



■ **News from
Southwest Water
Authority**

■ **Winter 2004**

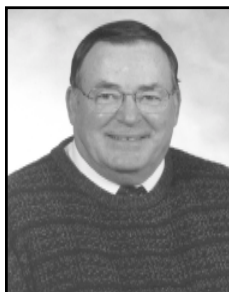
Water works



Volume 7 # 1 Issue 1

Manager's Message # by Ray Christensen, Manager/CEO

2003 highlights -- water rates remain constant: Board absorbs increase!



*Ray Christensen
Manager/CEO*

Southwest Water Authority board members and staff wish everyone a Happy New Year! As we anticipate the major happenings of 2004, let us pause to reflect on the major highlights of 2003.

The best news for our customers is water rates will remain the same for the second year in a row. And, budget projections from Southwest Water Authority (SWA) indicate rates could remain constant until 2008, barring any major catastrophe, malfunction or breakdown.

These stabilized water rates are a result of board action to absorb the required Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase, which would have meant an additional .02¢ per 1,000 gallons in monthly capital repayment fees for contract customers and .57¢ for rural customer minimums.

See "Highlights," pg 2

People and business succeeding with quality water: A strategy for the future!

The Southwest Water Authority Board of Directors met to review the current five year strategic plan. Board members participated in a special fall retreat as part of the October board meeting to discuss, in-depth, their vision for the regional water distribution system, which is ultimately "people and business succeeding with quality water."

The board also modified their mission statement to "providing quality water for southwest North Dakota."

Throughout the two-day retreat, discussions centered on:

- securing additional funding to complete the project;
- stabilizing customer rates;
- promoting economic development;
- enhancing communication with partners;
- enhancing customer education and public information; and
- customer retention, as well as, expansion.

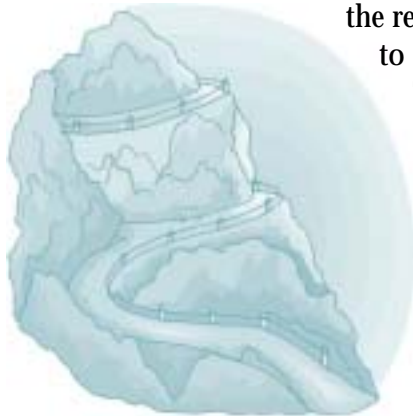
These "hot topics" became the framework for the board's newly adopted strategic plan. Throughout 2004, board members will develop an action plan to ensure that each goal is met successfully. Watch for planning updates in the "Water Works" newsletter.



SWA Directors Loren Myran, John Klein and Leonard Jacobs participate in strategic planning retreat.

"Highlights," continued from front

"The board also absorbed the CPI increase last year. Yet, because the pipeline continued to add customers, and subsequently sell more water, SWA was able to absorb the cost while increasing reserves," explained Ray Christensen, SWA Manager/CEO. "One of the reasons the 2004 budget proposed to again absorb the capital repayment increase was to help hold reserves at or near the minimum four-month requirement," he noted. This action by the board follows closely with their philosophy that SWA is not in business to make a profit, but to manage, operate and maintain the pipeline while covering costs.



Road to Beach

Another major highlight is that construction began on the main transmission line to Beach. The Beach-Medora Service Area is the second to last phase of the entire project. People in this area have been waiting a long time for an adequate quantity of quality water. Although construction has halted for the winter, it will begin again this spring in full force!

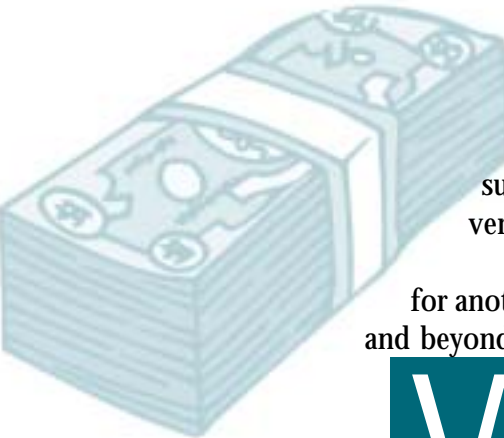
Restoring Funding

SWA collaborated with the North Dakota Water Coalition to restore the Municipal, Rural and Industrial funding for statewide water projects.

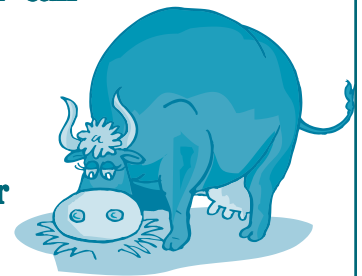
Volume Discounts

The three year trial for a discount offered to customers who use over 10,000 gallons of water per month seems to be successful. Rural water sales, in excess of 10,000 gallons, were higher in 2003 versus 2002.

