

Cooperation – key to regional system development

The *Random House College Dictionary* defines cooperation as "an act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose, more or less active assistance from a person, organization, etc.; the combination of persons for purposes of production, purchase, or distribution for their joint benefit."

An example of where a great deal of cooperation is required is when neighboring communities and rural water districts embark to develop a "regional water supply." We hear a lot about

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"regionalization." I contend that communities cannot be pushed into regionalization. Such projects need to be developed out of need that is realized and understood by each member. When that's the case, then the project has a much better chance of success.



From the viewpoint of water systems selling water to other water systems, you

can see that cooperation is essential. For example, what happens if the supplying system cannot meet the demands of the purchasers due to some operational problem? Well, it's a sure bet that some cooperation and understanding are going to be required. First, good communication is critical. Next cities and/or RWDs need to work

creation of public wholesale water supply districts. The law is embodied within K.S.A. 19-3545, et. seq. A public wholesale water supply district is a vehicle that allows local communities and rural water districts to cooperate on a central supply and/or treatment and distribution facilities. A public wholesale district in Kansas is generally seen

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together to overcome the deficiencies, such as scheduling the times when each system might take water to resupply their storage facilities. Each entity needs to do its share to ensure that the needs of the other systems can be met. The common good of all has to be the goal.

In the early 1970's, the Kansas Legislature adopted unique legislation that allows for the

as a "master supplier" to the respective communities. The creation of such projects has helped ensure adequate and quality water supplies to communities that historically had difficulty in maintaining adequate sources or treatment capacity. There are eight public wholesale districts in operation in Kansas as of January 1, 2005. These eight systems serve 32 cities and 30

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USDA Rural Development Funds Public Wholesale Water District #13

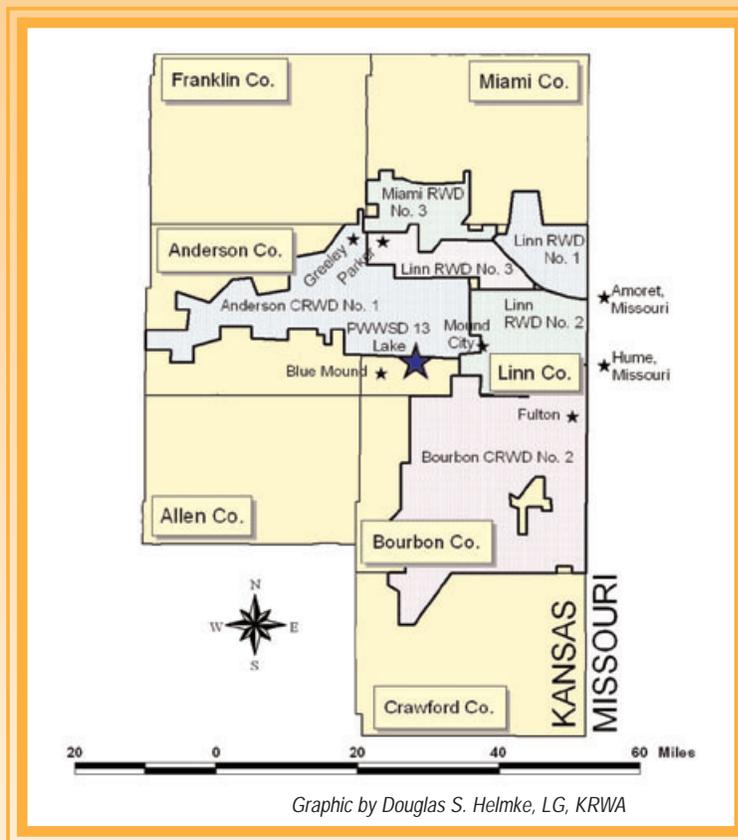


by Elmer Ronnebaum

Kansas has another public wholesale district moving from the development stage to the construction stage. Public Wholesale District No. 13 which will serve parts of Linn, Miami and Anderson counties, was scheduled to open bids for construction at the time this magazine went to press in mid-February. Initiated about 13 years ago, the project will provide water service to Blue Mound, Mound City, Fulton, Parker, Greeley, Anderson Consolidated RWD 1, Bourbon Consolidated RWD 2, and Linn County RWDs 1, 2, and 3. Two cities in Missouri will be served. They are Amorette and Hume. RWD 3, Miami County will purchase some water but is not a member at this time.

The proposed treatment plant is a conventional surface plant design, rated at 1.7 MGD. It will utilize chlorine dioxide for THM control. A new lake will be constructed to impound 212 surface acres and will provide a yield of 1.7 MGD, with a 2% deficiency. The dam will be 64 feet high, with an effective storage of 7144 acre feet. It controls 13.34 sq. miles of drainage. Flood detention is included. The project was to go to bid on February 10 with the lake, plant, distribution and tanks all scheduled for bid at the same time, according to Gary Gobel, Secretary of the board of directors.

USDA Rural Development is providing financing for the construction of the water treatment and distribution facilities. The District has been approved to receive a loan totalling \$7,549,400 and a grant of \$8,177,445 from the federal agency. USDA Rural Development has a long history of funding water utility



Graphic by Douglas S. Helmke, LG, KRWA

projects; the agency was previously known as the Farmers Home Administration. The State Conservation Commission is contributing \$1,817,900 for acquisition of land and construction of the lake. The proposed water rate to other cities and RWDs is \$3.50 per thousand gallons.

Project consultant is Shafer, Kline and Warren. Richard Hines, Erie, is legal counsel.

Kansas Rural Water Association lended support to the project at the time of the District's organization and encouraged funding at both the state and federal levels.

RWDs. Several other systems are in development.

The organization and development of a public wholesale district begs for cooperation among the entities to reach a common goal. From city councils and RWD boards of directors involved, the designers, landowners and most of all the funding agencies all play critical

project. KRWA has quietly supported funding for the USDA Rural Development program (formerly Farmers Home Administration) for decades and more recently, the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund.

I hope you will contact KRWA for assistance to your community if you seem to be at a standstill in developing a project

practical, there will likely be funding for the project. And be persistent. You'll have plenty of hurdles. Public Wholesale District 13 did not give up after the first hurdle. They've had many – and it's a guarantee there will be many more.

Attend the conference

The KRWA annual conference and exhibition offers numerous technical sessions of interest to existing and developing water supply systems. The program is reprinted in this issue. I encourage you especially to consider attending the session "Regional Public Water Supply Planning" at 10:45 a.m., Wednesday, March 30. Margaret Fast of the Kansas Water Office will be the presenter. I believe that board and council members will find this session interesting and helpful. I hope you and others from your city or RWD can attend at Wichita March 29 - 31. It's an investment that's well worth your time.

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parts – with cooperation being the key – if the project is to be successful.

In the case of Public Wholesale District No. 13 which is showcased in the sidebar on the previous page, I know that KRWA also worked with the project developers to help gain political and funding support for the

cooperatively with a neighboring community. Too often, local communities first put out "feelers" for grant eligibility as a first step. That's not the right way to go about a project. First, determine what your needs really are. Forget about "getting a grant." Design and purchase what you need; if that's reasonable and financially

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