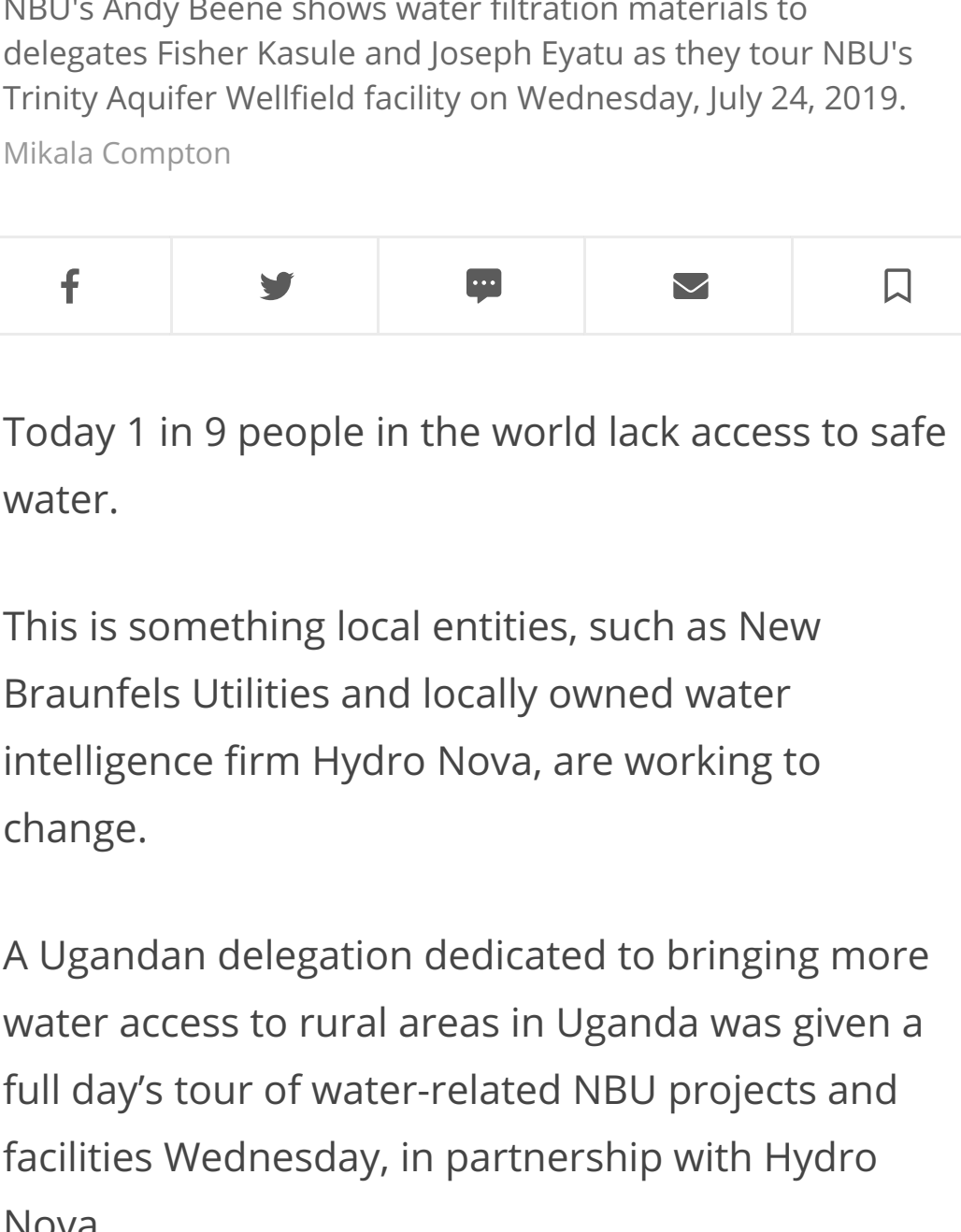


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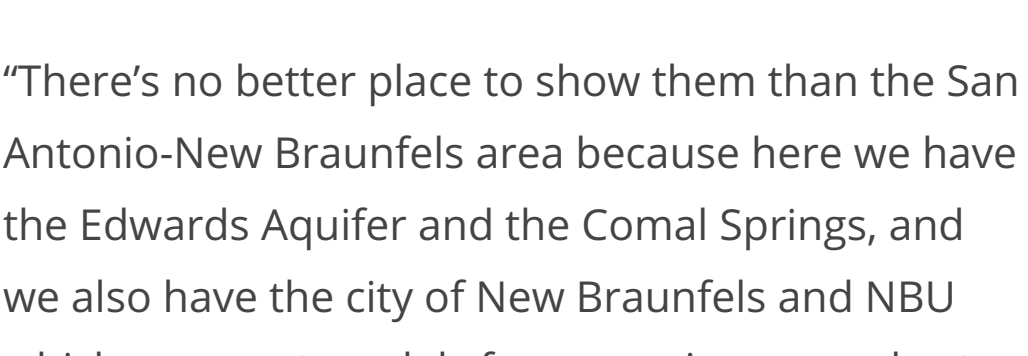
during NB visit

