

Making changes for over 30 years, Butler RWD 3 – ‘76 to ‘08

In 1971, America was busy putting men on the moon but in eastern Butler County, going to the moon was seemingly easier than drilling a good producing water well. It was tough for farmers and ranchers to find water to support their operations and back then, large scale rural housing developments weren't even on the radar. Community leaders worked for five years to develop Butler County RWD 3. Operator Tom Hinton and Bookkeeper Judy Cope are the staff members who have guided major changes and growth for the RWD during the last 25 years.

"I remember when one 10,000-acre ranch sold and the new owners didn't want to spend the money on a three-quarter-mile line to hook into our main. They built a nice

new barn with other needed facilities and they just wanted their own well! But after 11 dry holes they gave up and spent the money on the line – that had to hurt. They've been one of our larger customers," Cope noted.



Dan Knupp
Communications

Growth is incremental

"Actually, the steering committee that did the work to form the district had its first meeting in June of 1971. People interested in belonging paid a \$25 charge for a meter application and had to wait a while for service to begin because engineering and construction weren't finished until the summer of 1976," Hinton explained. "That initial phase had

132 patrons and generated enough interest that a year-and-a-half later, the second phase of construction put on another bunch of customers at the end of the decade."

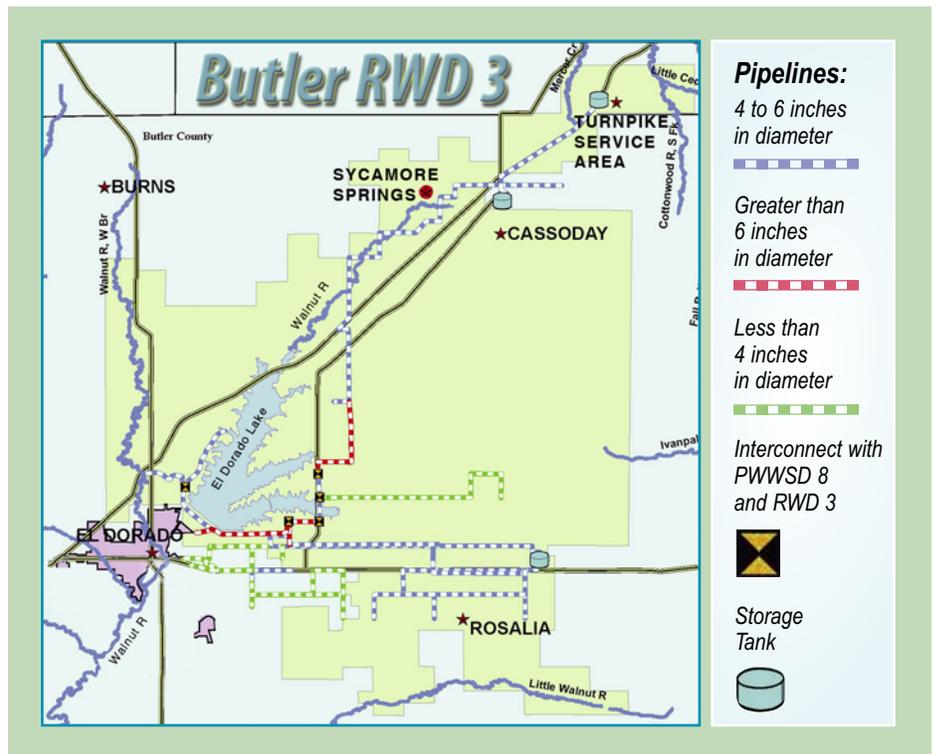
"Funds for the first and second phases were made available by the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), predecessor to USDA Rural Development. Bob O'Shea was the state director and Wendell Anderson was our local guy," Hinton remembers. "After the financing came through, we had to ask for an additional \$200 from patrons to guarantee a meter and water right."

In June of 1981, El Dorado Lake was finished and filled – eastern Butler County now at least had the look of being water prosperous! The lake's attraction for people, both for recreation and

for those wanting a more rural lifestyle, changed the demographics of Rural Water District 3 yet again. On July 26, 1982 Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 8 (PWWS 8) was formed to provide a stable water source for the US Army Corps of Engineers



Bookkeeper Judy Cope and Operator/Manager Tom Hinton are happy with the new office. They are behind the new customer service counter just inside the door.



and the State of Kansas to service El Dorado State Park. Butler County at the time wanted to establish a county recreation area at the lake and in partnership with Butler RWD 3 paid to increase pipe and pump size.



