WASHINGTON COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY HE PIP

NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall 2021

No. 35

The Long and Winding Road: WCSA's Multi-Year Galvanized Line Replacement Project

One of the service authority's most extensive infrastructure projects replaces 200 miles of galvanized steel pipe

Several years ago, WCSA began a massive undertaking that will directly impact 40% of its water customers. When completed, the Galvanized Line Replacement Project will improve pressure challenges for approximately 8,000 existing connections, eliminate many leak issues, add more fire hydrants to the system and provide more reliable service. The project will also indirectly impact many other customers throughout Washington County.

Before the project got underway, nearly one quarter of WCSA's distribution system - 200 miles - consisted of small, galvanized steel pipe. Because most of this pipe was two inches or smaller in diameter, it couldn't provide adequate flow or pressure, nor was fire flow possible. In addition, the pipes' tendency to corrode from the outside had resulted in frequent leaks and water quality complaints.

"The majority of all galvanized line in WCSA's distribution system is between twenty and fifty years old, although





some dates as far back as the 1950s," says WCSA General Manager Robbie Cornett. "This type of pipe accounts for the majority of all repaired water leaks in WCSA's system, with an average total annual repair cost of \$270,000. It has been the number one contributor to customer complaints related to both water quality and hydraulic deficiencies. The Galvanized Line Replacement Project will help alleviate these issues."

The approximately \$31 million project is supported by lowinterest loans from USDA Rural Development, along with a \$1 million grant.

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WCSA Project Updates

To learn more about WCSA projects, visit www.wcsawater.com.

Ongoing Projects:

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 driveby 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 late fall.

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 expected to be completed in August.

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, which is funded by USDA Rural Development, is expected to





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. The project is widespread across Washington County and consists of seven divisions. The approximately \$31 million project is funded by USDA Rural Development. Construction is expected to be completed by spring of 2022.



Galvanized Line Replacement — Phase 3 Project

Upcoming Projects:

The Lee Highway Corridor Sewer Expansion Project is a multi-phase project that began in 2012 when the Board of Supervisors, Industrial Development Authority and authority boards determined to bring much-needed sewer treatment capacity to the west-central portion of Washington County. The project is funded by USDA Rural Development. The next phase is currently in the preliminary design stage and expected to begin in early 2022.

WCSA's Multi-Year Galvanized Line Replacement Project

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Galvanized Line Replacement — Phase 3 Project

The project was divided into three phases. Completed in early 2013, Phase 1 incorporated nearly 212,000 linear feet of new ductile iron and PVC pipe, improving service for nearly 2,700 connections in the town of Abingdon, the town of Glade Spring, the Abingdon Elementary / Route 19 area, and the Lowry Hills area.

In the fall of 2015, construction on Phase 2 began, which was split into five divisions. The first four divisions were completed by spring of 2016, and the fifth division began in June 2016. When the final division of Phase 2 was completed in March 2017, nearly 242,000 linear feet of new piping had been installed, improving service for approximately 1,850 connection in the Benhams and Reedy Creek areas; along Wyndale Road and at the northern end of Lee Highway; at Abingdon Elementary, Prices Bridge, DeBusk Mill and Cedar Creek; in areas of Westwood, Emory, Taylors Valley and Fisher Hollow; and in Stonegate subdivision.

The third and final phase of the project, which began in November 2020, will improve service for approximately 1,450 connections. Construction is expected to be completed in the spring of 2022.

Divisions 1 and 1A of Phase 3 encompass sections between the Rivermont and Damascus areas. Divisions 2, 2A and 2B include parts around South Holston Lake, Old Saltworks Road, outlying areas of the town of Abingdon, Larwood Acres and Clayman Valley. Divisions 3 and 3A incorporate sections around Smyth Chapel / Tobias, Greenway Creek / Stonybrook and outlying areas around the town of Glade Spring.

The replacement of WCSA's galvanized piping has been accompanied by a great deal of planning for the future. Lines are sized to meet the needs of customers 40 or more years down the road. In addition, the new lines being installed allow for the addition of 105 new fire hydrants, providing many residents with fire protection for the very first time.

