

# Springville Utility District Water Tap Sign-ups Continue

*Paris Post Intelligencer*

The Springville Utility District is a not-for-profit utility created by Henry County and approved by all state regulatory agencies. Its purpose is to bring clean, healthy and abundant water at affordable rates to the people of the Springville/Britton Ford area which historically has a record of contaminated, low quality and low groundwater volume, according to Amon Evans, one of the organizers of the district.

A number of water supply issues have been percolating for years in the area. On Thursday, July 22, 2010, Bobby Goode, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development state director, and Michael Marshall, Delta Regional Authority alternate federal co-chairman, joined local officials to announce federal funding of more than \$3.5 million for projects to soon supply safe, reliable drinking water to homes and businesses in eastern Henry County.

“Safe, reliable drinking water is vital to the future of every healthy community,” Goode said. “Making these infrastructure investments puts people to work now and it lays the foundation for sustainable growth in these communities through the next generation.”

The check presented was from the USDA Rural Development for the Sandy Beach Water Association (SBWA). The new Springville Utility District (SUD) had earlier been awarded federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding through a Rural Development low interest infrastructure loan of \$863,000 and grant of \$1,925,500.

SUD also was awarded an additional \$352,000 grant from the Delta Regional Commission. Other funding partners include the federal Environmental Protection Agency with a \$500,000 grant, \$304,500 in SUD contributions and \$405,000 from SBWA.

The funds are being used to develop a new water system for areas in Henry County that currently get water from increasingly unreliable individual wells. Water for the system will be supplied by the Paris Board of Public Utilities.

The funding will be used to build a transmission main from BPU to supply the new system. Nearly 30 miles of distribution lines will provide water to about 1,300 homes and businesses in the Springville area where individual wells have become less reliable and more susceptible to contamination.

SBWA will replace its current Kentucky Lake intake by tying in to the new supply from Paris through Springville. The new combined system will provide better economies of scale and lower the overall cost of maintenance and repairs while serving more people.

The Springville Utility District is close to finalizing its plans for the project, in which 155,000 linear feet of pipe, just a bit less than 30 miles' worth, will deliver water obtained from the Paris Board of Public Utilities to an area that has traditionally been lacking in clean, abundant water.

Project organizers have hosted numerous public meetings throughout 2010 seeking customers for the service. Amon Evans, chairman of the water board, has estimated that a customer base of 400 people would each pay \$30 for 2,000 gallons of water. The goal has been to sign up around 600 or 700 people.

Water services agreements and tap fee sign-ups are continuing. Information and sign-ups are available by calling the temporary office number, 593-0459.

## FACT SHEET

By Amon Evans,

Springville Utility District Commissioner

Nearly five years ago, I was asked by Mayor Greer and the County Commissioners to look at bringing clean and healthy water to the Springville/Britton Ford peninsula. I spent nearly two whole years looking for a way to best serve this area now-- and in the future. Commissioner Warren, acting both as the Mayor's liaison with the commission and on her own initiative for the people of her district, walked with me through the tough early times and has been a super asset in this effort. She helped recruit Keith Cheek, Lowell Wilson and James Webb to serve as members of our original group.

We examined every possible avenue of relief. We looked at costs both now and the future. We went through treatment plants, groundwater cooperatives, and everything we and the United States Geologic Survey people could come up with. We tried to map the moving fingers of the Memphis Aquifer. We talked with and met with University professors, Tennessee Environment and Conservation department personnel, Tennessee Department of Health, Community Resource personnel, local physicians, well drillers and a myriad of water engineering companies, all in the effort to find an abundant supply of good, clean and healthy water that would be at affordable costs now and in the future. It was not and is not available in this area.

Mayor Greer and the Henry County Commission created the Springville Utility District in 2008 as the not-for-profit vehicle through which we would operate and continue the effort. Having already appointed three individuals and an alternate to the original project, it would now become an official agency and proceed through all the required regulatory steps to be a legal and authorized Utility District. At the same time this was going through the maze of legal voo-doo, my associates and I were striving to determine and document the need of this historically low quality water area.

We had heard reports from many residents of wells drying up and many other reports of lack of volume to say nothing of the costs incurred in chemically trying to make bad water good. We knew global warming and the excessive extremes of temperature swings would only worsen the situation. We knew that continual leaching of septic waste, agricultural run off, air pollution and the disturbing evidence of our surface water contamination, would only get worse as the years went by. Believe what you want but don't fool yourself and leave your children and grandchildren and their children a legacy of not caring about your water source.

### THIS IS WHAT WE FOUND:

Working with the city of Paris water department and their approved and certified laboratory and class 1 operators, we examined 21 wells at random scattered throughout the targeted Springville/Britton Ford area. We were planning to examine many, many more wells but up jumped the devil:

- Fifty percent (50%) of tested wells were contaminated with coliform bacteria.

- Six (6) of those 10 wells had extremely excessive iron results that far surpassed the recommended tolerance level established by TDEC.
- Three (3) of those six wells were so high in iron they exceeded the entire chart. And it gets much worse!
- Two (2) of the ten wells with coliform bacteria were positive for ecoli bacteria.

So, neighbors you can do the math. We were stunned by the findings in that short period of time and knew immediately what premature dissemination of these findings would bring about from many quarters unless a viable water alternative was found, and found quickly.

We stopped the well survey immediately and renewed our search to find an affordable way to bring access to clean and healthy water to the residents of this large geographic area of Henry County. We have indeed found what we believe is a workable and reasonable solution. With the help of our County Commission and with the help of funding from Rural Development, TDEC, EPA, ARRA and our own Paris Board of Public Utilities, we believe we have structured a plan to provide access to affordable, clean and healthy water. But governments can only do so much. It is now up to the property owners and residents to make this come about for the benefit of all who, whether weekenders, campers, vacationers or homeowners, call Springville home.

Lowell Wilson  
Commissioner

Keith Cheek  
Commissioner

Amon Evans  
Commissioner