

# Commentary: Business of water

## Even at work, it pays to be good stewards

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### Water watch

This article is one in an occasional series Insight and Opinion is running on water issues affecting New Mexico. The articles are being written mainly by members of the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly ([waterassembly.org](http://waterassembly.org)). Each article represents the opinion of the author. Other articles in the series are available on The Tribune's Web site at [ABQTrib.com](http://ABQTrib.com).

### Today's bylines

Haynes and Henrie are Albuquerque professionals whose work involves water issues. Both are members of the Business Water Task Force, the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties and the Governor's Blue Ribbon Water Task Force.

As we move into irrigation season with a relatively good snowpack, the metro area business community looks forward to nature's cycle of giving us sustainable water. The business community remains concerned about our existing water supplies and proactive in its goal to be good stewards.

During this "Year of Water," the business community has focused on incentive-based conservation measures, educating ourselves, sharing expertise and participating in on-the-ground projects, including:

- Working with the Albuquerque City Council and Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority to require and provide incentives for low-flow fixture retrofitting for older residential and commercial buildings.

Kudos to Councilor Martin Heinrich for sponsoring the legislation and to the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, the Commercial Association of Realtors New Mexico, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Board of Realtors and the Apartment Association of New Mexico for their work on this issue. These associations are now proactively educating their memberships on retrofits.

- Embracing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification for commercial buildings and green ratings for residential housing.

- Working with Albuquerque Public Schools to retrofit fixtures and landscaping at Dolores Gonzales Elementary and Comanche Elementary.

- Exploring market mechanisms to facilitate sale and leasing of water rights.

Working with the public sector to identify existing buildings, built before conservation was a priority, that do not conserve water. Water audits are performed. The business community then shares costs with the public sector to retrofit and maintain these buildings and bring them up to date. From this effort, educated decisions and policies can be made so that these public-private projects continue in the future to conserve water.

On a legislative level, the business community continues to support funding for the Water Trust Fund, American Indian settlements and adjudications.

Meanwhile, it is clear that historical water laws need to be adjusted to benefit all citizens of New Mexico.

Finally, the business community supports sound water policy that balances economic growth, environmental impacts and cultural diversity.