

Organization looking to sell water to oil companies

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Representatives with the Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority met with members of the Odessa and Midland community Wednesday afternoon at the Atmos Energy Conference Centre to discuss selling treated wastewater for to oil companies for energy production.

Ricky Clifton, general manager for GCA, said the organization is currently working to selling treated wastewater to oil companies for the purpose of hydraulic fracturing and water flood injection.

“We’ve been in the area for almost 15 years treating industrial wastewater and with the water shortage in the state and the drought, the issue ... and with water availability; we’re expanding our purpose of treating waste water,” Clifton said.

Gulf Coast Waste Disposal was originally formed in 1969 by the Texas Legislature as a non-taxing entity to help clean up the Galveston Bay. Odessa has been home to one of the organization’s four facilities since 1997 and it is used to treat municipal sewage and industrial wastewater. The other three facilities, and base of operations, is in Houston.

Though the idea is still in negotiation stages between the organization and Texas lawmakers, Manager of General Operations for GCA Gordon Pederson said the company is currently in the process of finalizing an agreement with Kerr Energy. If approved, the two would enter an agreement that would send up to 2 million gallons of water to the company for oil and gas production.

“By doing that, that 2 million we’re contracted to sell to that industry will offset any groundwater from fracking,” Clifton said. “It sets aside that ground water for other purposes for drinking water or other municipal purposes.”

Odessa Chamber of Commerce President Mike George was one of those in attendance at the meeting of about 20 people, saying GCA was a “diamond in the rough” in terms of water treatment.

Of the concerns raised about the process, one business owner asked if there would be any concerns of using treated water for fracking, which is regulated by the Texas Railroad Commission, and the water treated by the GCA, which is regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.