

# Shawnee Cons. RWD 4 has new plant under construction

**S**hawnee Consolidated RWD 4 is more than halfway towards the completion of a new 3-million gallon per day (MGD) lime-softening groundwater treatment plant just northwest of Topeka. The plant will be expandable to 6 MGD. This plant is unique in that it is being constructed from pre-cast concrete panels that are now, for the first time, being produced in Kansas.

Project Consultant Louis Funk with Bartlett & West, Inc., Topeka, reports that Iowa Pre-cast Concrete just opened a facility in Pleasanton, about 50 miles south of Kansas City. "Prior to this facility, the closest facility was in Omaha. Shipping from Omaha made pre-cast concrete panels less feasible," Funk says.

The new treatment plant will supplement the district's existing 1 MGD plant. Shawnee Cons. RWD 4 also has a connection with the city of Topeka. That connect will be used as an emergency interconnect when the new plant is complete. Nine new groundwater wells were also constructed, each producing 250 to 300 gpm. Also, three miles of 16-inch and 2.5 miles of 12-inch PVC pipeline were installed. Construction costs total \$10.7 million. The project



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is being funded through a loan from the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund, administered by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The plant is scheduled to start up in January 2010.

Funk reported to KRWA that the consulting firm performed a long-range planning study in May 2007 that considered the future growth and options for meeting the projected demands. The two options came

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down to an increased reliance on Topeka versus a new treatment plant. Because of the history of rate increases by Topeka, the district concluded that the payment to Topeka would exceed the debt and production average water cost from a new plant in 2014 and thereafter.

“The investment recovery period was less than ten years, meaning the additional average cost of water produced from the new plant for the first four to five years would be offset

by savings the next four to five years,” Funk comments. After 2014, it is anticipated that the new plant will result in savings for the remaining 30 to 40 years of expected service life. The bottom line is that the district expects that constructing their own new plant will result in a 50 percent savings compared to purchasing water from Topeka.

The district’s rates are low, relatively speaking at about \$30 for the average customer. The new plant will require an increase in rates of \$5.00 per month. The average water rate increase from the City of Topeka has been averaging about \$0.20 per 1,000 gallons annually, or roughly equal to \$1.00 per customer per month.

Shawnee Consolidated RWD 4 is the largest rural water district in Kansas, serving approximately 4,500 customers. Shawnee Cons. RWD 4 is the result of consolidation of Shawnee RWD 3, RWD 4 and RWD 5 in 2005.



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