

## Public Wholesale District 23 construction to begin soon

Construction of another public wholesale water district (PWWS) will begin soon. The \$20 million PWWS 23 will provide water to 19 cities and rural water districts. Funding for the project will come from loans and grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. Members of PWWS 23 are the cities of: Altoona, Buffalo, Fredonia, Neodesha and Thayer. Membership also includes these rural water districts: Montgomery RWDs 9 and 12; Neosho RWDs 4, 6, 7, 9 and 12; Wilson RWDs 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13 and Woodson RWD 1.

The project also involves the purchase of the City of Fredonia's water treatment plant to be used as the water source. An estimated \$2 million of improvements will be made to the plant. The original concept for the PWWS was to construct a new lake.

Bids for the project were recently let. C&F Construction received the contract to install water lines at a cost of about \$10 million. Engineering America will be paid \$2 million for construction of water storage tanks. LaForge & Budd Construction, Parsons, Kan., will renovate the Fredonia water plant.

As of September 30, the city of Thayer was debating continued participation in the project due to concerns over the proposed cost of water from the project.

## Cottonwood Falls, Strong City, Chase RWD 1 discuss joint water project

Members of the city councils of Cottonwood Falls and Strong City and directors of Chase County RWD 1 have been in discussions to consider the potential to develop a public wholesale water supply district.

A recent meeting was attended by all three entities. The meeting came in response to a preliminary engineering study completed for water system improvements for Cottonwood Falls. The study was completed by BG Consultants.

Project representatives intend to apply to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) for a cost-share match of \$12,500 for further study of a combined public water system. The funds which KDHE may provide originate as a set-aside from U.S. EPA's public water supply revolving loan program capacity development aspect.

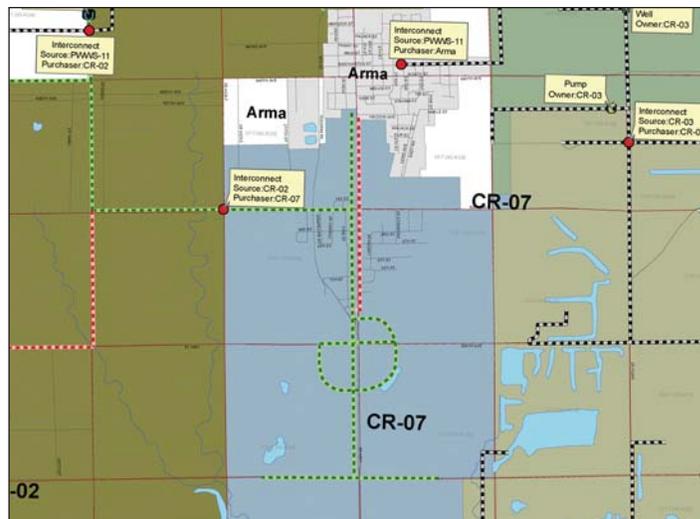
## Crawford RWD 7 tables change of water source

"Recent meetings have been tense for our water board," Crawford RWD 7 board member Veda Maxwell has explained to KRWA in recent weeks. For example the most recent board meeting held on October 2 began with one person describing the board as a "lynch mob."

But by the end of the meeting, the attitudes of "lynch mob" had been reduced in the minds of the three dozen people who showed up as the RWD board was debating changing water sources from Crawford RWD 2 to the City of Frontenac.

Maxwell and water district manager Henry Ashbacher reported to KRWA that Crawford RWD 7, which serves approximately 200 users in the small community of Franklin, were considering the switch in order to get more reliable water pressure.

According to board members, the switch to Frontenac water would have meant an increase in Franklin citizens' water bills by a \$3 per month debt service fee. This fee would be used to pay off the \$170,000 total costs of installing a booster station between Franklin and Frontenac and installing an 8-inch pipeline to the station for 1/2 mile.



Crawford RWD 7 (shown in blue), is adjacent to and south of the city of Arma. The Franklin community is located in the center of the RWD. The city of Frontenac is located 1.5 miles south of RWD 7. The interconnect between RWD 2 and RWD 7, where RWD 7 currently purchases water is seen at the red point on the left RWD 7 boundary.

"Local citizens are now reporting to be upset because they contend that the board has not sought other proposals for a water supply such as from nearby Arma," Maxwell explained.

