

Official Publication of Southwest Water Authority and the Southwest Pipeline Project

# Water Works



Jen Murray,  
Manager/CEO

Hello customers and stakeholders! My first newsletter as Manager/CEO goes out to you with winter in the rearview mirror and spring on the horizon. Spring is my favorite time of year, not only because the days get longer and the weather gets warmer, but because it is when things come to life. This is certainly true at Southwest Water Authority (SWA) as we plan and prepare for the upcoming construction season.

Construction of the 400,000-gallon Taylor Elevated Tank has been ongoing throughout the winter and will provide capacity for 63 subsequent customers. Construction of main transmission pipeline upgrades to water storage reservoirs located in New England, Belfield, and Davis Buttes reconvened at the end of March. Bids were opened for the replacement of raw water ductile iron main transmission line near Taylor. SWA continues to plan and design for additional hydraulic improvements throughout the system.

As of April 1, the signup campaign in the Burt, Hebron Service Area transitioned into the preliminary design phase and continues to move forward. During the initial signup period, 500 applicants committed to connecting to the Southwest Pipeline Project (Project). In addition to this area, SWA's waiting list to connect to the Project continues to gain applicants weekly.

In February, the State Water Commission approved SWA's request to begin designing the 12 million-gallon-per-day (MGD) expansion of the Southwest Water Treatment Plant (Southwest Plant). The Southwest Plant is a 6 MGD facility which came online in 2018 to accommodate the growing needs of the region. Once the Southwest Plant expansion is constructed, the 70-year-old Dickinson Water Treatment Plant will be retired.

Director Larry Bares and I attended this year's National Rural Water Rally in Washington, D.C. March 28-30. With representatives from multiple states, it was an excellent venue for water leaders to network and discuss present and future concerns facing rural water systems. During the rally, we had

the opportunity to meet with our congressional delegation to discuss the need for completion of water infrastructure statewide and to urge their continued support of funding sources for rural water projects.



L to R: Bev Saukas, Larry Bares, Eric Volk, Jen Murray, Congressman Kelly Armstrong, James Schmaltz, and Joe LaFave

At our March meeting, we welcomed Grant County's new representative, Harold Gaugler, to SWA's Board of Directors. As a farmer, rancher, and a SWA customer, Harold knows how important reliable, quality water is to our daily lives. Experienced with water governance, he currently serves on the Grant County Water Resource Board and the North Dakota Water Users Association Executive Committee. Welcome Harold!

Delivering quality water dependably is embedded in everything we do. It's our top priority. This on-going goal of providing quality water 24/7/365 entails constant water quality monitoring and testing. By July 1st, customers will be receiving SWA's annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) in their mailboxes. We are pleased to announce the drinking water provided by SWA continues to meet and/or exceed the EPA's strict drinking water quality standards.

While SWA marked its 30th anniversary in 2021, the journey is far from being done. I am thrilled with what has come together over the last few months. Together as a team, SWA remains ready and steadfast in its mission of *Quality Water for Southwest North Dakota*.

Respectfully,

Jen Murray



## Focus on Customer Service

Flowing with information, our "Customer Service Center" on Southwest Water Authority's (SWA) website allows customers to view and pay their water bills. Designed as a convenience for our customers, it allows self-service options for payments, usage history, and other important information. "The customer service center," stated Manager/CEO Jenifer Murray, "empowers customers to manage their water account on their own time." Signing up for the Customer Service Center is easy and only requires an account number. Visit <https://customer.swwater.com/VCH/> and signup today.

## Water Quality with Great Taste

Every day, SWA's state-certified operators conduct water quality tests to ensure the quality and safety of our drinking water. We produce an annual water quality report to inform customers about these testing results and the quality of their drinking water. This annual water quality report, also called the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), is prepared in accordance with the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Act Amendment. Our award-winning tap water surpasses the EPA's strict health standards, with the added benefit it tastes great. This report is mailed to our customers every year by July 1. You can also view the current CCR on our website 24/7.



## Seeking Future Operators



Along with the traditional curriculum, students at our local high schools explored, firsthand, professions in city/county government, police, fire, forest services, water, etc., to learn what it takes to run a community. In support of the program, Grace Rixen, SWA's Water Treatment Manager, taught a class on working for a government owned water utility. A volunteer effort with hopefully huge returns in the future for all of North Dakota's water utilities.

## Retirement Congratulations for Terry Buechler



After 10 years with Southwest Water Authority, Terry Buechler retired in March of 2022. Terry joined SWA as a Water Distributions Operator and took on the role of Assistant Operations Specialist in 2013. Terry looks forward to spending time at the lake and enjoying time with his bride, children and grandchildren. Thank you for your years at SWA Terry and may the retirement phase of your life be rewarding!



## "Make a Splash"



It was finally time for our local students to get their hands wet! Yes, once again, Southwest Water Authority (SWA) sponsored another "Make A Splash" Water Festival. Held April 7 -8, it was an opportunity to educate fifth graders located in SWA's service area on the importance of water in our everyday lives. The knowledgeable facilitators were provided by the Department of Water Resources Project WET program. The educational program led students through hands-on activities to learn about pollution, erosion, water sources, and much more. Family Night was held at the West River Community Center in which the public was invited to join us for games, prizes and open swim.

# Water Treatment Plant Expansion



At its February 23rd meeting, the State Water Commission approved Southwest Water Authority (SWA) to begin designing the expansion of the six million gallons-per-day (MGD) Southwest Water Treatment Plant (Southwest Plant) to its ultimate capacity of 18 MGD. As part of this effort, the existing 12 MGD Dickinson Water Treatment Plant (Dickinson Plant) treatment processes will move to the expanded Southwest Plant.

"The expansion of the Southwest Plant is a good thing," stated SWA Operator Andrew Sokolofsky. Then he added, "While the Dickinson Plant has been updated several times, the 1951-built

plant is ready for retirement. It's time for treatment to migrate to more dependable and efficient processes and equipment, which is what the expansion of the Southwest Plant will do for the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). Throughout the process of expanding the Southwest Plant and retiring the Dickinson Plant, we will continue to reliably provide safe drinking water. That's what we do."

## Hundreds Sign-Up for Quality Water

The Southwest Pipeline Project continues to collect sign-ups in the Burt, Hebron Service Area, including Lake Tschida. Preliminary design began on April 1, 2022, with hundreds of applicants committed to quality water. Southwest Water Authority will continue to sign up interested customers at the \$1,500 sign-up fee until the project progresses to the final design phase. Please contact our office to sign-up today!



## Welcome Harold Gaugler



In February, the Grant County Commission appointed Harold Gaugler to represent them on SWA's Board of Directors. A farmer and rancher, Harold knows how important quality water is to his daily life. "We believe that water is the life of all we do," claimed Harold. Harold also works hard within the North Dakota water industry. About 12 years ago, he was appointed to the Grant County Water Resource board and has served on both the county's Water Resource and the North Dakota Water Users Association board of

directors for the last eight years. Having taken the Oath of Office at SWA's March board meeting, Harold joined the 15-member board of directors which governs SWA. Harold has been married over four decades to Jodie, has three grown children, and two grandchildren.

## Our Vision

People and Business  
Succeeding with Quality  
Water

## Our Mission

Quality Water for  
Southwest North Dakota

Water Works is the Official  
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