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# WaterWorks

Official Publication of Southwest Water Authority and the Southwest Pipeline Project



## Serving Our Communities, Season After Season

The holiday season has a way of slowing things down just enough to remind us of what matters. For many of us, that meant full coffee cups on cold mornings, extra boots by the door, and gatherings that didn't always go as planned but felt right all the same. Winter doesn't pause for the holidays, and neither does water.

In November, the Board of Directors approved the 2026 Budget. The budget includes a nominal increase in monthly rural minimums, from \$55.32 to \$56.67, while the rural usage rate remains unchanged. These decisions are never taken lightly and reflect the ongoing need to maintain, protect, and invest in infrastructure that reliably serves the region.



Jen Murray, Manager/CEO

## Southwest Water Authority's Board of Directors



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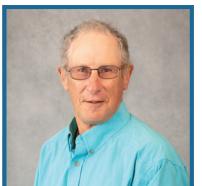
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This past year brought meaningful progress across our system. We completed the Buffalo Gap Tank west of Medora, improving storage capacity and long-term reliability for the area. Construction continued on rural distribution lines, extending dependable water service to more customers across the region. We also spent much of the year relocating portions of our Main Transmission Line along Highway 85 in anticipation of upcoming highway improvements.

Construction on the Southwest Water Treatment Plant Expansion will continue through the winter months. While winter construction is never easy, it keeps this critical project moving forward so we can continue meeting the needs of a growing system.

December also gave us a chance to gather with water professionals from across the state at the North Dakota Water Users Association and Upper Missouri Water Association Joint Water Convention. One highlight of the event was seeing Harold Gaugler, Grant County Director, recognized with a Water Wheel Award for his long-standing commitment to North Dakota's water resources. We are proud to share this recognition with our customers and communities. More details are available in this issue.

As we begin the new year, we also want to emphasize the importance of easements for upcoming construction in the Hebron Rural Service Area. If you have received an easement request, please consider granting it. Gratis easements help keep rural construction costs down, which in turn helps keep water rates affordable for everyone on the system.

January is often a month of fresh starts. It's also a good time to check meter pits, watch for signs of leaks, and make sure your contact information is up to date so we can reach you if needed.

Thank you for the trust you place in Southwest Water Authority. Whether it's during summer construction season or a quiet winter morning after the holidays, we're proud to serve you. We look forward to another year of progress in 2026 and wish you a safe, healthy, and prosperous New Year.



## DID YOU KNOW?

A leaking toilet can quietly waste **up to 200 gallons of water a day**, adding hundreds of dollars to your annual water bill. A quick check and simple fix can save water – and money – before it literally goes down the drain.



## National Engineers Week

February 22-28

We recognize and thank engineers for all they do for us.



## PRESIDENTS' DAY

Monday, February 16

SWA Office Closed

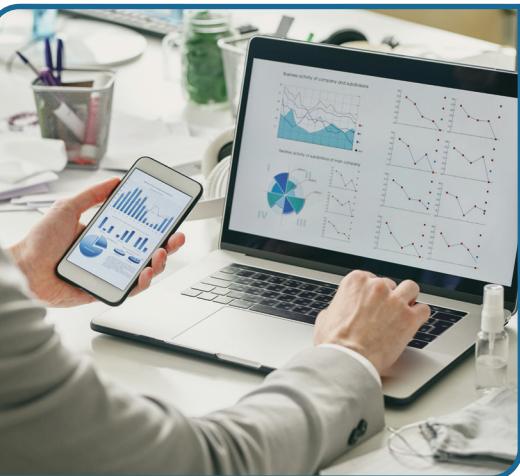
## MAKING WAVES

### Monitor Your Water Usage 24/7

Southwest Water Authority's automated meter reading (AMR) systems allow customers to monitor their water usage anytime, anywhere. By creating an online monitoring account, you can view your consumption, receive alerts for unusual usage and identify potential leaks or continuous flow.

Customers select a username and must provide an email address to activate their account. Online access also makes it easy to view bills and manage payments when needed.

These tools are designed to help customers take an active role in managing their water use. For help setting up your account or questions about your meter, contact SWA during business hours at 701-225-0241.



## IN THE PIPE

### Buffalo Gap Tank Now Operational



Construction of the Buffalo Gap Tank is complete and the tank is now fully operational. Work progressed steadily after the contractor arrived in mid-August, with tank erection completed in early November and site piping installation finalized shortly after.

All required testing, disinfection, telemetry controls and communication systems are complete, allowing the tank to operate remotely and automatically as designed.

The 500,000 gallon Buffalo Gap Tank strengthens system reliability and supports long-term water service for the region.

## THE CURRENT

### Gaugler Receives Water Wheel Award



Southwest Water Authority congratulates Director Harold Gaugler on receiving the Water Wheel Award at the North Dakota Water Convention.

The award, presented jointly by the North Dakota Water Users Association and the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association, recognizes leadership and perseverance in the protection and management of North Dakota's water resources.

Gaugler has represented western North Dakota's water interests for more than a decade, serving on both association boards and recently completing a term as president of the North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association. He also represents Grant County on the SWA board.

Gaugler and his family operate a century-old ranch near the North Dakota-South Dakota border and use regenerative practices to promote sustainability and water quality.

SWA is proud to recognize his leadership and dedication to water stewardship.

## WE KNOW HYDRO

### Check Water Availability Before You Buy

Southwest Water Authority occasionally receives calls from new property owners who were told a home, a lot or parcel of land had water access, only to find out later that a nearby water line may already be at capacity and unable to support a new connection.

To avoid surprises, anyone considering the purchase of land or property is encouraged to contact SWA first. Our team can help determine whether a water line is available in the area and if there is sufficient capacity for a new tap.

A quick call before you buy can save time, expense, and frustration down the road. For questions about water availability or capacity, contact SWA at 701-225-0241.



# 25th Make a Splash WATER FESTIVAL

Free open swim at West River Community Center on **Saturday, March 7**



## OUR VISION

People and Business Succeeding with Quality Water

## OUR MISSION

Quality Water for Southwest North Dakota

Visit our website to learn about everything from job postings to the latest pipeline and water news.

[swwater.com](http://swwater.com)

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