

# Doniphan RWD 6 Moves Towards Construction

**N**orthwestern Doniphan County in extreme northeast Kansas will soon realize the installation of its sixth water district. Doniphan RWD No. 6 is one very important step closer to full development as a result of funding recently announced by USDA Rural Development. Additional funding of \$1,561,000 has been obligated by USDA for the project. The additional loan and grant funding will enable the district to go to bid with the goal of providing water service to approximately 240 rural customers. The project has been a long time in development.

Rich in Kansas territorial history with the first college established in Kansas at Highland, to artifacts from the Native American Heritage Museum now on display in the Doniphan County Court House in Troy, to the four-state lookout atop the big hill in White Cloud, Doniphan County also boasts of some of the most highly productive farmland in Kansas. Plus, local farmers will explain there's more value than meets the eye as some of the hillsides are so steep, there really are more acres in a field than appear on an aerial map! Many of those farmers were vehement protesters this past year when a concept proposal to construct a 13,000-acre lake to hold water from the Missouri River for transport by the "aqueduct across Kansas" was being evaluated as one way to help reduce irrigation's reliance on the Ogallala Aquifer in western Kansas. By contrast, some landowners in Doniphan County have been hauling water for their domestic needs for decades.

Rural Water District No. 6's proposed water system will add services in the northwestern portion of the county. The District is bounded on the south by Doniphan

RWD 3 and Atchison Cons. RWD No. 5; it will border the Missouri River on the north and it will abut Doniphan RWD 5 and Mosquito Creek on the east. It will be bound by the Doniphan/Brown County line and Brown RWD No. 2 to the west. The district covers approximately 117 square miles of territory to reach the 240 applicants, including 21 meters in the community of Leona that is presently served by Doniphan RWD 1. The project will consist of approximate 592,740 linear feet (LF) of PVC waterlines of various sizes and 12,000 LF of 1-inch service line, 54 gate valves and a 12-ft. x 130-ft. standpipe. True to the landscape, the project's pipelines will have five river crossings and 43 smaller stream crossings.

Project Consultant Stuart Porter with the firm of Schwab - Eaton, PA offered this comment: "There have been a lot of people waiting a long time for this project. It's great to be



**This photo was taken on September 16 at the board meeting of Doniphan RWD 6. Shown left to right are: Director Preston Harness, Board Chairman Paul Rush and Director Randy Parsons. Back Row L-R: District Attorney Joel Euler; Dan Fischer with USDA Rural Development; Board Secretary Pam Wiedner, District Treasurer Shelly Cluck, Project Consultant Stuart Porter; and District Counsel Quinton Kurtz.**

Some future customers of the Doniphan County RWD 6 are hauling water for their residential use. One is Shelly Cluck who lives in the small hamlet of Iowa Point in northern Doniphan County. The need for a water supply is what caused Shelly to become involved in the organization and development of the new water district more than ten years ago. She was elected to the steering committee and board of directors and serves as treasurer. The photo shows Shelly visiting with Board Chairman Paul Rush as she picked up another 400 gallons of water at the fill station in Highland.



**Caption: Shelly Cluck became an early supporter of the rural water district. She has hauled water for their home at Iowa Point for 20 years. She is now RWD 6 Treasurer. She and Chairman Paul Rush visited about the project recently as she loaded another 400-gallons of water at the bulk fill station in Highland.**

Shelly and her husband Doug have four children; they have hauled water for more than 20 years. Water is picked up in Highland at a cost of \$1.75 per approximately 400 gallons. Either she or Doug make the winding and hilly trip to Highland at least once a week; sometimes two trips are made to haul water. In the Cluck's case, it takes up to two hours to drive to Highland, fill the tank and travel home to unload the water into their

holding tank that blends with their well water. Shelly says she is more than excited for the district to move forward and begin construction. She adds, "Once the district is in service, I no longer will have to worry if there is enough water to take a full shower, flush the toilet or wash a load of clothes. When we finally get rural water, we will be able to do all those things at the same time!"

able to take this next step towards making rural water in northern Doniphan County a reality." The district anticipates going to bid in October or November 2015.

District Board Chairman Paul Rush says that the construction of the Rural Water District No. 6 will be one of the largest economic development projects for the western portion of Doniphan County. "In recent years, we have seen a decline in population in our rural communities. This has affected our schools and our ability to support local businesses. This project will provide safe drinking water to help support being able to live in our rural communities. We have many people to thank for making this project possible, so for now we will honor them by getting this project constructed. Going forward, we need continued support from the landowners and people that may be affected during the construction phase," Rush said.

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nitrate standard of 10 mg/L. In 2014, the district was awarded a \$1 million Regional Water Supply Community Development Block Grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce. Unfortunately, in February 2015, the district lost the grant due to not being in a position to bid the project. A big factor that contributed to not being able to bid was the district board decided to test the wells after having no activity for a year. The exploration wells had nitrate of 12 mg/L. The drinking water standard is 10 mg/L.

Brown RWD No. 2 to the west of Doniphan RWD 6 has been in the process of developing wells approximately eight miles from the location of the proposed Doniphan 6 well site. The test results from the Brown 2 wells were showing nitrates at

3 mg/L with capacity in the range of 500 gallons per minute. Recently, discussion between Doniphan RWD 6 and the neighboring Brown County RWD 2, which presently purchases water from the city of Hiawatha, led to an agreement to allow the purchase of water by RWD 6 from Brown RWD 2. Bryan Ford of Bartlett & West, Inc.,

Topeka, and consultant for Brown RWD 2 says that with the nitrate contamination a concern for the area, the water systems decided to work together on a water supply. The proposal is for Brown RWD 2 to construct new wells, while Doniphan RWD 6 constructs their new distribution system.

USDA Rural Development was able to award additional funding to Doniphan RWD 6 as the benefit of the USDA's national pool of funds. RWD 6 signed a the second Letter of Conditions (LOC) from USDA on Wednesday, September 16 for an additional loan not to exceed \$588,000 and \$973,000 respectively. The interest rate will be 2.875 percent. The district had confirmed a LOC from USDA Rural Development on June 19, 2013 for \$2,575,000 loan and a grant of \$1,565,000 at an interest rate of 2.75 percent. The district's total loan is now \$3,163,000 and total grant of \$2,538,000. The USDA funding will be complimented by the district contributing \$219,000. The revised total project cost has increased from \$5,103,400 to \$5,920,000.

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“The regional approach that Doniphan County, Rural Water District No. 6 took to address its water supply challenges is a plan that USDA strongly supports,” said Sháne Hastings, USDA Rural Development Community Programs Director in Kansas. “Working regionally to address water and wastewater infrastructure in rural Kansas communities, helps ensure current and future residents will have access to safe and reliable water for many years to come.”

The Kansas Rural Water Association has provided support to the development of both Doniphan RWD 6 and Brown RWD 2 since their days of inception. It has been rewarding to me personally to help this organization navigate the necessary steps to acquire financing, environmental reviews, easements, etc. If any readers of this article in Kansas have a project that they would like to have help with, KRWA is ready and willing to be of whatever help possible. Give KRWA a call at 785-336-3760.

*Rita has extensive municipal experience with the city of Troy, KS for eleven years. She was a certified EMT and served as the Ambulance Director for two years and supervised the volunteer staff. Rita also worked on or completed most water and wastewater utility reporting requirements. Her focus at KRWA is to provide assistance with applications for funding for cities and rural water districts.*



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