

70



WCSA Celebrates 70 Years of Service

While WCSA is not the oldest water distribution system in Virginia, its roots go back further than most people realize. In fact, WCSA is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year as it was chartered in 1953 as the Goodson Kinderhook Water Authority.

However, WCSA's roots go back to 1902, when water was first pumped into a Damascus home. In 1910, Abingdon Water Authority began providing water service to Abingdon through wooden transmission lines. Nearly three decades later, Washington County Sanitary District No. 1 (WCSD) was formed as part of President Roosevelt's Works Progress

Administration (WPA) plan to help lift the country out of the Great Depression. The District employed many jobless young men to lay water and sewer lines that served the Abingdon area with water drawn from Taylors Valley. Other water authorities were later formed to provide service to various other communities in Washington County.

In 1976, WCSD consolidated with two other water companies and was renamed the Washington County Service Authority. A year later, the new Middle Fork Drinking Water Plant was placed into service as the main source of

Continued on Page 3

A Note to WCSA Customers

By David (Wayne) Campbell, Chairman, WCSA Board of Commissioners

In recent weeks, several articles have appeared in the Bristol Herald Courier regarding the Washington County Service Authority's dismissal of its former General Manager, Robbie Cornett.

On behalf of WCSA's Board of Commissioners, I can say that we took unanimous action we believed to be necessary. To ensure that we are exercising our required due diligence, we made the decision to launch an internal investigation into the events leading to Mr. Cornett's termination. Moreover, to assure our customers that WCSA has been and is being financially well-managed, we have retained the services of an outside accounting firm. As these efforts are ongoing, we currently are not at liberty to comment on factors surrounding these decisions.

In response to questions concerning news items posted to the WCSA website on November 17th that include quotes from Mr. Cornett, two weeks after his

Continued on Page 3

INSIDE

WCSA Project Updates	2
WCSA Celebrates 70 Years of Service (Continued from Page 1)	3
A Note to WCSA Customers (Continued from Page 1)	3

Tap Water Versus Bottled Water.....	4
Calendar and Board Meetings.....	4

WCSA Project Updates

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

Ongoing Projects:

The **WSL-010-21A Combined Water Line Project** will provide 13,250 linear feet of water line to serve 22 residences along a section of Green Springs Road from the Tennessee state line, and sections of Monroe Road, Prices Bridge Road and Taylors Valley Road. The project began in March 2022 and is expected to be completed in March 2023.



*Galvanized Line Replacement — Phase 3 Project
(Industrial Park Road)*

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 \$30 million project is funded by USDA Rural Development. Construction is underway and expected to be completed by summer of 2023. Divisions 1 and 2 are complete and replaced 49,000 and 27,000 linear feet of water line respectively. Division 2A is also complete and replaced 26,300 linear feet. Work continues on Division 3A to replace approximately 7,000 linear feet of old cast iron pipe with 12-inch water line in the Bristol Industrial Park.



WSL-010-21A Combined Water Line Project

Upcoming Projects:

The **Mendota Road Water Line Extension Project** will continue the installation of water line infrastructure begun nearly 20 years ago and will deliver service to 32 additional residences along a more than 8-mile section of Mendota Road. It will also allow these residences to be served by WCSA's water system from its Middle Fork Water Treatment Plant. Water line installation began in January and may experience weather delays. The project has been scaled back due to construction costs being above existing funding. WCSA is actively pursuing additional funding to complete the entire water line.

The **Mary's Chapel/Archery Range Road Water Line Project** will enable WCSA to bring water service to homes along Mary's Chapel Road and a portion of Walker Mountain Road, along with an unserved section of Archery Range Road. The project was originally planned to include installation of 19,000 linear feet of waterline and construction of a pump station, and provide service to 14 of the 25 existing homes in the project area. The project is scheduled to be bid in early 2023.

