element which converts pressure changes into an "output" that can be measured. **3.** Indicator which is the

mechanism" that converts the "output" of the pressure sensing element to an indicated value of known units.

First discussed was the mechanical differential pressure gauges: **1.** Pressure containing elements which separates high pressure and low-pressure housings that contact and contain the media. **2.** Pressure sensing element is an elastomer diaphragm that converts the pressure differences between the high and low sides into linear motion via magnetic coupling. **3.** An indicator which converts linear motion of the diaphragm into rotary pointer motion indicated against a graduated dial arc. Mike explained that the diaphragm is fully supported so it is not damaged under pressure.

Mike then presented a slide showing animated differential pressure gauge components. The animation then went through the RPZ test procedure. Very difficult to describe in "two dimensions" what we were viewing in three dimensions. Troy Baird, your National ABPA president, said the procedure is not what is TCEQ approved in Texas. So funny but Mike handled it well.

Mike then presented an animated slide showing the 11 components of a 5-valve backflow test kit with animation of what happens while going through the RPZ test procedure.

With another animation, Mike demonstrated magnetic coupling with the driver magnetic at 0 PSID and then with the driver magnet at full scale. All this is what the tester cannot see but believes happens.

Second item discussed were the digital backflow test kits. **1.** Pressure-containing elements each transducer has its own housing. **2.** Pressure sensing elements two pressure transducers that convert pressure changes to an electrical output. (voltage, inductance, capacitance, etc.) **3.** The indicator contains a microprocessor and circuitry designed to convert the electrical output to a digital pressure readout that can be displayed on an LCD and one version had a thermal print out. Digital pressure sensing transducer technology has existed since the 1980s. Application of this technology into backflow test kits followed shortly thereafter.

Mike showed two examples of digital test kit components: one where the water was not isolated from the electrical circuitry, the other where it was. The problem with the first is that water and electrical circuitry was not compatible.

How Digital ΔP Pressure Sensors Work. The digital sensor has a very small displacement compared to a Manual gauge. One side of sensor is the "high" side and the other is the "low" side. Capacitance (Signal) from one side is the same as the other at 0 PSID. Capacitance (Signal) from one side is higher than the other at 15 PSID.

Mike then reviewed the manual and digital gauges: **Pressure Housing** – Manual: More Volume and larger displacement. Digital: Less Volume, very small displacement. **Pressure Sensing Element** – Manual: Diaphragm with range spring. Digital: Capacitive differential pressure sensor. **Indicator** – Manual: Diaphragm displacement combined with magnetic coupling to a dial pointer. Digital: Capacitive sensor to a digital value for display on an electronic device.

Analog or Digital: What Remains the Same. **1.** Physical Test Time – Still have test cocks to bleed, adapters to install, hoses to connect, components to test, assembly returned to as found state, etc. **2.** Both versions resolve 0.1 PSID. **3.** Both designs have the same manifold configurations –water in the bottom, air out the top. **4.** Both versions work with existing test procedures. **5.** Both Designs require accuracy verification, recommended annually. **6.** Does not eliminate false or inaccurate test reports.

For digital gauges: Why now and what is next: **1.** Save test data to always have it available at any time. **2.** Generate PDF files to drive more commonality on test submission forms and procedures. **3.** Download results from cloud and Integrate with other software.

There were a lot of questions from experienced chapter members. Questions were on the app on display to show how it works. Mike continued to answer questions after the presentation to the satisfaction of those asking.

Adjournment. Adjourn the meeting at 8:11 PM for the raffle.

Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA San Antonio Chapter





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YOUR BACKFLOW PRODUCTS CONNECTION

Cont. from page 1

Those involved with enforcing a viable backflow prevention program can relate first-hand, the necessity of an area to recognize <u>one</u> procedure, as recommended by the American Water Works Association M-14 Cross Connection Control Manual. Texas has utilized USC's procedures for the past 40 years and those involved in backflow prevention enforcement consider it a must for all courses to teach the same test procedure and for enforcement agencies to be requesting the same type readings in the appropriate sequence, due to reporting, troubleshooting, etc. Enforcement agencies have to review and many times question testers on their readings, etc. The person enforcing the program generally knows one test procedure and therefore will question a tester's procedure/knowledge based upon that procedure.

We had a tester in Houston telling a facility, having a containment R/P, that the water <u>did not</u> have to be turned off to test the assembly with their test procedure.

WHAT test procedure was this -- falsification? How is an enforcement agency to know if the tester is performing the procedure correctly? Know of a test procedure on an R/P where the water does not have to be turned off?

With national organizations, e.g., PHCC, ASSE, AWWA, etc., developing manuals, that can and are being used for testing courses – the administrative authority in the area/state should consider ensuring that all courses, and organizations are teaching and utilizing the same test procedure.

As an example, Texas only accepts USC's standard field test procedures in it's TCEQ approved training courses. While questions have been raised about the many other test procedures available, those that have **enforced** the testing portion of a <u>viable</u> backflow prevention program for any length of time and "speak backflow", realize how very important a single, uniform test procedure in an area is, as recommended by AWWA and required by TCEQ..

Bac-Flo Unlimited, Inc.

NOTICE

ATB SERVICES, INC has been the Mid-West Instrument factory service center since January 1995 and would like to thank all those who entrusted their backflow gauges servicing and Certification to ATB Services, Inc. Bill is retiring due to medical issues immediately.

The new service center for Mid-West Instrument is the San Antonio branch of **BAVCO**, located at 6017 Randolph Blvd, San Antonio, TX 78233. Phone (210) 451-7564. You may also contact them through (866) 318-0274. Again, thanks for the many years of servicing your backflow gauges.

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2023 - 2024

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Quote of the Day

"Backflow World - What we have learned and know about this field - is that - the more we know the more we realize we don't know!"

After over 50 years in the Backflow World - I came to realize this. Are there really - any experts in this field?

Fred Baird

This space is available for advertisements.



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Troy Baird – Current ABPA Vice President info@speakbackflow.com



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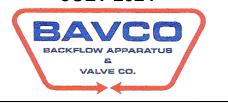


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There are two ways to join the San Antonio Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to set up your account and be presented with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. https://www.abpa.org/page/Join IMPORTANT Be sure to select the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) you want to join before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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There are two ways to renew your San Antonio Chapter membership of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to renew your membership and sign into your account and follow the instructions. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. https://www.abpa.org/page/RenewNow The program will present you with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. IMPORTANT Be sure the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) is/are selected that you want to renew before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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REGION 2		REGION 6		REGION 11	
Virginia	\$25.00	Arizona Central Coast	\$20.00 10.00	Indiana BPA Michigan	\$25.00 40.00
REGION 3 Carolinas	\$10.00	Central Valley California	10.00	Northern Illinois	23.00
Florida Suncoast	12.00	Hawaii Silver State	23.00 23.00	REGION 12	
Peach State "1788" Tennessee	30.00 20.00	Southern California	15.00	Eastern Nebraska	\$10.00
REGION 4	20.00	REGION 7			
Arkansas	\$10.00	Oregon SRC4	\$20.00 20.00		
Central Texas	20.00		20.00		
Corpus Christi Lower Rio Grande Valley	23.00 25.00	REGION 8 (USD)			
North Texas	23.00				
San Antonio	60.00				

Please make checks payable to: ABPA

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