The 40 x 50 foot Butler RWD 3 office is built inside of this metal building on Rosalia's main street. The cedar façade and shingle covered porch finish the structure with an attractive look and homey touch. A repair shop inside wraps around the office from the overhead door at the left, back and behind.

“The Butler County lake recreation project later fell through and we reimbursed them for their expense. So the Corps, State of Kansas, and Butler RWD 3 ended up paying for the wholesale district’s development. Raw water comes from the lake and is treated by El Dorado. We then purchase the water from them,” Hinton explained. “Wholesale 8’s board is made up of one representative from the Corps, one from the state park, two from Butler County and two from Butler RWD 3. And Judy keeps the books.”

At the time PWWSD 8 started, the size of the pump station east of El Dorado was also increased. It now has three, 50-hp, 1,200 gpm. variable speed pumps set at 120 lbs. of pressure. Much of Butler RWD 3’s system is pressurized by this pump station. Even with a major line break, water pressure can easily be maintained.

In 1986, Butler RWD 3 started growing again, this time by going north. Two new construction phases provided service to customers at the north end of El Dorado Lake and in

1991, a line was installed to the city of Cassoday and the Matfield Green Turnpike Service Area. Both have towers to maintain pressure but a booster station was put in on the lake’s north side to push water up to them.

“We cut cross country when we put that line up north – went right across farm fields to save money on distance. Hindsight is always 20/20 and I’d never, ever do that again. I’d put those lines right down the side of the road. In all the years since, we’ve not had a single customer hook-up in the middle of a cornfield – and

when you have a problem with a line in the middle of those crops, you pay damages and cause a lot of ill will. It is more likely for new customers to build along township roads, thus

creating a loss of potential hook-ups when lines are laid across country,” Hinton said.

New office is a big change for staff

From 132 customers in 1976, to having 197 miles of line and 598 customers today, the biggest change for the staff since April 2007, of having a new office building. Since 1982, the RWD has been run out of Judy and Joe Cope’s home, a mile south and three quarters of a mile east of Rosalia.

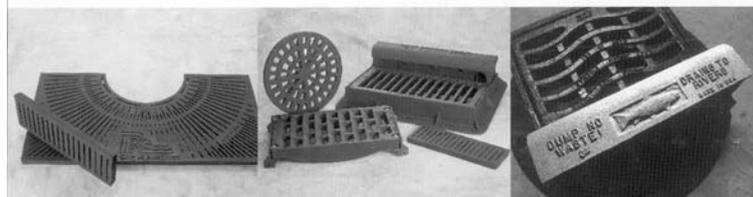
“It started out at my dining room table and then moved into the little area where I have a desk and piano. Once my boys were grown RWD bookkeeping moved into their bedroom and expanded to take over the basement and garage – just about any place there’s storage in the house,” Judy exclaimed!

“Knowing what we know now, after having an office here for just a little while, any new district starting up should just bite the bullet and go ahead and borrow money to build an office along with a system,” Hinton noted.

East Jordan Iron Works, Inc.

“We Cover the Infrastructure”

Proudly Made in USA since 1883



Contact the sales office nearest you by calling
1-800-MANHOLE, or visit www.ejiw.com.

Making changes . . .

A new office has been a priority for the last several years. Rural Fire Dist. 5 along with Flintheills Unified School District 492 deeded a lot across the street from the RWD's new location. Plans were drawn and

prices were figured to build a stand-alone office on that property.

Great deal for the community

"What happened next and finally getting us an office is a true success

township. They leased office space to Butler RWD 3 for 30 years. That's cooperation!"

After a concrete slab was contracted for and poured in the inside of the north building, the 40 x



Above: The entry and bookkeeper work area inside the front door allows for plenty of table top work space as well as good counters for meeting the public.

