

After 15 Years, Public Wholesale District No. 19 Is in Service



The source of water for Public Wholesale District No. 19 is Spring River. This photo shows the site of the intake.

USDA Rural Development Community Programs Director in Kansas, Sháne Hastings, and other officials attended the recent open house for Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 19 at Columbus. USDA Rural Development provided more than \$16 million in financing to improve water quality and quantity to residents in Cherokee County.

Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 19 was formed in 1998 because of the limited amount and decreasing quality of groundwater

The investment made by the federal government in Cherokee County will ensure that rural residents and businesses have modern, working infrastructure.

available in Cherokee County. The district provides water to the city of Columbus and Cherokee County Rural Water Districts No. 3, No.6 and No. 7 and Evonic (formerly Jayhawk). Those systems serve approximately 50 percent of Cherokee County.

Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 19 received USDA funding to install 40 miles of water lines, construct a 200,000-gallon elevated water storage tank, and a water treatment plant. The water treatment plant is capable of producing one million gallons of water per day, which will be drawn from the Spring River.

The plant is located three miles northwest of Galena.

According to John Epler, Chairman of Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 19, “More than 15 years ago, discussions began on the need to ensure that Cherokee County would have a reliable water source well into future. Water from the Ozark Aquifer in Cherokee County was being used faster than it was replenished. State water and geology officials suggested that the county stop using deep wells and switch to surface water. In 2009, the district applied for USDA Rural Development financing to build infrastructure to begin using surface water. Without the funding assistance from USDA Rural Development the regional water project wouldn't have been possible,” Epler commented.

Other board members are Jim Burton, city of Columbus, Tom Dietz from District No. 7 and Ron Westerfelt from District No. 6.



This photo shows the water treatment plant located three miles northwest of Galena.



District and Plant Manager Eric Davolt (seated), reviews the operation of the plant on the SCADA system with Keith Karsten, a member of the board of directors of Cherokee RWD 3.



The treatment plant was constructed by Walters Morgan, Manhattan, KS. McEnroy of Nevada, MO installed the pipeline. The project consultant was Professional Engineering Consultants, Wichita.

A recent open house provided agency, district officials and others a chance to tour the plant and see how the water is processed from Spring River.

The modern plant has been producing water since June 2014 for its member systems.

Columbus currently depends on Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 11 (Bone Creek) and District No. 19 for all their water. Columbus has not used its wells since District No. 19 began service. A 12-inch pipeline services Columbus. The water rate is a flat \$6 per thousand; the rate is uniform to all member systems.

The contractor for the plant project was Walters Morgan, Manhattan, KS; McEnroy of Nevada, MO installed the pipeline. Darrel Schumake, an attorney from Columbus,

was legal counsel to the project. Professional Engineering Consultants, Wichita, was the project consultant.

Eric Davolt is plant manager. Other employees are Paul Harlos and Holland Ellis.

“USDA Rural Development is committed to helping ensure that rural Kansans have access to affordable, safe drinking water,” stated Hastings. “The regional approach that Cherokee County took to address its water infrastructure challenges is a plan that the Agency strongly supports. The investment made by the federal government in Cherokee County will ensure that rural residents and businesses have modern, working infrastructure,” he concluded.

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