

# WASHINGTON COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY IN THE PIPE

NEWSLETTER

Winter/Spring 2021

No. 33

## WCSA Receives \$18.7 Million USDA Loan for New Water Storage and Distribution Systems

Once complete, new systems will improve service for thousands of WCSA customers

In October 2020, WCSA was awarded an \$18.7 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development loan for improvements to water storage and distribution systems. The funds will help support the Abingdon Water Storage Tank Improvements Project and the Galvanized Line Replacement — Phase 3 Project.

The water storage tank project will provide a new 1.5 million-gallon tank, which will directly impact approximately 6,600 water connections. The project is underway and scheduled for completion later this year.

The third and final phase of the galvanized line replacement project is part of a long-term upgrade to replace all galvanized pipe in WCSA's distribution system. Previous phases completed over the past decade replaced lines in Abingdon, Glade Spring and nearby outlying areas.

Construction projects in the third phase include the relocation of 63 water meters, the installation of 145 fire hydrants, and the installation of more than 300,000 linear feet (55 miles) of new 4-inch to 12-inch water line. The length of the new water line is slightly greater than the distance from the Tennessee/Virginia state line when traveling along I-81 to the Wythe County line near Rural Retreat.

The scale of the galvanized line replacement project requires it to be subdivided into seven divisions or construction contracts. The project will improve service for 1,600 residential customers in the Harris, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Taylor, Tyler and Wilson Districts. Construction began in November 2020. Some divisions are expected to be completed in the fall of 2021, while others will be completed by the summer of 2022.



Waterline Tie-In on Azure Lane

WCSA's distribution system consists of more than 900 miles of water line, 200 miles of which is small galvanized steel pipe. Approximately 40% of existing WCSA customers are directly connected to this type of pipe. As it ages, galvanized pipe tends to corrode from the outside, leading to frequent leaks and water quality complaints. It makes up approximately 86% of all repaired water leaks in WCSA's system.

"Because most of the galvanized pipe in our system is two inches or smaller in diameter, it can't provide adequate flow or pressure in some cases," says Robbie Cornett, WCSA's general

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## WCSA Project Updates

To learn more about WCSA projects, visit [www.wcsawater.com](http://www.wcsawater.com).

### Ongoing Projects:



*Meter Replacement Project*

The **Meter Replacement Project** will replace all water meters throughout WCSA's system with new, non-metallic ultrasonic meters, combined with Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) technology. This new system will automatically collect readings multiple times a day and on-demand, and will eliminate drive-by readings. It will also provide customers with greater access to their water usage data throughout each billing period. The project is currently underway and expected to be completed by summer of 2021.

The **Hidden Valley Phase 2 Project** will extend water service to 31 additional residences currently relying on wells and springs. The project is funded by the Virginia Department of Health, the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The project is underway and is expected to be completed by June of 2021.



*Hidden Valley Phase 2 Project*

The **Abingdon Water Storage Tank Improvements Project** will provide a new, 1.5 million-gallon tank, which will directly impact approximately 6,600 water connections. The project is funded by USDA Rural Development. The project is underway and is expected to be completed by July of 2021.

The **Galvanized Line Replacement — Phase 3 Project** is the third step in a three-phase project to replace all galvanized pipe in WCSA's distribution system over the next several years. The project is widespread across Washington County and consists of seven divisions. The approximately \$30 million project is funded by USDA Rural Development. Construction is underway and is expected to be completed by spring of 2022.



*Galvanized Line Replacement — Phase 3 Project*

### Upcoming Projects:

The **Lee Highway Corridor Sewer Expansion Project** will extend public sewer service to residents and businesses along Lee Highway between Exit 13 and the city of Bristol, Virginia. The first phase of the project is currently in the preliminary design stage. The project, which is funded by USDA Rural Development, is expected to begin in the spring of 2022 and be completed by summer of 2023. 💧



# WCSA Receives \$18.7 Million USDA Loan for New Water Storage and Distribution Systems

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manager. "Much of this line was installed in WCSA's system in the 1950s and has reached the end of its useful life. It's costly to operate and maintain, offers no capacity for growth, and does not meet our expectations or those of our customers. For these reasons, all galvanized line is being replaced.

"The remaining galvanized line in WCSA's system is being replaced with new PVC and ductile iron pipe," Cornett notes. "This will eliminate repair costs associated with the existing line, provide increased flow and pressure to meet customers' needs, and allow fire flow where possible and feasible. This will also offer the opportunity for future expansion in areas deemed suitable for growth, reduce water loss, and enable WCSA to continue delivering clean drinking water that meets or exceeds all regulations."

WCSA customers who reside in areas of planned construction will be notified in advance of any anticipated water outages. Construction will occur along existing and acquired easements. WCSA has contracted with several regional contractors to construct the Phase 3 project, and a WCSA representative will be onsite at each construction location.