Among the public comments at the recent meeting were representatives from Arma, Crawford RWD 1 and Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 11. Each spoke about how they had not known Crawford RWD 7 (Franklin) was looking for a new supplier until an article about last month's meeting appeared in *The Pittsburg Morning Sun*. Because of that, each representative at least spoke about looking into a proposal to Franklin.

Maxwell reports that after those comments, the board voted unanimously to table the approval of the contract with Frontenac. The board also voted to accept proposals from the other representatives. Manager Ashbacher and RWD 7 Chairman Craig Stokes reported that the district's board had looked at potential suppliers as far back as 1999.

As recently as 2002, the board had spoken with Arma as a possible supplier. However, the charges Arma offered at that time were greater than what Franklin was then paying.

The decision was made based on "the idea we would be charged more than what we were initially. That's the main economic reason," said Ashbacher, who is not a voting member of the board.

Other alternatives were considered at the time, but Franklin was told by one other water system only to consider them after exhausting all other options.

Franklin was devastated by a tornado on May 4, 2003. The town has done an amazing job of rebuilding since and was recognized by KRWA in 2006 as "the most improved water system in Kansas."

Ashbacher reports that Frontenac was very grateful to give the RWD a proposal, adding, "and they gave us all the engineering studies at their own cost."

Because of the response from other suppliers as well as from the public, the board was willing to hear other options as offered. Those alternative proposals, from Arma, from Rural Water District No. 1, and from Wholesale Water Supply District No. 11, are expected to be received in writing by the next meeting.

During the October 2 meeting, RWD Chairman Stokes asked how

many Franklin families were represented. Noting that only 12 households were represented at the meeting, Stokes commented that was the largest crowd in three years. The district has more than 200 families in the district.

"I don't know where everybody's been," Stokes said. "They don't come until an issue comes up. It's all up to the people, though. It's great everyone's getting involved. People just need to show up at meetings. Where've they all been?"

At the October 6 Frontenac city council meeting, the city voted to table all future negotiations over a water purchase agreement with RWD 7.

## City of White Cloud seeks grants to replace water system

The city of White Cloud is seeking grants to replace its water system. White Cloud is located in Doniphan County in extreme northeastern Kansas. The city serves approximately 85 connections and a population of 234.

Dan Harden of BG Consultants, Lawrence, recently presented a proposal to the Doniphan County Commission. Harden advised the commission that the city is planning to submit a grant application to the Kansas Department of Commerce for \$400,000 and a grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development for \$623,440, to complete a \$1,748,440



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citywide water system replacement project. Improvements would consist of new water distribution pipelines, valves, water storage, telemetry, a generator and a booster pump station.

### Remedial work at Atlas-E site expected to cost \$8.9 million

Cleanup of contaminated groundwater near the retired Atlas-E missile base near Wamego in Pottawatomie County is expected to cost as much as \$8.9 million, according to a recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' study.

The contaminant, trichloroethylene (TCE), was first discovered in a water well on the missile base in July 2002. Subsequent testing by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment revealed the substance had leached into the groundwater. Trichloroethylene is a chlorine-based solvent that was used to clean engine parts of the Atlas missile during the 1960s when the base was active.

After discovering the groundwater contamination, the Corps installed carbon filtration systems in 29 homes having contaminated wells. The Corps later contracted with Pottawatomie RWD 1 to provide rural water to the 74 homes in the contamination area at a cost of \$700,000. The Corps also paid \$161,000 to relocate one well for the city of Wamego. Although the city well was in the path of the expanding contamination plume, no trace of TCE has ever been detected in city water, according to the report.

The total cleanup costs include an estimated \$3.2 million to clean up the city well in the event it ever becomes contaminated with TCE. The remainder of the groundwater contamination in a plume to the south and east of the missile base would be allowed to reduce naturally. This could take an estimated 16 years, according to the Corps.

### WRAPS offers implementation cost share funds

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) recently announced the availability of \$936,748 in WRAPS Implementation Funds for conservation practices above federal reservoirs in Kansas. WRAPS is an acronym for Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy. It is a locally-driven effort that addresses water concerns in watersheds. Funding provided by the State Conservation Commission comes through an appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund.

Local landowners in the Delaware River Watershed, which contains Perry Reservoir, have a unique opportunity to implement practices that will protect water quality with WRAPS implementation funds assistance. Perry Reservoir is a federal reservoir at the southern end of the watershed.

