

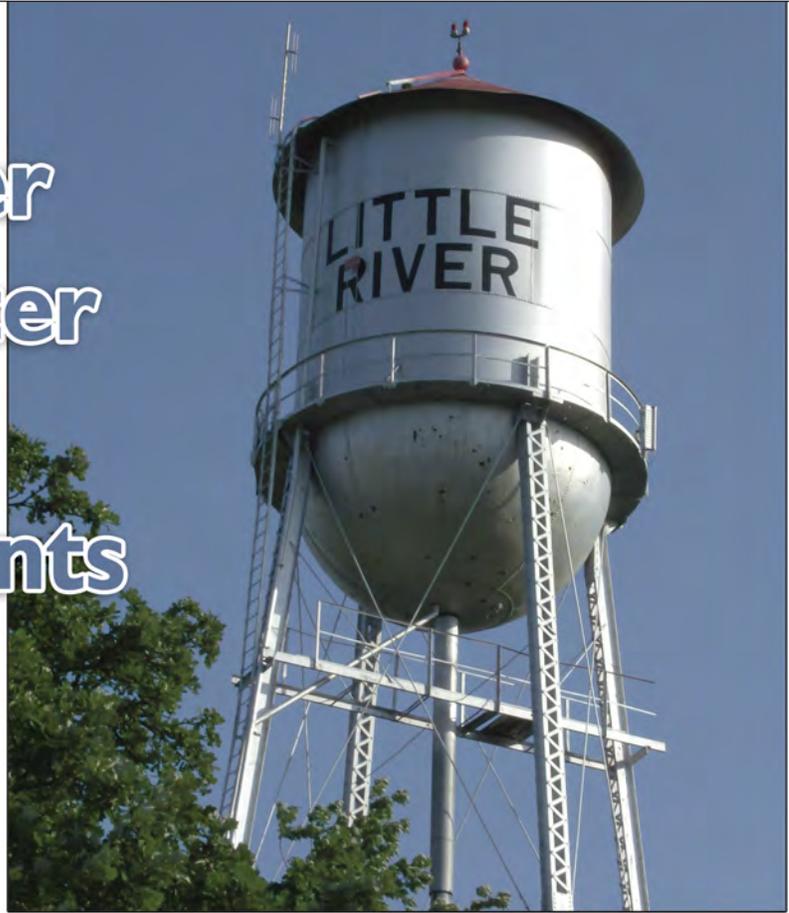
Little River Makes Water System Improvements

Located in eastern Rice County in central Kansas, the city of Little River recently completed a water system improvement project that went to bid in 2010.

Little River is a small town with a lot of local pride. Like many other small Kansas towns the railroad played a significant part in the town's establishment. In 1879 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway built a branch line from Florence to McPherson and in 1880, that was extended to Lyons. This put Little River right along the route bringing vital goods to town. A leisurely drive down the brick paved Main Street and you can't miss the once glorious Burke Hotel directly west across the street from city hall. The city hall today sits on the site where the hospital originally stood. Seeing the old Burke Hotel invokes a sense of mystery and intrigue of what life must have been like back in the former days when the hotel was in its prime.

Today Little River is a thriving small town with many local businesses, schools, churches, a weekly newspaper and is home to the local Rice County Rural Water District No. 1 office as well as the Upper Little Arkansas River Watershed District office. Included in the 350 water services serving 557 residents are 40 businesses including a lumberyard, the MTC phone company, construction companies, a cookie factory, grocery store, restaurants, salons and more.

In 2007, the city council decided to proceed with improving the water system. They began the typical process of loan and grant application in order to obtain financing to upgrade the water production and distribution. A snag was encountered and the financing was denied since their publicly funded sewer project wasn't yet completed. This was all due to a situation beyond the city's control when some excavation work at the sewer plant site turned up Indian artifacts. This put the project on hold until the artifacts could be properly addressed and dealt with. The delay resulted in a rejection of the funding of the water



project. Once the sewer project was completed, the city began the funding application over again. Their application was approved for a loan through the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan fund administered by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and a Community Development Block Grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce.

New pipeline and more

The project consisted of two components: transmission and well field and distribution. The project included transmission line of 6,600 feet of 4-inch PVC pipe to the well field, 20,600 feet of 6-inch PVC transmission pipeline and another 6,640 feet of 4-inch pipeline. Structural and electrical improvements were made to the six existing wells including all new radio telemetry controls, new pump motor controls, five new master meters, new well pumps, new chlorination system, a standby generator, tracer wire, system valves, nine service reconnections and 440 feet of brick street replacement.

On the distribution side, the project included 290 feet of 2-inch PVC line, 14,220 feet of 4-inch PVC and 3,530 feet of 6-inch PVC and 18,030 feet of tracer wire. Eight, 6-inch valves, thirty-five 4-inch, and three 2-inch valves were installed; two 4-inch valves were hot tapped. There were 195 service reconnections, 18 new connections to existing water lines, two new flush hydrants and 29 new fire hydrants installed. The project included repair of 2,580 feet of pavement.



Little River is located in eastern Rice County near the Little Arkansas Lyons River near Hwy 46 in south central Kansas.

Water quality in Little River is pretty good with the exception of Well 13 which was shut down at one time due to high chlorides and nitrates. In 2000 the chlorides increased to 944 mg/l due to oil field activity and the nitrates were at 10.2 mg/l. Hardness is also an issue at 664 mg/l. The chlorides are now at 400 mg/l and the nitrates are at 6.2 mg/l. Water from Well 13 is now being blended with water from the other five wells. Chlorides in the other wells average less than 100 mg/l with total hardness at 250 to 300 mg/l and nitrate at less than 4 mg/l. There were no significant detections of iron or manganese. An interesting note is Well 8 is an original well and was a hand-dug well. It had previously had a concrete casing installed and had been fitted with the proper sanitary seals and vent screen.



Fat Boyz Bar & Grill-Home to some of the best steaks and burgers in Rice County.



The old brick Burke Hotel still anchors Main Street in Little River.

Water rates had to be increased to service the new debt for the project. The previous water rates were an \$11 monthly minimum with 2,000 gallons included and \$3/1,000 gallons thereafter. The new rates are \$12 minimum with 1,000 gallons included and \$5/1,000 gallons thereafter.

The successful bidder for the project was actually \$145,000 below expected and some extras were added to use the available funding. The project consultant was Schwab-Eaton, P.A., Manhattan, KS; the contractor on the job was APAC of Hutchinson, KS. The job was completed within the specified time allotment.

Congratulations to the city of Little River for making improvements that will help sustain this vibrant community.

I would encourage any community that is contemplating needed improvements or expansion of their water or wastewater utilities to contact the Kansas Rural Water Association for discussions concerning funding options, water rates or similar project experiences in other communities.

Jon Steele has been employed by KRWA as a Circuit Rider since 1995. Jon is certified as a water and wastewater operator. He has more than twenty-five years experience in public works, construction and industrial arts.



OLATHE
Winwater
 COMPANY

1165 W. 149 St. • Olathe, KS 66061
 Phone: (913) 829-3300 • Fax: (913) 829-3993
 www.olathewinwater.com

WHOLESALEERS OF PIPE
 VALVES • FITTINGS
 WATERWORKS • SANITARY SEWER
 STORM SEWER

"Best Service In Town"

Call a locally owned firm with personalized service to plan and design your next project.

Water Systems • Wastewater • Streets
 • Dam Safety Inspections •

King and Associates Engineering

Holton, KS 66436

Office: 785-364-4312 kingengineering@embarqmail.com
 Fax: 785-364-4755 Bruce Rinkes (cell): 785-845-5272