On behalf of the board of directors and staff, I thank you, our customers, for another successful year. We look forward to continuing service throughout 2004 and beyond.



Quality water can bring added gains to livestock and extra cash for producers! Find out how!



Call Southwest Water Authority today at 1-888-425-0241



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY AND
SOUTHWEST PIPELINE PROJECT

Vision Statement:

People and business succeeding with quality water

Mission Statement:

Providing quality water for southwest North Dakota

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4TH ANNUAL



Water festival draws record attendance

Record numbers attended the fourth annual Southwest Water Authority (SWA) "Make A Splash" Water Festival held recently in Dickinson. Attendance for the two-day event grew with over 900 people attending Family Night activities, an increase of over 200 from last year.

The festival is coordinated primarily to educate youth on the importance of quality water in abundance. Students from PS Berg, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, Heart River elementary schools and Hope Christian Academy in Dickinson, as well as, students from Bowman, Hettinger, Glen Ullin, New Salem, Elgin-New Leipzig, Taylor-Richardton, South Heart, Belfield, New England, Mott-Regent, Killdeer, Twin Buttes, Beach, Fairfield, Medora, Mandaree, Flasher, Lewis and Clark Elementary in Mandan and area home schools participated in a variety of educational presentations and hands-on activities teaching them about water and its importance in their lives.

As in the past, the festival was free and open to the public Thursday evening for Family Night. Family Night featured Project WET activities, puppet shows by "Kids from the Block," exhibits, Dakota Zoo water friends and the opportunity for parents to fingerprint and photo identify their children.

"A special thank you goes out to the Project WET facilitators, presenters, exhibitors, volunteers and teachers, especially CaraLee Heiser, Bill Gion, Tammy Simnioniw and Bonnie Twogood all from Dickinson. Also, Pam Hintz, Elgin, Michelle Bechtold and Kayleen Marmon, Belfield, Jim Jeske, Killdeer, Sharleen Stigen, Fairfield, Kevin Kirkey, Washburn, Tom Gibson, Bottineau, as well as, Bill Sharff, Mark Orth, Jackie Henderson, Trent Bristol, Dr. David Nix, A.J. Becker, Darin Langerud and Aaron Gilstad all of Bismarck, for helping to make the fourth annual 'Make A Splash' Water Festival a huge success," said Bernice Shreve, Festival Coordinator from LoAnn's Marketing Inc., Dickinson. "And congratulations to Mary Ann Reisenauer, Roosevelt Elementary School, grand prize winner of a birdhouse donated by Shirley and Fred Gengler, Dickinson."

"The festival takes many hours and generous individuals and organizations to create this true adventure in water education," said Mary Massad, Chief Financial Officer/Office Administrator with SWA.

The "Make A Splash" Water Festival was sponsored by SWA, Project WET Water Education for Teachers, ND State Water Commission, Dakota West and Dakota Prairies Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Western and Central Stark Soil Conservation Districts, Dickinson State University, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Stark County Water Resource District and Billings County Water Resource District.



Coffee Shop # by Glenn Eckelberg, Marketing Coordinator**Public information meetings scheduled for Trotters, Fairfield, St. Anthony**

*Glenn Eckelberg,
SWA Marketing
Coordinator*

**PUBLIC INFORMATION
MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR:**

TROTTERS

January 28, 2004
1:00 p.m. mountain
Trotters School, Trotters

FAIRFIELD

January 28, 2004
6:00 p.m. mountain
Fairfield Rural
Fire Department,
Fairfield

MORTON CO.

(NW and SE of Mandan)
February 4, 2004
7:00 p.m. central
6:00 p.m. mountain
St. Anthony Church,
St. Anthony

The 2003 construction season was a banner year. The project was blessed with ideal construction conditions, allowing completion of the Bowman/Scranton Phase. Construction on the main line for the Medora/Beach phase of the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP) began following award to Northern Improvement, which submitted the low bid for main transmission pipeline work from Belfield to Beach.

The first contract for rural customers will be bid February 25, 2004. This small service area will include customers who live within the vicinity of, or are, skirting the boundaries of the National Grasslands. Construction for these rural customers is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2004.

Funding for rural customers in phase two will have to be acquired before that portion can be started. It is very important that all people who want water service are signed up prior to final design.

