

# WaterFest

*Sixth-graders get lesson on future sources of H<sub>2</sub>O*

by Allison Gatlin [agatlin@eldoradonews.com](mailto:agatlin@eldoradonews.com) - *El Dorado News Times*, 9.2.11 P1



News Times/Michael Orrell

**WaterFest fun:** Brooklynn Turbeville and Conner Edgerton, sixth graders from the Strong School District, look at green algae and duckweed under a microscope during the 2011 Union County WaterFest at the old El Dorado High School. The event was held Thursday for area county schools and will continue today with students from El Dorado.

As a water scarcity problem grows and conservationists foretell of a less aqueous future, the Union County Water Conservation Board and the Louisiana Sparta Groundwater Commission teamed up this week to offer a series of lessons to prepare the next generation to deal with what this one left behind.

Funded in part by sponsors and a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Geological Survey, sixth-graders from across Union County spent Thursday learning what water contains and how much water one person uses in a day, as well as where water is treated and how

human usage affects local water supplies. Sixth-graders were given a real look through the 2011 WaterFest held at the old El Dorado High School and South Arkansas Arboretum. They learned what the future could be if water sources are taken lightly. Washington Middle School sixth-graders will attend WaterFest today.

Though egged on during a relay race — "The LongHaul" — to tote a bucket of water several yards to a 96-gallon dumpster —approximately what one person uses in a day — the message behind the game was simple: If you had to carry this water to your house every day, would you continue to use this much water?

The answer all around was a resounding "no."

"I would argue that if you had to carry this water from a well in your yard some 200 to 300 yards to the wash basin on your porch, you wouldn't use nearly this much water every day," said Lindsay Keith-Vincent, of the IDEA Place at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, who was leading discussion with the students alongside Tom Sewell, of the Louisiana Natural Resources Conservation Service.

She added, "I would use less because that's about 30 more minutes of sleep I could get every morning."



News Times/Michael Orrell

**From dirty to clean:** Mike Stratton with Entegra shows sixth-grade students how to take river water and make it clean enough for his company to use by adding a few chemicals during the 2011 Union County WaterFest at the old El Dorado High School. Students from throughout the county [El Dorado] continue activities today.

Under the purview of Rob Reynolds, of the UCWCB, and Mike Stratton, of Entegra/Union Power Partners, students also inspected a 48-inch pipe used to filter water from the Ouachita River and adjusted valves on a scale model of the same system in place for the river.

For the county students, a lesson in the effects of pollutants in the sewer system via a maze in which some children acting as water were treated and others escaped into the groundwater, streams or ponds, was an eye-opening experience into how pollution affects what could become potable drinking water.

Cynthia Ford, a 4-H volunteer with the Union County Cooperative Extension Service, explained that many of these students don't live in areas near sewer systems.

"A lot of these kids live in the country," she said. "So for them water goes into the ponds or streams, so this will give them an idea of what happens at a sewer-treatment system."

Other presenters taught lessons concerning what grows in the water as a method of identifying its quality, the effects of water rights in various portions of the country, and gave the history of the Sparta Aquifer and the Ouachita River.

After nearly a century of abuse, Union County's water resources plummeted in the 1990s and have only just begun the slow process of recovery following recognition in the early 2000s that the going rate of use would have eventually parched the Sparta Aquifer, explained Tony Schrader, of the Arkansas USGS.

Through the identification of the Ouachita River as a resource for El Dorado's three largest industrial users and conservation efforts locally, well levels have risen and usage has dropped significantly since 2001 when the UCWCB was created, he told the students.

However, even with the introduction of critical water designation 10 years ago which forced residents to cut their use by 70 per cent, water scarcity is still a quandary the next generation is going to inherit, said Lindsay Gouedy of the LSGC.

"They're going to have to make decisions on water in their lifetime," she said. "It's a problem that's going to be replicated all over the country throughout these kids' lifetimes and it's a problem we're leaving for them, unfortunately."

She added, until adults get as serious about water as they are about oil, water conservation is going to continue to be a problem that will eventually seep down into the next generation's daily lives.

Conservation efforts can only go so far, she explained. The next step is educating those who will be charged with solving the problem.

"If we don't get control of our usage and we don't learn to look for other directions and look for other ways of maintaining our water supply through developing reservoirs, through recycling water, through doing what they do at the Ouachita River, we're going to have a big problem," Gouedy said. She added, "Either way, this is something these students are going to have to develop, they're going to have to fix it — this developing and growing problem."



**The Long Haul:** Laurie Gilmore, left, helps her classmate Drew Ball dump water from a bucket into a holding container in the 'Long Haul' event. Students transferred water from the red tank, in the background, to the blue tank to simulate how water was brought to homes from a stream many years ago.



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### Football begins

Junction City Dragons begin their football season early, playing Thursday night. Other Union County teams begin action tonight. For full coverage, see Page 18 and the special two-section path-out highlighting all teams.



Photo: Theresa Hill and David

## WaterFest

### Sixth-graders get lesson on future sources of H<sub>2</sub>O

By Allison Galin  
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As a water scarcity problem grows and conservationists fretful of a less aquatic future, the Union County Water Conservation Board and the Louisiana Sports Groundwater Commission teamed up this week to offer a series of lessons to prepare the next generation to deal with what this one left behind.  
Funded in part by sponsors and a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Geological Survey,  
See WATERFEST, Page 3A

## College papers fuel Congress race

LITTLE ROCK (AP) — An Arkansas congressional candidate's 11-year-old column he wrote as a college student that said connecting classrooms and libraries to the Internet was a "terrific idea" found a fresh life online Thursday as Democrats set out the way to go. See Page 5A.

