

THE SPIGOT

from the NORTH DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

Rural Water Projects Move Forward Across North Dakota

Submitted by AE2S, Rural Water Expo Corporate Elite Sponsor

Southeast Water Users District Expansion – Construction Could Begin Next Spring

The water service requests for the Southeast Water Users District's (SEWUD) expansion project are almost triple what was expected when the sign-up campaign kicked off in January.



SEWUD has received 587 applications for rural water service. This spring, the State Water Commission approved grant reimbursement funds totaling more than \$11.79 million for the project, and last month the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced it will provide SEWUD with a \$4.7 million loan to support the system-wide expansion.

The expansion is in the final design phase, and SEWUD representatives are contacting landowners about easements. Pipeline installation could begin as soon as next spring. New reservoirs and pump stations will also be required to meet the increased water demands. Construction is projected to continue for two to three years.

In 2006, Southeast Water Users District, Ransom-Sargent Water Users District, and Dickey Rural Water Users District consolidated to form one regional water district, now known as SEWUD. SEWUD provides water service to approximately 2,825 rural water users and 24 bulk users in a 5,010-square-mile area, and operates in portions of Dickey, LaMoure, Logan, Ransom, Richland, and Sargent counties in North Dakota.

Northeast Regional Water District-Devils Lake Water Supply Project Moves Forward

The Northeast Regional Water District (NRWD) will move forward with the Devils Lake Water Supply Project, after the Devils Lake City Council unanimously approved selling water to NRWD. The project will serve existing users on the western portions of NRWD, the City of Langdon, and provide capacity for an additional 200 users who requested water. NRWD has requested an additional \$8 million from the State Water Commission to fund the new users, which is the second phase of this project.

Residents of Langdon voted to move forward with purchasing water from NRWD this summer, after it was determined it would be the most economical and drought-proof water plan for the future. The project includes the addition of 60 miles of pipeline, two new reservoir booster stations, and a new booster station within the City of Langdon at a cost \$23 million. The NRWD plans to begin facility construction this year and pipeline construction next year, with the goal of delivering water to Langdon by next fall.

Western Area Water Supply Authority Installs 1,100 Miles of Pipeline

The Western Area Water Supply Authority (WAWSA) will serve hundreds of new drinking water customers when construction wraps up this year, thanks to the installation of hundreds of miles of pipeline in the rural areas around Tioga, Ray, Epping, Stanley, White Earth, Crosby, and Watford City. By the end of the current biennium, crews will install approximately 190 additional miles of pipeline and four new pump stations, plus a 1 million gallon reservoir near Stanley.



Since 2011, WAWSA has installed more than 1,100 miles of pipeline, increased the capacity of the Williston Regional Water Treatment Plant to 21 million gallons per day, and built 10 reservoirs, two water towers, and 10 pump stations across Burke, Divide, McKenzie, Mountrail, and Williams counties in northwestern North Dakota. The project currently serves 65,000 people, and is designed to serve 125,000 people by the year 2038.

WAWSA plans to request \$60 million from the state legislature for the upcoming 2017-2019 biennium, however the request may be modified based on the state's lower revenues. All of the \$80 million provided by the state for the current two-year period will be spent by the close of the 2015-2017 biennium. Future funding will be used to install 650 miles of pipeline, several pump stations, reservoirs, and complete water treatment plant upgrades. To date, the North Dakota Legislature has obligated \$309 million to the \$469 million project.

Source Water Protection:

A Must in Every Community

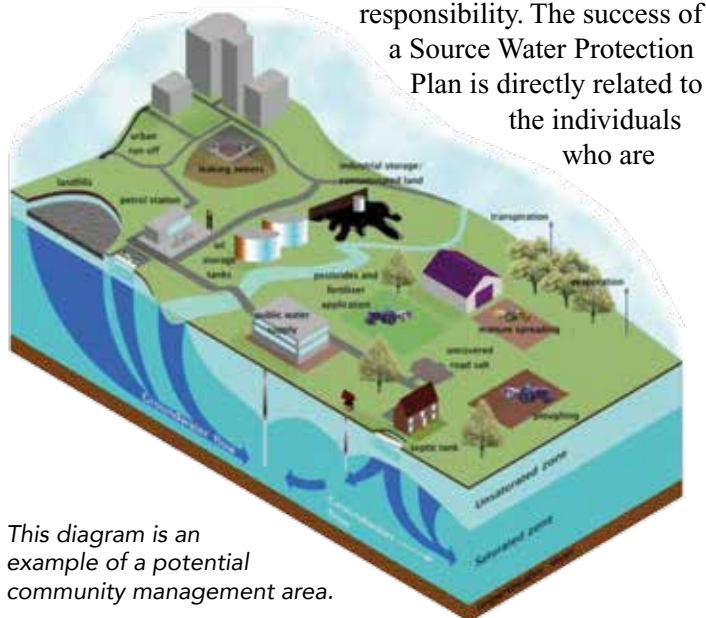
An Introduction to Source Water Protection

What started as a voluntary program for groundwater-dependent systems is now required of all public water systems that use surface water or groundwater. The Source Water Protection Program, created by the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, requires all public water systems to have their source water protection areas delineated, complete a contaminant source inventory and land use survey, and complete a susceptibility analysis. Once these requirements are completed by the North Dakota Department of Health, water systems can develop management strategies and contingency plans, and encourage the citizens of their communities to participate throughout the process.

What Can I Do?

• Water System Personnel •

It is the responsibility of the operators and managers of public water systems to provide safe and reliable drinking water to their customers. Protecting your sources of drinking water is vital to fulfill this responsibility. The success of a Source Water Protection Plan is directly related to the individuals who are



This diagram is an example of a potential community management area.

managing the plan. Water system personnel must make an effort to annually review their plans and update the contaminant source inventory. It is also important to establish relationships with property owners within the system's delineated area and educate them about what they can do to help protect the community's drinking water sources. Operators and managers should also familiarize themselves with the possible contaminants in their delineated area. This will enable them to react quicker during an emergency situation, and it will also allow them to create a more comprehensive contingency plan.

• Directors and City Officials •

One of the most important aspects of managing a water system is having an open line of communication between operators, council members, managers, and directors. The same concept applies to source water protection. Preventative planning is often overlooked while discussing the annual budget. Water system personnel may not realize that a small investment today can lead to huge savings in the future. In the event that a water system loses drinking water sources to contamination, several contingency options are available. None of them are nearly as cost effective as the preventative steps that could have been taken to prevent the contamination in the first place. Obviously, not all events are avoidable, but there are steps directors and city officials can take to mitigate the risks of contamination to their communities. According to North Dakota Century Code 40-05-01 (61), a municipality has the authority to protect its drinking water sources within one mile of city limits. An ordinance that limits the use/storage of harmful chemicals or fuels in vulnerable areas is a good place to start.

Rural water systems can request local water resource district boards to establish similar ordinances within their jurisdictions. There are a number of management strategies that can be implemented within a community at little or no cost. Public awareness and education are key factors to transforming a Source Water Protection Plan from a document on the shelf to a procedure within a water system. People in the community will be more willing to support and participate in best management practices if they know that what they are doing is improving the quality of life for their families.