

## **Section 4**

### ***Regional Coordination of Regions A and O – Use of Video Conferencing to Facilitate Joint Meetings***

In view of the fact that significant quantities of municipal water are obtained from areas of Region A to meet projected municipal needs in Region O, it is essential that the Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group and Panhandle Regional Water Planning Group coordinate and communicate regional water planning activities and work. However, given travel time and distances, plus the escalating cost of fuel, it is proposed that interactive video conferencing methods and facilities be evaluated as a means of facilitating coordination meetings of Regions A and O.

**Interactive Video Conferencing Services Needed:** Interactive Video Conferencing Services needed by Regions A and O are video conferencing equipped meeting rooms located conveniently to the locations of each regional water planning group; i.e.; a video conferencing room near or within Amarillo where the Region A Regional Water Planning Group meets, and an equivalent video conferencing room located in or near Lubbock where the Region O Regional Water Planning Group meets. Meeting rooms in each location need to be capable of seating up to approximately 60 persons, in order to accommodate regional planning group members, consultants, and the public.

**Existing Interactive Video Conferencing Facilities/Services located conveniently to members of the Regions A and O Regional Planning Groups:** The General Manager of the Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group's Administrative Agency, Mr. Jim Conkwright, and the Technical Consultant's Project Manager, Mr. Herbert Grubb located and made a personal call upon two Interactive Video Conferencing Facilities located in Lubbock. These two facilities were (1) AgriLife Research Facilities of the Texas A&M University System,<sup>1</sup> and (2) Texas Tech University. The AgriLife facility is located in two conference rooms and an auditorium. The conference rooms and the auditorium are each equipped with television cameras and

---

<sup>1</sup> Personal interview and facilities demonstration by Jaroy Moore, Resident Director, Texas A&M Research and Extension Center, 1102 E FM 1294, Lubbock, Texas, 79403-6603.

viewing screens and the conference rooms can seat between 30 and 50 persons and the auditorium can seat 80 persons. During the “visit” the facilities were demonstrated by connecting with similar facilities in the AgriLife Offices in Amarillo, Texas, the location of the Panhandle Regional Water Planning Group (Region A). At the Amarillo location, the video conference room can accommodate about 30, and is located about 50 yards from a meeting room which is large enough to accommodate the Region A Water Planning Group for an ordinary meeting.<sup>2</sup> The demonstration showed Mr. Conkwright and Mr. Grubb that the facilities would meet the needs of Regions A and O for coordinating meetings.

The Interactive Video Conferencing facilities at Texas Tech University are inside classrooms which can seat more than 40 persons, and although these facilities are available to outside groups, they are regularly used for classroom instruction. This, together with the fact that access to campus and limited parking would necessitate advanced reservations that would be difficult to meet the Regional Water Planning Groups’ schedules.

The AgriLife Research Directors of the Texas A&M University System in Amarillo and Lubbock have indicated that the fully staffed Interactive Video

<b>Interactive Video Conferencing Facilities</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>AgriLife Research</b>	6500 Amarillo Blvd.W. Amarillo, Texas 79106 Phone: 806/677-5600	Seating for 30 persons	\$25 to \$50 per 4 hour session
<b>AgriLife Research</b>	1102 E. FM 1294 Lubbock, Texas 79403 Phone: (979) 862-2240	Seating for 30, 50, or 80 persons	\$25 to \$50 per 4 hour session

<sup>2</sup> Dr. John M. Sweeten, Resident Director, Texas A&M Research and Extension Center, 6500, Amarillo Blvd. W., Amarillo, Texas, 79106.

conferencing Facilities are available to Regions A and O, subject to scheduling in advance, and at costs of \$25 to \$50 per four hour session to groups such as Regional Water Planning Groups A and O.

**Estimate costs of establishing and operating Interactive Video Conferencing Facilities/Services to meet the needs of Regions A and O:** Representatives of commercial video conferencing providers have provided estimates of costs to establish Interactive Video Conferencing capabilities ranging from \$12,000 to \$15,000 per site to \$15,000 to \$25,000 per site.<sup>3</sup> In addition, each site must have staff that understand and can operate the video conferencing facilities and services. Neither Region A nor Region O has such staff available at this time.

**Costs and services of Interactive Video Conferencing Facilities available from others in comparison to establishment of specialized services for Regions A and O:**

Interactive video conferencing facilities and services are available at very low costs to Regions A and O, consequently it appears that justification can not be made at this time for the purchase and installation of such facilities. Instead, it is suggested that Regions A and O schedule an Interactive Video Conferencing meeting using the AgriLife Research facilities at Lubbock and Amarillo in order to test the functionality of Interactive Video Conferencing for interregional coordination. If the services available are satisfactory, then it will not be necessary to give further consideration to purchase and installation of such facilities. If the available services are not satisfactory, and Interactive Video Conferencing methods are found to be useful the regions, then further consideration can be given to the acquisition of such facilities.

---

<sup>3</sup> Great American Networking Conferencing, Harris, Scott, and AT&T, Adams, Andy.