Pressure Reducing Valves Protect Your Plumbing and Appliances from High Water Pressure Damage

With improved water pressure being provided to thousands of WCSA's customers as a result of the Galvanized Line Replacement Project, now is a good time to ensure your home is equipped with a pressure reducing valve and that it is in good working order.

Many homeowners don't notice when their water pressure is higher than necessary. High water pressure is wasteful, can result in higher utility bills, and can damage pipes or appliances. Most plumbing fixtures or appliances should have a maximum water pressure of 80 psi (pounds per square inch). Anything higher can shorten the lifespan of a fixture or appliance, or cause premature failure. Pressure Reducing Valves (PRVs) reduce the pressure of the water flowing from your meter into your home. A PRV is installed at the water service entry point of a home to conserve water and regulate incoming pressure from WCSA's water mains. WCSA and county building codes require homeowners to have them. A new PRV can be purchased at most hardware or home supply stores. Another option is to contact a plumber to have a new PRV installed.

PRVs require routine maintenance to operate safely and effectively, and should be checked regularly for damage or leaks. Homeowners should check their pressure at least once a year by using a hose bib and pressure gauge. For questions about PRVs, contact WCSA's customer service department at (276) 628-7151.



WCSA Earns Top Ranking in Operations, Performance for Eleventh Consecutive Year



Pictured from left to right are Robbie Cornett, general manager of WCSA; Drew Langston, production manager of WCSA; Eric R. Herold, P.E., VDH district engineer for the Mount Rogers Planning District; and Dr. David Dawson, P.E., deputy field director of VDH's Field Office in Abingdon.

WCSA has earned the 2020 Virginia Optimization Program Gold Award for its high-quality drinking water treatment from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Drinking Water, the highest possible ranking in operations and performance excellence for water utilities. WCSA has received this award each year since 2010.

The award was presented to WCSA staff on June 8 by Eric R. Herold, P.E., VDH district engineer for the Mount Rogers Planning District, and Dr. David Dawson, P.E., deputy field director of VDH's Field Office in Abingdon. WCSA received the award for the Middle Fork Drinking Water Plant following a 12-month analysis of data by the VDH Office of Drinking Water.

Each year through Virginia's Optimization Program, the VDH recognizes drinking water plants that perform above and beyond minimum standards by optimizing and running their treatment process efficiently and effectively. The primary purpose of the program is to reduce risks to public health associated with drinking water.

"We are greatly honored to receive this year's award and are extremely pleased to have earned it for the past eleven years," says Robbie Cornett, general manager of WCSA. "This award demonstrates a tremendous amount of dedication by our Middle Fork team, as well as WCSA's overall commitment to our community for providing top-quality drinking water that meets or exceeds the standards set forth by the VDH."

Of the 129 conventional surface water treatment plants evaluated by the VDH during 2020, WCSA was among 50 that received a gold award, while 30 received silver awards.

"WCSA has the largest permitted capacity and serves the largest number of service connections in the Mount Rogers Planning District," Herold says. "WCSA has consistently been a top performer in the Virginia Optimization Program and was one of 40 plants in Virginia to receive a perfect score for 2020."

The mission of Virginia's Optimization Program is "to encourage waterworks to provide water with a quality that exceeds minimum regulatory standards (i.e., as perfect as possible) and to operate water systems in an exemplary manner (i.e., as effective and functional as possible)."

Over a period of time, through research and plant performance studies conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the American Water Works Association and the waterworks industry, the VDH has developed performance goals for clarification and filtration processes in surface water treatment plants. For Virginia's Optimization Program, drinking water programs throughout the commonwealth submit monthly operation reports containing operational data.



WCSA offices will be closed on the following holidays: Labor Day Sept. 6 Columbus Day Oct. 11



UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES

Aug. 23, 2021 Sept. 27, 2021 Oct. 25, 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 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 25122 Regal Drive Abingdon, VA 24211 P: 276-628-7151 F: 276-628-3594 Email: inquiry@wcsawater.com www.wcsawater.com

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