## East Coast waits for electricity

WATERFORD, N.Y. (AP) — Cold shivers. Mists in the dark. Refrigerators full of spoiled food. No TV. No Internet. Up and down the East Coast, patience is wearing thin among the hundreds of thousands of people still waiting for the electricity to come back on after Hurricane Irene knocked out the power last weekend. See Page 6A.

## Music variety set for weekend

It-Down and Dave Almond will be playing in town tonight. Chris Logan, Uquid Calabris, Age of Man and CS Oke, plus Bill Kerkar hit the local entertainment scene on Saturday. Standing out the Labor Day weekend is the 10th Anniversary playing on Monday. See Page 7A.

## Another party cloudy day?



Check the complete weather forecast on Page 2A to find out.

## Expo excites

Heather Hawley: With the unveiling of the 9/11 memorial, Dallas Cowboy display trailers, duck calling and — of course — the legendary rib cook-off contest, I have to say I am very excited about being able to finally attend the Outdoor Expo. See Page 4A.



**Waterfest fun:** Above, Brooklyn Turville and Connor Edgeton, sixth-graders from the Stone School District, look at green algae as it ducked under a microscope during the 2011 Union County WaterFest at the old El Dorado High School. The event was held Thursday for area county schools and will continue today with students from El Dorado. At right, Laurie Gilmore, left, helps her classroom Drew Bell dump water from a bucket into a holding container in the Long Reef event. Students transferred water from the red tank, in the background, to the blue tank to simulate how water was brought to homes from a stream many years ago.



## Murphy USA to be Boomtown Classic title sponsor

Organizers of the Boomtown Classic announced this week the Murphy USA will be the title sponsor of this year's event.  
"The game will feature the University of Arkansas at Monticello against Clarksville Baptist University on Sept. 17 at El Dorado's Memorial Stadium. According to Boomtown Classic Chairman Matthew Shepherd, "We are delighted to partner with Murphy USA to promote the annual Boomtown Classic. This collegiate sporting event has drawn thousands of football fans to El Dorado each year and we expect another great year. Murphy USA has been a great supporter of local organizations and we are proud to have them as our partner."  
The Boomtown Classic is in its third year. UAM last won the previous two games over Southern Arkansas University. This year the kick-off has been moved to 7 p.m. with tailgating, entertainment and other activities scheduled to start at 3 p.m.  
Murphy USA representative Jay Stagg stated, "At Murphy USA, we fill the tanks of hundreds of thousands of college football fans in 25 states each week as they travel to see their favorite teams play and we are pleased to have the opportunity to participate in such an event right here in our hometown. We've invited several of our key vendor partners to assist in making the tailgating event the best ever and fans will also have the opportunity to sample several of our own Murphy USA branded products prior to the game."

In addition to the Great American Conference football game, other activities include a virtual cook-off sponsored by TRIO Yacht Service and the Old City, a Kids Zone activity section, tailgating along Fifth Street and live entertainment. A halftime contest will provide a lucky fan an opportunity to win a Ford F-150 pickup truck from Voyage Road in El Dorado.  
Tickets for the event are \$15 in advance and can be purchased at Suncoast First and Suncoast South in El Dorado, Southern Bancorp in Arkadelphia, Murphy USA in Monticello and select Murphy USA stores across southern Arkansas.



## Drug delivery nets 20-year sentence in prison

By Sara Mitchell  
smitchell@eldoradonews.com  
Kirkman C. Gray pleaded guilty Thursday in Union County Circuit Court to delivery of a controlled substance (Ecstasy) and was sentenced to 20 years in the Arkansas Department of Correction by Circuit Judge Harrison Stephens.  
Gray, who is a husband, father, was caught on video and audio recorders selling Ecstasy to a confidential informant. The sale was also witnessed by another confidential informant. Gray was transported to the Union County Sheriff's Office where her car was seized and brought to the USDO.

Gray also was sentenced to 10 years suspended imposition of sentence, which will begin upon her release. Singleton gave her credit for 150 days of pre-trial incarceration.  
Other cases heard Thursday include:  
• George Le Dario Brown was given five years probation after pleading guilty to possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver (cocaine) and driving in a vehicle. He was ordered to attend the ACTS drug program and pay applicable court costs and fees. If he violates his probation, he could spend up to 120 days in the county jail or two years in the Community Correction Center.  
• Jerry D. Barsett, who is charged with conspiracy to deliver methamphetamine, was ordered to be assessed for the Smarter Sentencing Program.  
• Kimberly Lynn Smith, charged with first-degree burglary, will be assessed for the Smarter Sentencing Program.

## For the Weekend

High school football teams will begin the 2011 season with four local teams playing games tonight.  
The El Dorado High School Wildcats will play at Camden Bayview at 7 p.m. and Don Aze will play the Parkers Chapel Vikings at Parkers Chapel at 7 p.m. today.  
England will play the Strong Bulldogs at Strong and the Noyahat Leopards will play the Spackover Blackhawks at Spackover, with kick-off at both games at 7:30 p.m.  
The Junction City Dragons played their opener for the season on Thursday night.



**Finishing touch:** Ronnie Parker puts a coat of drywall compound on a seam on the ceiling of the hallway at the South Arkansas Arts Center. Remodeling of the center continues in areas of the galleries and in the reception area. The center is expected to reopen Sept. 10 after extensive remodeling.

Several events are being planned at **Moro Bay State Park** for the Labor Day holiday weekend. All events are free to the public.  
Beginning at 5 p.m. today at 5 p.m. on Saturday and at 10 a.m. on Monday, Moro Bay cruises will be held. Seating is limited and those planning to attend are asked to pre-register. Participants are asked to meet at the Moro Bay Marina.  
At 7 p.m. today, a program on "Moro Bay's 30 Most Banned Animals" will be held at the  
See WEEKEND, Page 3A