The work will involve digging a trench for installation of the new line. The trench will be deep enough to provide at least three feet of cover over the pipe. Once the new line has been installed, tested and approved by an engineer, the contractor will disconnect water meters from the old line and reconnect them to the newly installed line. Properties will be restored to their pre-existing conditions.

For questions about the project, contact WCSA's customer service department at 276.628.7151. 💧



Waterline Replacement on Rivermont Drive

## WCSA is Offering Free Vacuum Breakers to Customers

As mentioned in our November 2020 issue, water in a garden hose can be drawn back into the water supply in many ways, creating a potential risk for backflow of contaminated water into our homes, wells, or neighborhood or municipal water supply.

Using a simple, inexpensive vacuum breaker on your hose bibb (exterior spigot) can help avoid this hazard. A Hose Vacuum Breaker (HVB) is a simple device that screws onto the hose thread of your hose bibb. It does not interfere with the use of the garden hose and allows the water to flow normally, but opens and vents to the atmosphere if a pressure reversal occurs.



To help ensure that our customers are protected from a backflow event, WCSA is offering a free vacuum breaker that can be installed on your hose bibb. Customers may stop by the drive-through window at WCSA's administrative office in Abingdon to pick up a vacuum breaker.

Customers may also contact Steve Barton, WCSA's resident project representative, at 276-608-9721 to have a hose vacuum breaker delivered and installed, or to schedule a survey to assess your needs.

By taking steps to prevent backflow, you are not only protecting your neighbors and other WCSA customers, you are protecting members of your own household. 💧

# WCSA Receives Prestigious National EPA Award for Rattle Creek Road Water Line Extension Project



Site of Rattle Creek Road Water Line Extension Project

**WCSA was recently awarded an Aquarius Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). WCSA was selected as Virginia's entry into the award program and won the national award in the Excellence in Community Engagement focus area.**

The Aquarius award is a national honor recognizing excellence in the areas of innovative financing, partnership and problem solving, plus work to improve water quality and public health protection.

WCSA was recognized for a collaborative, low-cost financing partnership that helped residents of Rattle Creek Road in Washington County receive safe, affordable drinking water through a water system extension to previously unserved existing residents. The partnership involved collaboration with the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Office of Drinking Water and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and included construction of approximately 6,000 linear feet of waterline and related appurtenances.

"This project demonstrates the innovation that can be achieved through community engagement," says Kelly Ward, DWSRF director, Office of Drinking Water, Virginia Department of Health. "WCSA partnered with the community to plan and design a solution, and assist in the search for funding options for this project. The end result provided public health protection in the form of safe and reliable drinking water for this community."

In late 2018, Rattle Creek Road residents approached WCSA about the possibility of bringing water to the community, and WCSA embarked on the process of bacteriological testing, soliciting user agreements for a potential water line extension project, and applying for funding to support the project costs. Funding was received for the project in 2018. Construction began in early 2019, and work to connect homes along Rattle Creek Road was completed that same year.

"We were excited to receive this funding, and we are honored to receive this award in recognition for our community engagement efforts for the Rattle Creek Road Water Line Extension Project," says Robbie Cornett, general manager for WCSA. "It is always our goal to provide exceptional water and wastewater service to our existing customers, as well as expand our water distribution and wastewater collection systems to better serve the needs of the residents in our community. With approximately 3,727 existing countywide residents without access to public water, the funding enabled WCSA to complete the necessary improvements to provide our Rattle Creek neighbors with a reliable source of clean drinking water for the very first time."

As a result of the project, community members who previously relied on wells and springs no longer have to worry about unsafe drinking water during periods of heavy rainfall or low water pressure, work to manually haul water from springs during power outages, or experience loss of access to water sources as a result of underground freezing during cold weather. 💧



## WCSA Calendar

WCSA offices will be closed on the following holidays:

<b>Presidents' Day</b>	<b>Feb. 15</b>
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>April 2</b>



## Board Meetings

### UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES

Feb. 22, 2021  
Mar. 22, 2021  
April 26, 2021

Board meetings are held at WCSA in the E.W. Potts Board Room at 6 p.m. The public is welcome to attend.

*Actual dates may vary. Please contact our office to confirm meeting schedule.*

### Customer Contact Information

Should WCSA need to contact you regarding your water service, we generally do so via text message, email or telephone. If you prefer not to be contacted by one or more of these methods, please call our office at 276-628-7151.

If you would like to be contacted but are not sure we have your information, please contact us at 276-628-7151 or [inquiry@wcsa-water.com](mailto:inquiry@wcsa-water.com) with that information.

### E-CHECK PAYMENTS

**WCSA NOW OFFERS A 24/7 E-CHECK METHOD FOR PHONE AND ONLINE PAYMENTS. YOU MAY PAY BY CALLING 276-628-7151 AND CHOOSING OPTION 2, OR BY ACCESSING YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNT. CALL CUSTOMER SERVICE AT 276-628-7151 FOR DETAILS.**

#### WCSA

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