Right: The board room has ample room for meetings and the kitchenette is well lit and efficiently arranged.



story for our community," past RWD Board Chair and present PWWSD 8 Board Member Wes Pletcher said. "Two ideal metal buildings on the west side of the main street in Rosalia became available – and were purchased by the fire district and

50 foot office was built by Tom and assisted by Dean Bender of the fire district and Jack Bender of the township. The heating and air work was contracted. Tom crafted the finish interior carpentry. A spiffy cedar exterior was added, setting the office off with an attractive façade. Behind and around the RWD office is a roomy shop used by the Fire District, Township and RWD. The south building is more than large enough to house the three partners' vehicles. Because of the savings over the stand-alone building, the RWD could afford the office without financing. Costs for the office furnishings were shared by Butler RWD 3 and PWWSD 8.

For Judy, the new office has allowed her to shut the door at the end of the day and leave her job behind. "We're still available for after-hours emergencies but there's no more late night calls about such things as: 'The cold water works but please turn the hot back on,' or, 'what's my last meter reading?' And no more payments are stuck in the mail box – the mailman actually picked up a payment envelope and took it to the post office. Those

Utility Service Co.

I N C O R P O R A T E D

FULL SERVICE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

GASB 34 Compliant
Interior and Exterior Painting, Repairs, Safety Accessories
Inspections, Washouts, Disinfections

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Antenna Site Management
Antenna Installations
Design Reviews/Project Management

TAX EXEMPT FINANCING

Asset Acquisition and Infrastructure Growth
Extremely Competitive Rates
No "Red Tape"

NEW TANK SALES

Expedited Delivery
Any Style, Design, Capacity



CORPORATE OFFICE

P.O. Box 1350
Perry, GA 31069
Phone: 800-223-3695
Fax: 478-987-2991
www.utilityservice.com

TOM STECHMANN
Liberty, MO
Phone: 888-424-4188 • 314-420-4912
Fax: 816-628-6487
tstechmann@utilityservice.com

people ended up having a late payment. It's just much, much nicer to have an office away from home," she said.

Since the office is in place, Tom and Judy both concede that they still have a concern. Now that their jobs have changed so much for the better, they are both are thinking about retirement.

If it's not one change, it's another

"Our main concern is how are we are going to find experienced replacements, or if that can't be done, find good people to train who will be able to step into our jobs a little later," Hinton exclaimed. In the past, Tom's son Jason has been available as a backup operator but has recently taken a job out of state. Judy finally has an individual that helps with posting when necessary but adds, "When you take time off, everything is waiting and hits you hard when you return."

"Our system has been very solid the last several years and it has been easy to be a board member in no small part because of the efforts of both Tom and Judy," Pletcher explained. "I'm retired from the Texaco Refinery in El Dorado and have original meter number 40 from the first district construction. I know that Tom and Judy will also retire one of these days and it would sure be nice to find people locally to fill their positions. I'm sure the current board will be working on this in the months to come."

As the board and staff of Butler RWD 3 continue to settle into their new office, new changes continue to pop up on the horizon. Good management, good governance, dedication and hard work have all been factors in growing the system through 30 plus years of change – change for the good.

Please stay tuned, because for Butler RWD 3 and all the system's customers, there's much more of the good yet to come.

Water makes 15 mile u-turn through RWD to be "recycled" by customer

Sycamore Springs is located west of Cassoday about a mile-and-a-half and about a quarter-mile south in a pasture. It is a unique water feature in the Flint Hills, a water hole about twice the size of the RWD's new office and has a five foot wide geyser, two to three feet tall that gushes constantly.

"The pasture with Sycamore Springs has been in Cassoday's Harsh family since 1871 and current owner, Robert Harsh, is a past board member," Hinton explains. "Our board laughs about us recycling our water. The water line we laid up north in 1991 runs very close to the spring. The spring runs down a slough into the Walnut River which empties into El Dorado Lake and is treated at the city's treatment facility. It is then sold to PWWSD 8 where it makes the u-turn at the east El Dorado pump house and is sold to RWD 3. It is pumped north, aided by the booster station north of El Dorado Lake and finally is sold back to the Harsh family ranch west of Cassoday."

(See the system map on page 16)



Tom Hinton describes the RWD's board room photo display of Sycamore Springs and a little of its history.



The Sycamore Springs geyser is about five feet across, gushes up two to three feet and runs constantly.



Treated water supplied from El Dorado Lake which is fed by the Walnut River makes a u-turn here at the pump house east of El Dorado. It then travels north, back to the Harsh ranch customers to finish a unique 30-mile water cycle.