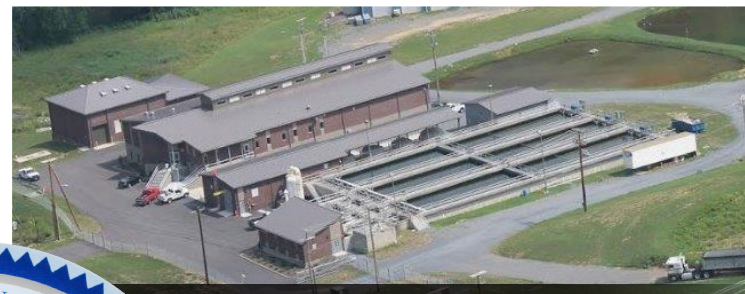
The **Lee Highway Corridor Sewer Expansion Project** is a multi-phase project that began in 2012 when the Board of Supervisors, Industrial Development Authority and authority boards determined to bring much-needed sewer treatment capacity to the west-central portion of Washington County. The project is funded by USDA Rural Development. Easement acquisitions and overall design are in the final stages for the project. 💧

WCSA Celebrates 70 Years of Service

Continued from Page 1

WCSA's drinking water. Since that time, major upgrades have increased the plant's capacity from 4.6 million to 12 million gallons per day. In addition, WCSA continued to grow through consolidation of numerous private and public utilities throughout the county, along with millions of dollars in infrastructure investment. This expanded our service area to include Bristol, southern Washington County, Damascus, Mendota, and the area between Glade Spring and Saltville.

Today, WCSA serves approximately 22,000 water connections and 2,300 wastewater connections in Washington County, Virginia, and surrounding areas. The water system consists of an estimated 900 miles of water line, a 12-million-gallon-per-day surface water treatment plant, a 3.1-million-gallon-per-day membrane filtration plant, two springs, one well, 29 pump stations and 22 water storage tanks. The wastewater system consists of approximately 70 miles of wastewater collection lines, 29 lift stations and two wastewater treatment plants.



Middle Fork Water Treatment Plant



WCSA impacts the health of more people in Washington County on a daily basis than all the greater health care community combined, while also positively impacting water quality in local streams.

We appreciate the thousands of customers who are connected to our system, and we look forward to continuing to provide clean water and quality wastewater services to this area for the next 70 years — and beyond. 💧

A Note to WCSA Customers

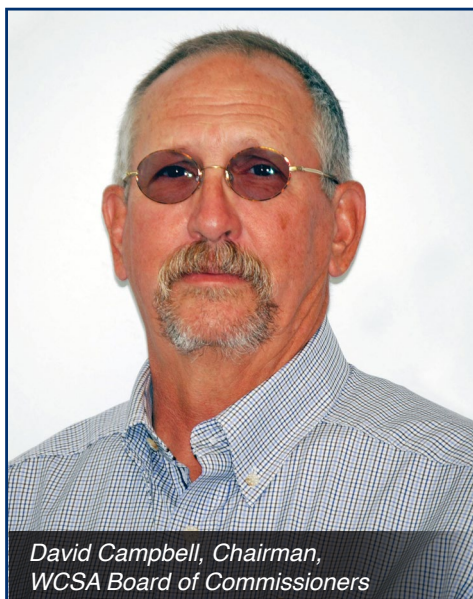
By David (Wayne) Campbell, Chairman, WCSA Board of Commissioners

Continued from Page 1

dismissal, I hope to provide some much-needed clarification. One of these posts originated from a news release that WCSA shared with local media in early September. Both posts were included in WCSA's Fall/Winter newsletter, which was printed in mid-October, and shared on our website after customers began receiving the newsletter in November.

Now, let's talk about where we go from here.

Clearly, WCSA's leadership is presently going through a period of transition. In the coming weeks, our Board will appoint a committee to oversee the process of selecting the next General Manager. At that time, we expect to provide more information about the process and a projected timeline.



*David Campbell, Chairman,
WCSA Board of Commissioners*

In the meantime, Ron Seay is serving as acting General Manager, overseeing WCSA's daily operations. Mr. Seay joined WCSA in January 2021 as Operations Manager, building on a career that includes more than 30 years' experience in engineering, operations and plant management. We are confident in his proven abilities to lead WCSA as we navigate this season of change.