Project types that are high priority for funding include riparian area protection (stream bank protection and alternative livestock water supplies), livestock waste management practices, sediment

control practices (grade stabilization, cross fencing and livestock water supplies in expiring CRP contracts, residue management – no till incentive), and wetlands restoration.

Lower priority projects eligible for funding including nutrient management (soil testing), improving on-site wastewater (septic) systems and pasture/rangeland management.

The SCC funds are being made available locally through the county conservation district Non-Point Source Pollution Control Cost-Share Program.

Landowners in the portion of Nemaha, Brown, Atchison, Jackson and Jefferson counties that lie within the Delaware River Watershed should contact their local conservation district office for more information or to apply for the funds.

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The SCC cost-share funds are targeted WRAPS implementation funds.

The focus of the cost-share program is protection of the 20 federal reservoirs in Kansas, including Perry Reservoir, with public water supply storage.

## **Milford seeks grant to rehab water plant**

The Milford city commission recently voted to apply for \$400,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to offset a proposed \$1.9 million price tag to upgrade the city's 40 year old water treatment plant.

North-Central Regional Planning Commission in Beloit is preparing the grant application. The project consultant is BG Consultants.

But according to a report in the Junction City *Daily Union* newspaper, the Milford city commission was not pleased with the project's proposed cost, which has risen since BC Consultants first presented it to the council. Engineer Pat Cox explained that the estimate is conservative in order to not be faced with unexpected expenses.

"Everything is escalating in costs," Cox was quoted. "We're trying to stay ahead."

However, any improvements made to the city's drinking water plant will likely require the city to finance a large sum of money.

The *Daily Union* article went on to list out the funding options as provided by the project engineer. The options include the Community Development Block Grant, Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund (SRF), a USDA Rural Development grant and loan or general obligation/revenue bonds. The following rates were estimated for each funding scenario:

- Kansas Public Water Supply Loan. With a total project loan of \$1.92 million for 20 years at a 4 percent interest rate, the proposed monthly water bill of a 5,000-gallon user would be \$90.95.
- Community Development Block Grant and Kansas Public Water Supply Loan. With a \$400,000 CDBG grant and a 20-year SRF loan, the proposed monthly water bill for a 5,000-gallon user would be \$80.
- USDA Rural Development Grant and Loan. With a 45 percent grant and a 40-year loan, the proposed monthly water bill for a 5,000-gallon user would be \$57.05.
- CDBG and USDA Rural Development grant. With a \$400,000 CDBG grant, a 30 percent USDA grant and a 40-year loan, the proposed monthly water bill for a 5,000-gallon user would be \$55.95.

One council member expressed discontent with a 40-year loan when the water plant's life expectancy is 20 years.

During the July council meeting, council members told BG Consultants to plan for a conventional drinking water plant opposed to the more expensive membrane system plant. But during more recent meetings, ideas resurfaced about finding other water resources.

Milford citizen and Geary County Public Works Administrator Dennis Cox said he believed that the city could receive groundwater from Geary County Rural Water District 4, which now is also pursuing a second wellfield and should have capacity to provide water to Milford.

"Their problems have dramatically improved," he said. "The water system maintenance would drop dramatically."

Dennis Cox said that even with a new water treatment system in Milford, water from the lake would likely continue to be of poor quality.

Councilmembers responded that the cost of a water main to reach from RWD 4 would be high as well. Dennis Cox said the water main would have a longer life than the plant would.

The *Daily Union* reported that the council also discussed only replacing parts of the plant, like the clarifier. Pat Cox said it was a possibility, but reminded the council that water regulations continue to become more strict and the existing structure is extremely old.

Within BG Consultants' preliminary project recommendations, a new building would be put on the north side of the existing building, an issue for two residents who said their view of the lake would be compromised. While other locations are possible, they would be more costly, Pat Cox explained. Building the new plant next to the existing plant will allow for an easier transition during construction and existing parts of the plant can be used in the new plant, such as the control room.

Despite the council members' concerns, they signed the resolutions because doing so did not obligate them to a final project plan. The council also approved an engineering agreement with BG Consultants. The company was hired by the council earlier this year but won't get compensation unless the city receives grant funding it's applying for. The engineering costs for the project are estimated at about \$280,000, according to City Attorney Doug Thompson.