



News from
Southwest Water
Authority

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Water Works

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Manager's Message # by Ray Christensen, Manager/CEO

Vulnerability Study addresses potential terrorist attacks



Ray Christensen
Manager/CEO

In response to the threat of terrorism in the homeland, President Bush signed into law the 2002 Bio-Terrorism act. This law requires water systems serving over 3,300 people to conduct a vulnerability assessment and update any existing emergency response plans accordingly. The vulnerability assessment involves a comprehensive review of physical structures, as well as, the water treatment process.

Southwest Water Authority is required to submit its vulnerability study to the Environmental Protection Agency by June 30, 2004. The good news is that we've already completed most of the assessment, and will begin updating our emergency response plan shortly. Both documents will be reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Bio-Terrorism Act also increased penalties for tampering with water systems. Tampering with a community water system is a federal offense, and now the charge is accompanied with up to 20 years incarceration and a \$1.0 million fine. Threatening to harm a water system also carries hefty repercussions, including a fine up to \$100,000 and 10 years incarceration.

Our assessment and plan, although quite comprehensive, is based on common-sense feasibility. It is not feasible for the system to continually monitor each mile of pipeline. That is why we will continue to rely on you, the customer, to immediately report any suspicious activities to local authorities or the Southwest Water Authority Office.

Suspicious activities may include strangers (other than SWA employees or law enforcement officers) examining gates, locks, vaults, tanks or other related appurtenances; photographing or making sketches of the system's reservoirs, vaults, vents or pipes; or asking to conduct maintenance of your meter pit.

If you witness any of these, or other suspicious activities occurring near you, please contact us or your local authorities immediately! We all play a role in maintaining the safety of our water system.

In their own words. . . customer feedback

Dear Water Authority,

I just want to tell you how much I appreciate rural water. Although it is a bit pricey, my well was not so free either -- replacing three pumps at \$800.00 each, and three water softeners. Now our appliances are white inside again and my t-shirts are not rust colored anymore. There is no more scum on the shower door! Again, I am thrilled to have rural water.

Alvin Whitmer

2002-2003

Progress Report Southwest Pipeline Project



Headlines

- After 18 years, Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP) began construction on the final phase of *original plan* – service to Medora, Beach, Sentinel Butte, Golva and surrounding rural customers. Upon completion of the Medora-Beach Phase, Southwest Water Authority (SWA) plans to begin construction of the Oliver-Mercer, North Dunn Phase, pending funding.
- SWA collaborated with North Dakota Water Coalition to restore the Municipal, Rural and Industrial (MR&I) funding for statewide water projects.
- Rural water sales in excess of 10,000 gallons were higher in 2003 versus 2002. The volume discount rate structure and drought conditions may have played a role in this increase.
- Customers rated SWPP water “very good” to “excellent,” according to a customer satisfaction survey.
- SWA held its fourth annual “Make a Splash” Water Festival in September 2003. Over 880 people attended Family Night. The evening was filled with activities and entertainment educating families on the importance of quality water in abundance.
- SWA presented its annual Consumer Confidence Report to the public, providing information on drinking water and opportunities for involvement in water source protection. The SWPP meets or exceeds all requirements established by the Environmental Protection Agency. View the report on SWA’s Web site www.swa.swc.state.nd.us.

Phased Development Plan

Zone of project

Current Phase of Development:	
Medora-Beach Phase	West
Final Proposed Phase of Development:	
Oliver-Mercer North Dunn Phase	North

Priority Issues

- For 18 years the SWPP has been constructing an efficient network of pipelines, pump stations, reservoirs and treatment facilities to bring southwest North Dakota an adequate quantity of quality water. We have come a long way, but the project isn’t finished. We are so close to completing the original plan. After 20 plus years of patiently waiting, people in the Medora-Beach Phase are about to receive the quality water provided by SWPP.
- Cooperation between local and state governments, the congressional delegation and state legislature is imperative to the continuation of southwest North Dakota’s water development. Water, our most precious resource, is an essential element to the future economic growth of southwest North Dakota.

***The time is now.
The need is great.
The funding critical.
Completion is in sight.***

Project Funding Sources

Funding (in millions) through June 2003

State Funding:	
Resources Trust Fund	\$ 32.8
Water Development Trust Fund	11.4
Total	\$ 44.2
Grants:	
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District	
Municipal Rural & Industrial Fund	\$ 69.7
USDA - Rural Development	7.6
Total	\$ 77.3
State Bonds Repaid by Users:	
Public Revenue Bonds	\$ 7.0
USDA - Rural Development	6.2
Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund	1.5
Total	\$ 14.7
Total Funding	\$136.2

Southwest Water Authority does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, marital status or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Construction Activities

Upon securing funding from the North Dakota Legislature, bids were awarded for the first phase of construction along the Medora-Beach Service Area, including installation of the main transmission pipeline (46.4 miles) and necessary booster pump stations from Belfield to Beach. When completed (September 2004) this segment of pipeline will provide service to the communities of Medora, Sentinel Butte, Beach and ultimately Golva, as well as, an estimated 260 rural water users.

By September 2003, most of the construction in the Bowman-Scranton Service Area was complete. The area serves approximately 180 rural water connections and all users were turned over to SWA for service.

