

Harvey RWD 1 adds customers and develops new water source

Harvey County Rural Water District 1 has undergone significant changes over the years. From accelerated repayment of outstanding debt to increasing service to many more customers, construction of new water tanks, a much needed office building and shop in tiny Walton, Kansas, Harvey RWD 1 has been changing! Harvey RWD 1, located just east of Newton on Hwy 50, is a great example of efficient operations, having an unaccounted for water loss over a 30-year period of 10% or less.

System history

Harvey RWD 1 was incorporated in 1975 in response to poor water quality and quantity for rural residents and farmers in

Harvey and Marion counties. Several years of district organizers' efforts resulted in collection of \$25 from all interested landowners to fund an engineering feasibility study. In 1976 a contract for construction was awarded to Bill Worthy of

Oklahoma to install the original system that was funded with a Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) loan of \$1.25 million. An agreement was reached by the district to purchase water from the city of Newton at 71 cents per thousand gallons. The original 40-year loan from FmHA was purchased in 1988 under the Discount Purchase Program with

financing through the Kansas Rural Water Finance Authority.

The original system consisted of some 300 miles of PVC pipeline, a 300,000-gallon

supply line to the town of Elbing and a new 75,000-gallon water tank just south of Peabody.

A subsequent expansion project financed through another

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However, no change for the RWD up to now has been quite as drastic as the decision to stop buying water from Newton and to instead develop a district ground water source.
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elevated storage tank, one 30,000-gallon standpipe and service to 373 customers including the towns of Elbing and Walton. An expansion project in the early 90s, financed though a bond issue, added 50 new customers, a second

bond issue provided service to 30 additional customers in the vicinity of Goessel. It also allowed the district to replace the original 30,000-gallon standpipe with a new 100,000-gallon elevated tank. Harvey RWD 1 by



*Jon Steele,
Tech Assistant*



Harvey County RWD 1 Board Chairman Maurice Meirowsky and Business Manager Sandra Lanzrath take a break from looking for a water line section on a system map at the district office in Walton, Kansas.

2006 has grown to serve 930 customers.

As previously mentioned, the original cost of water was \$.71/1000. Since 1976, the district has received two rate increases. The first was a hike to \$1.65/1000 and more recently, the rate was increased to \$2.88/1000. The district originally purchased 4.2 million gallons monthly and now purchases 8 million gallons monthly.

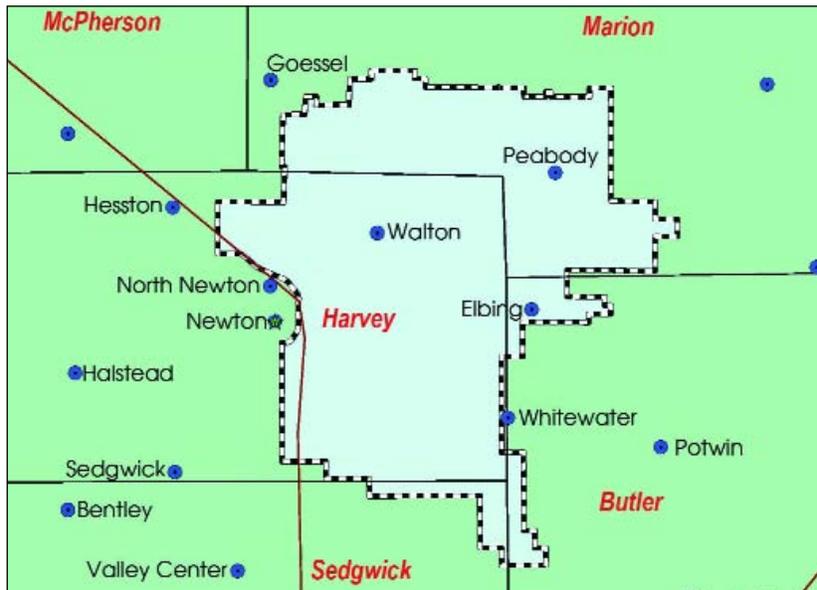
District develops own wells

Harvey RWD 1 is developing a source of ground water that will be supplied from three new wells to be drilled in the Equus Beds southwest of Hesston. Water quality was never an issue in the board's decision to seek out a water source. The quality from Newton was always good. Pressure problems between the city and the booster station were a concern of the RWD board. And having no control over the cost of the water was another. The contract with the city states that water will be supplied at 51 psi. Several customers ahead of the booster station at times had lower pressures. The board was concerned about constantly meeting the minimum 20 psi KDHE standard. An option at moving the booster station was explored to supply more pressure to those customers but was going to be a major expense to the district. The idea was abandoned.

