

## From Mary Massad, Manager/CEO



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Manager/CEO

Last year was a year of progress for Southwest Water Authority (SWA) — full of accomplishments, construction and project completions. As of the first of 2016, SWA serves more than 6,200 rural customers, 33 communities, 26 contract customers, 21 raw water customers, two rural water systems and two raw water depots. In 2015, SWA added 495

rural customers and 130 subsequent customers. SWA now has nearly 5,000 miles of pipeline in place.

Construction contracts completed during this past year include the Killdeer Mountain elevated tank, the Dunn Center elevated tank, a 1.5 million gallon per day upgrade to the OMND (Oliver, Mercer, North Dunn) Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and completion of the main transmission line from the OMND WTP to northwest of the city of Killdeer. The city of Killdeer was connected to the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP) in late fall. The cities of Dunn Center, Dodge, Golden Valley and Halliday were switched over to receiving treated water from the OMND WTP, along with the Killdeer Mountain, Grassy Butte and North Fairfield Service Areas.

Other notable accomplishments last year include SWA's quality water being awarded 4th internationally for **best-tasting water**, followed by North Dakota's water quality award to SWA for fluoridation. SWA won the best-tasting water in the state at the ND Rural Water Systems Association's Expo.

SWA also held the 16th annual "Make a Splash Water Festival" in Dickinson. There were 17 schools, from 10 communities, who attended the educational student sessions for fifth graders for a total of 565 students. SWA again hosted, along with the North Dakota Water Education Foundation, another well-attended SWA and Southwest Pipeline Project tour in 2015.

With the state's payback requirements for Capital Repayment and the Replacement for Extraordinary Maintenance (REM) Fund, SWA's Board of Directors approved a seven-cent monthly increase. The new monthly minimum for standard rural customers is \$39.95. The Board also approved a modest rate change of 30 cents per 1,000 gallons making the price of treated water for rural customers \$4.69/1,000 gallons. The price per gallon of treated water remains well under a penny. The rates can be viewed on our website at [www.swwater.com](http://www.swwater.com).

Moving into 2016 there are several construction projects underway or in the planning and design phase. These include the Finished Water Pump Station in Dickinson, a new 6 MGD WTP in Dickinson, upgrades to existing pumping stations, paralleling pipe, additional reservoirs and continued rural construction.

I want to thank Lee Messer for all of his dedication and commitment to the SWPP. Lee retired at the end of 2015 as SWA's Water Distribution Manager and was succeeded by Andy Erickson on January first. Steve Ries and Guy Mischel, Water Treatment Plant Operators, also retired last year. SWA is fortunate to have Steve and Guy back on a part-time basis to serve you.

Such a massive project could not have happened without the SWPP construction costs being paid by the state. This is why it is important to remember that the customers receiving SWPP's quality water are paying back to the state the cost of construction. Every one of SWA's customers, rural, city, contract and industrial, are paying back, into the Resources Trust Fund, on average \$12,000 per day, or about \$4.8 million per year. By the end of 2015, the amount paid back was over \$47 million.

*Happy New Year!*



## Lee Messer Retires



Lee Messer began his career in water with the North Dakota State Water Commission in 1991 as a Master Electrician for the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). Lee transferred to Southwest Water Authority (SWA) on January 1, 1996, and by 1998 he was promoted to Assistant Operations Chief. In 2001, Lee had become certified as a Class III Water Distribution Operator for SWA. Over the past 14 years Lee Messer has been the Water Distribution Manager. He was responsible for the entire water distribution system including supervision of SWA's water distribution staff. Lee retired at the end of 2015.

Lee's years of dedicated service to the water industry, and undeniable leadership can be directly related to the success of the quality water that has been distributed to the people and businesses of southwest North Dakota. Over the years, Lee has gone above and beyond to ensure tap water stayed flowing in negative temperatures and blizzards. He has weathered many nights making sure generators were in place and working and pipelines stayed thawed. It is no wonder why he was awarded the Water Wheel Award.

## Andy Erickson Promoted



Andy Erickson has worked for SWA since the beginning of 2002, starting as a Water Distribution Maintenance Worker II. He then worked his way up from being a Grade I Operator in 2003 to being a Grade III in 2006. Andy was promoted to Water Distribution Operator in 2007, then became the

Assistant Water Distribution Manager in 2014. On January first of 2016, Andy became SWA's Water Distribution Manager succeeding Lee Messer.



**Our Vision:**  
People and Business  
Succeeding with  
Quality Water

**Our Mission:**  
Quality Water for  
Southwest  
North Dakota

**Water Works** is the Official  
Publication of Southwest Water  
Authority and the Southwest Pipeline  
Project.

Visit our website...from job  
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[www.swwater.com](http://www.swwater.com)

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## Protect Water Pipes From Freezing

While it has been a relatively mild winter so far, we can't count on it staying that way. The problem with water is it expands as it freezes and can fracture pipes. When the temperature the pipes are exposed to drops below 32 degrees, Fahrenheit (F), even for a short period, the water inside can freeze. It is important to take the following precautions to avoid the pipe fracturing or breaking.



- Even if pipes are indoors, any exposure to outside cold air could cause freezing. Make sure your pipes, crawl spaces and vents are closed off and/or well insulated against any cold air.
- Cold air can gush through even a small opening or crack. A bathroom or laundry room located above or next to a garage is particularly vulnerable and keeping that garage door closed can make a huge difference.
- Do you have bathroom pipes that run along an exterior wall? When the mercury plunges, think about opening a nearby door to bring warmer air to the pipe. In extremely cold weather, a fan will facilitate air circulation near the pipes — or you can use a portable heater on a temporary basis.
- Remember: If you leave home during the winter, leave your thermostat set to at least 55 degrees F.

### Easements Needed

Even though there are nearly 5,000 miles of pipeline in place since the inception of the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP), there are still many people who do not receive quality water.

Before construction of the SWPP can commence in any area, voluntary easements need to be granted by the landowners. It's important to remember for an easement to be valid, it must be signed in front of a notary and returned to Southwest Water Authority.



### Rate Change Approved

Southwest Water Authority (SWA) continuously strives to stabilize the cost of quality water. Coinciding with the population growth in the areas served, however, SWA has experienced rapidly rising costs in nearly every aspect of providing service to our customers. These costs include such items as labor, power, chemicals, operations and maintenance.

With these costs on the front burner, along with meeting the state's Capital Repayment and the Replacement for Extraordinary Maintenance (REM) Fund, SWA's Board of Directors approved a seven-percent monthly increase. The new minimum for standard rural customers is now \$39.95. The Board of Directors also approved a modest rate change of 30 cents per 1,000 gallons making the price of treated water for rural customers at \$4.69/1,000 gallons. All 2016 rates can be viewed on our website at [www.swwater.com](http://www.swwater.com).



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