By Lindsey Carnett | The Herald-Zeitung | Jul 27, 2019



NBU's Andy Beene shows water filtration materials to delegates Fisher Kasule and Joseph Eyatu as they tour NBU's Trinity Aquifer Wellfield facility on Wednesday, July 24, 2019.

Mikala Compton



Today 1 in 9 people in the world lack access to safe water.

This is something local entities, such as New Braunfels Utilities and locally owned water intelligence firm Hydro Nova, are working to change.

A Ugandan delegation dedicated to bringing more water access to rural areas in Uganda was given a full day's tour of water-related NBU projects and facilities Wednesday, in partnership with Hydro Nova.

Executive director at Hydro Nova and New Braunfels resident Casey Walther said he was approached by Uganda, which is now one of his clients. A delegation of five Ugandans in the Ugandan Ministry of Water and Environment came to the San Antonio-New Braunfels area to learn some best practices in groundwater management on the utilities side.

"There's no better place to show them than the San Antonio-New Braunfels area because here we have the Edwards Aquifer and the Comal Springs, and we also have the city of New Braunfels and NBU which are great models for managing groundwater resources," Walther said.

Hydro Nova is working with the Ugandan delegation on a project to deliver resources for drinking water on a national scale.

"It's a 25-year project that would bring in 500 systems to rural areas in Uganda, and we hope it will be a transformative effort that will change the lives and livelihoods of Ugandans," Walther said.

The delegation, led by Joseph Eyatu, commissioner for rural water supply for the Ugandan Ministry of Water and Environment, were taken to the Headwaters at the Comal, Comal Springs at Landa Park, the LCRA groundwater well, and to NBU's Trinity Aquifer well field facility.

"We learned about the Edwards Aquifer yesterday and visited SAWS H2O facility," Eyatu said at the beginning of the tour. "Today we'll see that management at the local level."

The delegations week-long tour started in San Antonio with a tour of SAWS, followed by a tour of NBU facilities, and then by time in San Marcos learning about the San Marcos system as well as meeting with members of the Texas Water Development Board and the US Fisheries and Wildlife Department.

This was the delegations first time to visit the San Antonio-New Braunfels area, although it has been working with Hydro Nova for about three years, said Fisher Kasule, one of the members of the delegation.

"People will often walk up to a kilometer or more to get fresh water, and we want to bring it close to them," Kasule said. "We're trying to bring water to rural areas."

CEO of NBU Ian Taylor said it is an honor for NBU to have been selected as a utility to share best practices with the Ugandans.

"They thought enough of us to fly halfway around the world to come here," Taylor said. "We hope this will be the start of a relationship as they start off on their own rural system."

NBU is focused on bringing water to the region, but water efforts are a world issue as well, Taylor said.

"It's neat to work with others to form world partnerships," Taylor said. "Everyone is able to exchange different perspectives and come up with their own solutions best for their area."

NBU is proud to share its best practices with the delegation and hopes to help inspire solutions to bring water to rural parts of Uganda, Taylor said.

"We love to share — people who get into the water business are service-oriented people. They're not looking for a profit, but to bring a service to people," Taylor said.

COO of NBU Ryan Kelso said he is excited to see a relationship grow with the Ugandans.

"I am (also) interested to hear their unique perspective as they contemplate their project, and we at NBU are honored to help lead folks by showing off what we have here and talking ideas out," Kelso said.

At the conclusion of the tour, Eyatu said the group had very much enjoyed learning best practices about NBU and he enjoyed seeing the Comal Springs.

"There are natural springs in Uganda as well, but they do not have the same level of management as these do," Eyatu said.

A big limiting factor in Uganda is money, he said. He said he looks forward to continuing a relationship with NBU staff as well.

"Any one of you is welcome in Uganda anytime," Eyatu said to the group of NBU and city representatives.



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