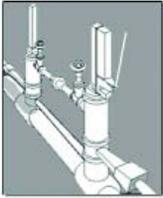
The district also has an area of territory that cannot be adequately served without some major work. Some area residents wanted water service for many years but the district could not meet the request. Public meetings were held to find out just how much interest existed. There was also a promising water source in the area that could be developed. After the public meetings, more than 100 new water services were requested.

The district collected \$2500 from the new subscribers. Recently, 18 additional landowners purchased meters. KDHE will pay for two connections in Zimerdale due to a groundwater contamination problem in that area.

The \$4.35 million project will be funded with a loan from the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund which is administered by KDHE. The district anticipates a cost reduction of \$213,000 annually by producing the water



The Harvey RWD 1 boundaries are shown above, extending from Harvey County into Marion, Butler and Sedgwick counties, encompassing nearly 330 sq. miles, with 520 miles of pipeline and serving 930 customers.



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internally vs. purchasing water from the city of Newton at \$2.88/1000 gallons. Combined with the revenue from the 100 new customers the project is financially sound. No water rate

adjustment will be necessary from present rates which are a \$15 minimum with no water and \$4.90/1000 gallons and \$4.60/1000 after 30,000 gallons. Present fees for a benefit unit

(connection) are \$3900 plus costs of construction. Although additional maintenance and operational issues will be incurred, the change in water sources is simply a matter of economics of the district working to make sure that its customers have the most affordable cost of water services, plus it allows 118 new customers to have access to good water and the capacity to serve more customers in the future.

Ground water exploration, a challenge

Attempts to obtain access to properties to explore for ground water sources were met with resistance by some landowners. But once landowners understood they would be compensated for well sites, the district was confronted by phone calls from landowners offering that a well be located on their property. Salt contamination, like that caused by oil field activity was found in several initial test wells. This caused Ground Water Management District 2 to order a study by the Kansas Corporation Commission. Ground water exploration expert Robert Vincent of Ground Water Associates, Wichita, then suggested to drill test wells in other areas with good success. Monitoring wells are a part of the ground water supply development to detect possible future contamination concerns.

District personnel

Board Chairman Maurice Meirowsky has been busy helping obtain easements for the new project. Business Manager Sandra Lanzrath prepares all easements and handles administrative duties at the office.

The project consultant is Bartlett and West Engineers, Topeka. Water well exploration and design is by Ground Water Associates, Wichita. Clarke Well & Equipment of Great Bend has



Maurice Meirowsky proudly poses with the district owned backhoe in the new shop building in Walton.



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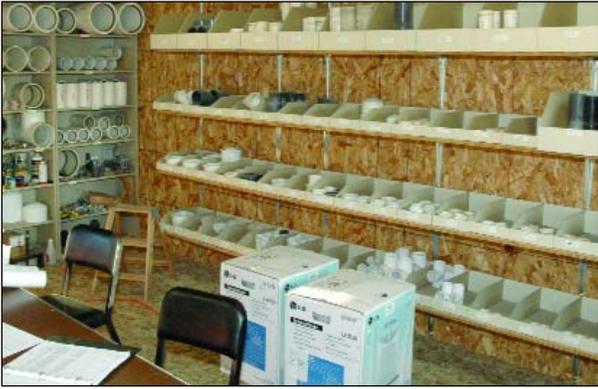
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drilled test wells. Contracts for construction have not been let as of October 20.

Harvey RWD 1 has four full-time employees. In 2001 they constructed a new 1400-square

foot office building in Walton and a new 40 x 80 shop was added to the site the following year. The district's original office was in Peabody on Main Street and was listed on the National Register of

including pipeline materials to be stored inside. Harvey RWD 1's board of directors and staff are working hard and making the investments to ensure a long-term water source for a growing



Above: The new Walton shop facility has a separate parts storage room to keep high turn parts and equipment inventoried, easy to find and ready for use.

Above right: The Harvey RWD 1 new office and shop building are now located in Walton, just south of Hwy. 50. The facility moved from downtown Peabody to a more central district location.

Historic Places. That building was sold; the new office is more centrally located for the RWD. The office has a concrete, fireproof room that also serves as a storm shelter. The shop allows all supplies and equipment

customer base. If your system has financing or other needs, I encourage you to contact KRWA to learn about funding options or other information that may be needed.

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