

Community Outreach  
Mount Laurel Township Municipal Utilities Authority  
“Then and Now” Wild West Exhibit

It is vital that information about how important it is to keep water clean and the Authority’s system running properly. It is equally important to demonstrate to the community how the Authority itself is an important part of the community in delivering clean water. The Authority’s determination to show the importance of delivering clean, safe and affordable water led us to present our ideas at the Mt. Laurel Township’s Fall Festival.

The annual fall festival includes several area vendors and expects about 15,000 visitors. The Authority has been a part of this event for the past fifteen years. We always make an important “water statement” in a fun way. We emphasize water conservation, water and wastewater treatment, the need for water pollution control and the cost of bringing clean water to homes.

In 2004, our theme was “Then and Now”. We depicted the problems with water before the turn of the century and compared it to the ease and safety of our water supply today. We had many visuals including a water trough for horses, an old water pump, and pictures of wooden barrels of water being trucked into small desert towns. Back then they used old water towers when they were lucky enough to have them, small bathtubs, big pitchers to sponge bathe, a scrub board and tub to wash clothes, and an outhouse outside of the “saloon”.

In the saloon the Authority employees were dressed as cowboys and cowgirls with hats, jeans and bandanas sitting at a table playing cards. The bar sold two water bottles for a penny, the approximate cost of what 32 oz. of water cost our customers today. (The Authority actually let customers have water for free). Displayed were photos of today’s modern conveniences compared to the harshness of yesteryear. We emphasized the safety of today’s drinking water compared to the serious health problems that were encountered in the days before water and wastewater treatment.

The Authority encouraged recycling of the plastic water bottles by having residents toss the bottles into different size holes on a post board to win prizes. Keeping with the theme of the “Wild West”, one of our prizes was a deck of cards donated by the Wild West Casino in Atlantic City.