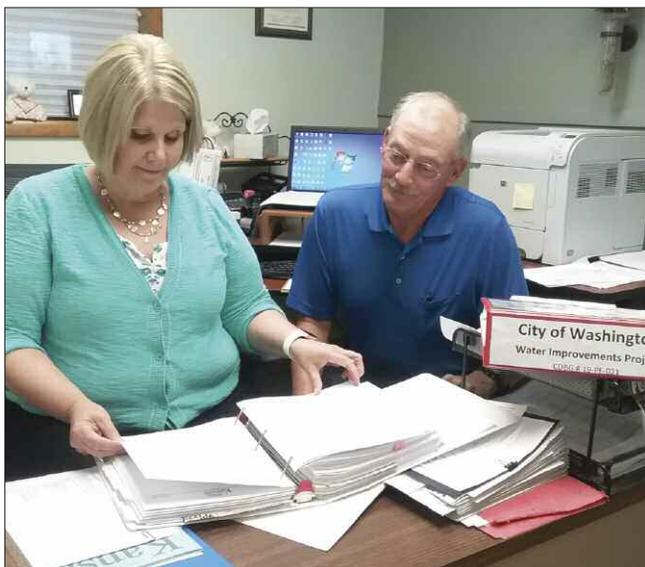


City of Washington Begins Replacement of Distribution System

There comes a time in every water system when upgrades are required. The city of Washington recently made that determination. The city has 683 water connections and also serves the citizens with wastewater treatment, electrical production and distribution. The city also maintains the streets, parks and the cemetery.

Located in North Central Kansas at the junction of U.S. 36 and K-15, Washington is a friendly, caring community that is proud of its infrastructure and town history. The city of Washington is the county seat of Washington County.

Citizens of Washington like the quality of life. They describe it as very pleasant in the splendor of the Midwest where they enjoy the beauty of all four seasons, with no pollution, no stop lights, a low crime rate, and hard-working, caring people. Recreation is a priority in Washington. A spacious park provides a picnic area, play area, fairgrounds, rodeo arena, swimming pool, tennis court,



City Clerk Denise Powell and City Administrator Carl Chalfant gather information for a water rate review.



City of Washington's elevated storage tank shown with a replica of the Statue of Liberty in front of the County Court House.

basketball court, sand volleyball court, two softball diamonds, small car race track, and RV parking with hook-ups.

In addition to 1,100 friendly people and more than 70 businesses that call Washington home, the city boasts a beautiful up-to-date library, a 9-hole grass green golf course, and an 8-lane bowling center.

Washington is home to KSDS, a unique dog-training center for highly-trained canine social and service dogs that provide assistance to disabled and sight-impaired individuals.

Washington's downtown business district is home to a variety of shopping experiences to indulge in. The industrial park continues to develop with an eye toward the future of the community.

The Washington City Park showcases the community-built playground, Munchkinland, and includes a walking fitness trail. Other features include a zero-depth entry pool, constructed in 2010, fishing area, ball diamonds, tennis, basketball and sand volleyball courts, and a racetrack, which offer additional recreational opportunities.

The above information was obtained from the city of Washington web site at <http://www.washingtonks.net/>. Having a web site allows citizens to stay informed if they so choose.

Water System Upgrades

Like most water systems that were installed in the early 1900's, Washington has been dealing with a deteriorating distribution system. The governing body recently decided to make significant upgrades to the system. The project will include the replacement of approximately 55,000 linear feet of water line. The line size replacement ranges from 2-inch to 10-inch, with the 6-inch line being the majority of the new line with 36,000 linear feet. The city will also install

new AMR meters, fire hydrants and valves. BG Consultants is the project consultant.

The total estimated cost for the improvements is \$8,268,350. The funding will be provided by a USDA Rural Development loan of \$5,151,000 and a USDA Grant up to \$1,320,000 depending on final costs. The Kansas Department of Commerce has awarded the city of Washington a Community Development Block Grant of \$600,000. The city will provide \$200,000 from internal funds.

Impact on Rates

The city council has the difficult job of approving what the new rates will be for the citizens. The city is committed to providing quality water at the most reasonable cost. This includes adjusting rates to fund major improvements for the long term. Nothing is inexpensive anymore.

The annual payment will be approximately \$275,000 depending on final costs for the improvements. With 683 connections the average amount needed per month from each customer is \$33.55. This is in addition to the present rates. How the city determines to assess these costs will affect all the customers. Like other communities, they wonder if they should apply all to the monthly minimum equally? The basis of support for that idea is that the amount needed for the debt payment would be guaranteed, with every customer paying the same amount. But the single household member who is depending on Social Security using 1,000 gallons a month, to the business that may use more than 100,000 gallons per month do not impact the system operation equally.

The city leaders also understand that adding the increased debt service to the water sold only is not practical either. A large user might relocate to another system that has lower utility rates. Maybe a better option is to consider adjusting both the monthly minimum and the charge per thousand gallons sold.

Kansas Rural Water Association has assisted the city with a water rate review. City Administrator Carl Chalfant and City Clerk Denise Powell, have worked hard to make sure that the information provided was accurate and provided to KRWA in a timely manner. The review does suggest the city increase rates but the governing body is still reviewing the information provided and will make a decision soon.

KRWA commends the city of Washington in first determining the need for improvements and then moving toward a set goal. Did it happen overnight? No, absolutely not. Will it be worth it? I believe that it will. The town will end up with a major portion of the distribution system being replaced. Fire flows will be improved; customers will have less outages due to repairs. Water quality should also be improved. A last comment – even if the rates are doubled, they will be similar to the average across the Kansas.



This cutout of a 4-inch cast iron pipeline shows a new break just adjacent to a clamp that repaired a prior break.



This section of 4-inch pipeline shows extensive buildup of mineral deposits in the existing water distribution system in Washington, Kansas. The city is embarking on a total replacement of the system.

Rate Reviews

KRWA has initiated the Kansas RATES Program to help cities and water districts get their rates set properly and simply. Through the program, KRWA provides basic rate reviews, FREE OF CHARGE!

Most of the time, a basic review is all that is needed. But when the situations are more complex, KRWA will refer those systems to Carl Brown Consulting to get a service and fee proposal. If the city or RWD then wants to proceed, the firm will do an analysis and assist in getting rates, fees and everything else set up properly.

To learn more about this service, check the KRWA website at <https://krwa.net/TECHNICAL-ASSISTANCE/Rate-Reviews>

Greg Duryea started work for KRWA in 1993 as Technical Assistant. He holds a Class I water certification and is the certified operator for Sycamore Springs Resort in Brown County. Greg is assistant general manager at KRWA.