WCSA is grateful for the opportunity to serve our 22,000 water customers and more than 2,000 wastewater customers. As we move into 2023, our 70th anniversary, we will continue to uphold our mission of

leading the industry and our region by providing excellent, affordable, environmentally responsible water and wastewater service. 💧



Tap Water Versus Bottled Water: Which is the Better Choice?

When we're thirsty, many of us choose water over carbonated soft drinks or sports beverages. In fact, American consumers have been choosing to drink bottled water in ever-increasing numbers over the past couple of decades.

Since 2016, bottled water has outsold soft drinks every year as more consumers are choosing it as a healthier option than other packaged drinks. In 2021, 15.7 billion gallons of bottled water were consumed in the U.S., a figure that outstrips soft drinks' 2004 all-time record of 15.3 billion gallons consumed in the U.S.

While most people understand that water is healthier than soft drinks and other beverages, far fewer of them know whether bottled water is actually better than tap water, as many consumers believe. Although bottled water is frequently presented as coming from glaciers or springs, some companies simply fill bottles from local public sources, then charge customers for the costs of packaging, marketing and transportation.

These costs add up. Adult females should consume more than two quarts of water per day, while adult males should consume more than four quarts per day. Currently, the cost for a single 16.9-ounce bottle of water (purchased as part of a package of 24 or 32 per pack from a grocery store) ranges from 13 cents (for generic brands) to 22 cents (for name brands).

For one adult male, using bottled water to meet the recommended daily amount of water costs between 78 cents to \$1.32 per day, or between \$285 to \$482 per year, and the cost goes up significantly when you include additional family members. The average American family spends more than \$1,000 per year in water costs through their local utility. Because this includes all types of water usage, both indoors and outdoors, it's easy to see how expensive bottled water is in comparison.

Bottled water also has a significant environmental impact, even if we're able to recycle the bottles we use. Current limitations on how recyclables are internationally transferred and accepted for processing means more plastic water bottles are ending up in U.S. landfills—approximately 86% of them. Eight million tons of plastic enter the oceans each year, killing more than 1.1 million seabirds and animals annually. Plastic water bottles can languish in landfills for 450 years or more until they degrade. During this process, they break down into microplastics that produce carcinogenic toxins that seep into the soil, eventually entering our waterways and oceans. In addition, huge amounts of energy are utilized just to treat, bottle and transport bottled water to end users.

When it comes to quality and safety, consumer standards are actually more stringent for tap water than bottled water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for tap water provided by public water suppliers, while the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets standards for bottled water.

The best way to learn more about your local water quality and make informed decisions about your drinking water is to read your utility's annual water quality report. The Washington County Service Authority's (WCSA's) water quality report is posted on its website each year. For the past 12 years, WCSA has earned a Gold Award in operations and performance excellence from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Drinking Water for meeting or exceeding all state and federal requirements for water quality, monitoring and reporting, and providing the highest-quality drinking water to its customers. The award is the highest ranking bestowed to Virginia water utilities.

For more information on WCSA's source waters, or to review the annual Drinking Water Quality Report, visit www.wcsa-water.com.

Sources cited: "Bottled Water Sets All-Time Volume Record" by Russell Redman, Supermarket News, June 3, 2022; "Is Bottled or Tap Water Better for Your Health?" by Kelli McGrane, Healthline, June 11, 2020; "The Water in You: Water and the Human Body," U.S. Geological Survey's Water Science School, May 22, 2019; <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/statistics-and-facts>; "Environmental impact of bottled water up to 3,500 times greater than tap water," by Joey Grostern, The Guardian, August 5, 2021; "Plastic Water Bottles - Environmental Impacts" by Jennifer Okafor, www.trvst.world, August 1, 2021; "One Bottle at a Time," <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/one-bottle-time>; <https://www.epa.gov/>



WCSA Calendar

WCSA offices will be closed on the following holidays:

Presidents' Day
Memorial Day

Feb. 20
May 29



Board Meetings

UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES

Feb. 27, 2023
Mar. 27, 2023
Apr. 24, 2023

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