System Upgrades

A \$1.15 million upgrade to the raw and treated water pipelines boosted the SWPP's system to ultimate capacity. With the addition of the Bowman-Scranton and Medora-Beach Service Areas, expanding the raw water pipeline allows SWA to meet system demands.

Upgrades included pumps at the intake, Dodge, Richardton and Jung Lake Pump Stations and a carbon dioxide tank at the System Water Treatment Plant. The first pump stations have been in use since October of 1991, and only one pump has required extensive work, attributed to timely, detailed maintenance.

Sales

Extremely dry conditions in southwest North Dakota contributed to record water sales for SWA. At the end of July, SWA served 23 communities and 2,489 rural customers, approximately 332 more rural customers than in 2002.

All rural water sales in excess of 10,000 gallons were billed at \$2.60/kgal, under the SWA's volume discount rate structure. The volume discount, implemented on a three-year trial, entered its second year in July 2003. Throughout 2003, volume rural water use increased each month compared to the first year of the trial. The largest increase, 19 percent, occurred in February 2003.

For more information contact:

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ND State Water Commission

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Water Quality and Monitoring

This past year, SWA participated in sampling for Unregulated Contaminants. Test results indicated no detects of any of the 12 contaminants, included in the Unregulated Contaminant Monitory Regulation, List One.

The North Dakota State Health Department (NDSHD) conducted an extensive annual sanitary survey of our facilities, including the water treatment plant, sludge recycle building, pump stations, meter vaults, pressure reducing valve vaults and reservoirs. Recordkeeping was closely scrutinized, including operator certification and training. Certificates of compliance were issued to SWA from NDSHD.

Legislative Issues

Federal: In March, SWA joined the North Dakota Water Coalition in conducting a 'grassroots' campaign to restore MR&I funding. MR&I funding supports the development of rural water projects. President Bush's administration proposed eliminating this funding from the 2004 United States Bureau of Reclamation budget.

Over 100 personalized letters were sent to the White House, Bureau of Reclamation, United States Department of the Interior and North Dakota congressional delegation by SWA customers, employees and supporters. In addition, three SWA board members attended the National Rural Water Rally in Washington, DC, to further promote the restoration of MR&I funding. The campaign made a favorable impression, as \$11 million may be restored to the budget for rural water projects in North Dakota.

State: The North Dakota Legislature allocated \$91.1 million to the ND State Water Commission. Some of this funding, \$7.8 million, in conjunction with a USDA grant and loan, will be used to begin construction of the Medora-Beach Phase.

Water Rates for 2003

	Cost per thousand gallons
Contract	\$2.98
Raw	2.45
Demand	3.83

Rural: \$38.25 monthly minimum including 2,000 gallons and \$3.60 per thousand gallons, thereafter. Beginning July 1, 2002, the volume discount was implemented on a trial basis, for usage greater than 10,000 gallons/month. The volume discount water rate is \$2.60 per 1,000 gallons for usage greater than 10,000 gallons.

Volume discounts are available to qualified users at these rates: (note: 2,000 gallons are included in the listed minimums.)

- Standard unit, 25,000 gallons, \$38.25 per month
 - One extra unit, 50,000 gallons, \$44.76 per month
 - Two extra units, 75,000 gallons, \$51.27 per month
 - Three extra units, 100,000 gallons, \$57.77 per month
 - Pasture taps, 12,000 gallons, \$229.50 per year.
- (Reduced rate available for usage over 60,000 gallons.)

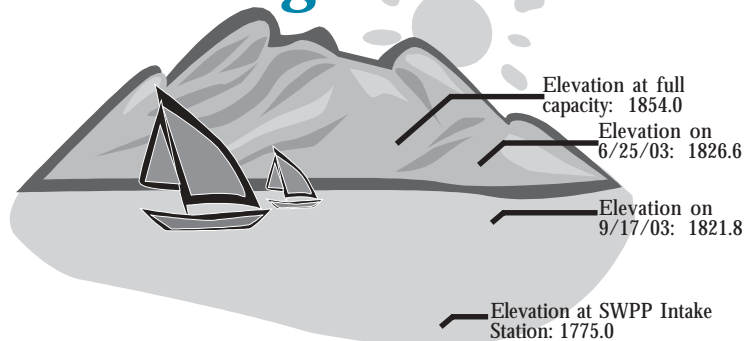
Vickie's Water Notes # by Vickie Franchuk, Customer Service

Get winterized with customer service

For those customers who expect to be away for the winter months, please feel free to contact our Customer Service Department at 701-225-0241 or call toll-free 1-888-425-0241 to make arrangements for payment of the monthly minimum bills and to turn off the water until you return. We can also discuss Southwest Water Authority's automatic payment plan, if you are interested.

Attention pasture tap customers! It is time to read your meters! You should have received a reminder letter in the mail at the beginning of October. In November you will receive a bill for next year's annual minimum and for October's reported water usage.

Lake Gauge



Southwest Water Authority (SWA) Board of Directors

To obtain information in your area regarding SWA, contact your county or city representative.

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*Indicates Executive Committee
**Indicates Chairperson



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
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