While traveling the area, there still seems to be some confusion as to who is and who is not signed up. In order to be a customer of Southwest Water Authority (SWA), you must have signed a contract with SWA and paid all of the fees. The fees include a good intention fee (GI fee) and also the hookup fee. Customers who are signed up should be receiving the ND Water Magazine, published quarterly, as well as, a Progress Report distributed annually. If you are not receiving these publications or you were receiving them and no longer are, please contact the SWA office.

SWA, the ND State Water Commission and Bartlett and West Engineers will be conducting public information meetings for rural customers in the Trotters, Fairfield, and St Anthony areas. Meeting times and locations are listed to the left.

These meetings are extremely important and everyone is urged to come. Invite your friends and neighbors. In some areas, construction is questionable due to the lack of sign ups and the remoteness of the area. All service areas must meet specific criteria: The area must have a fifty percent (50%) sign up ratio and the cost per customer must be within the allowed amount for that construction project. Several issues, such as criteria, will be discussed at the public information meetings. Join us and be informed!

Contract customers give pipeline good marks

Contract customers are pleased with Southwest Water Authority (SWA) system operations, according to a recent survey. The survey, sent to contract customers every two years, evaluates the level of customer satisfaction.

“Overall SWA is very pleased with the results from the contract customer survey,” said Mary Massad, SWA Chief Financial Officer/Office Administrator. “The board, entire staff and management will continue to strive for excellence.”





Employee News

**PLEASE REMEMBER:
WHEN USING DROP
BOXES, PLEASE PUT
PAYMENTS IN AN
ENVELOPE
THANKS!**

Scott becomes full-time SWA maintenance team member

Southwest Water Authority (SWA) has hired Clint Scott as a full-time Water Distribution Maintenance Worker II. Scott will assist the Distribution Operators with pipeline maintenance and operations. He has been employed by SWA since 2001 on a seasonal-part-time basis, and assumed the full-time position in September. Scott originally hails from Killdeer.

“We are excited to have Clint working for SWA on a full-time basis. He has proven to be a valuable asset to the organization,” said supervisor, Lee Messer, SWA Water Distribution Manager.

Burwick, Bilquist service awards presented

Sandra Burwick and Shawn Bilquist were both recognized in 2003 by Southwest Water Authority (SWA) Board of Directors for five years of service.

Burwick serves as an Accountant/Assistant Office Administrator for SWA. In addition to those responsibilities, Burwick also oversees the customer service department, which has grown to more than 2,500 customers.

Bilquist is certified as a Grade II Water Distribution Operator, stationed in Elgin. His maintenance area includes 425 square miles and about 775 miles of pipeline and related appurtenances. Prior to his assignment in Elgin, Bilquist managed the first SWA satellite office in Regent.

“Southwest Water Authority is fortunate to employ a staff that is committed to providing quality water to southwest North Dakota,” said Loren Myran, SWA Board Chairman. “Their dedication shows, not only in the quality work they provide, but in their longevity as employees.”



*Sandra Burwick
SWA Accountant/Assistant
Office Administrator*



*Shawn Bilquist
SWA Water Distribution
Operator, Elgin office*

Training highlights

Clint Scott attended CPR/First Aid Training.

Allen Hecker was tested for and certified as Grade III Water Distribution Operator.

Public information meeting held in Pick City Water options and survey discussed

Recently, Southwest Water Authority (SWA) hosted a public information meeting in Pick City to discuss options in receiving rural water and the results of a public opinion survey gathered this summer.

Residents living near Lake Sakakawea have different options, including service from Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP), North Central Rural Water Consortium (NCRWC) or Pick City. This particular area, as well as, Oliver, Mercer and North Dunn counties, is currently included in the SWPP service area. To determine what service the residents near Lake Sakakawea preferred, SWA hired LoAnn's Marketing Inc. of Dickinson to survey affected residents. The results indicated that the residents would support the entity that could service their area first and that cost of the service was not a major factor.

As a result, SWA is currently working with NCRWC on an agreement for interim service to the Pick City Service Area. Once SWPP water is available, all interested parties will review the option of providing service to this area by the SWPP.

"Southwest Water Authority is concerned with what is best for the entire Oliver-Mercer, North Dunn phase," said Ray Christensen. "We have committed to getting water to this area and we are working diligently to secure continued funding for this phase," he noted. Oliver-Mercer, North Dunn is the next and final construction phase of the Southwest Pipeline Project. This area was not included in the original plan, but was added in later years.

"The area near Pick City is unique in that it neighbors another rural water system with adequate capacity to fill their needs," said Christensen. The capacity of the NCRWC would not be large enough to service the entire Oliver-Mercer, North Dunn phase, however.

"It is important for the residents of the Oliver-Mercer, North Dunn Phase to know that SWA and SWPP are committed to bringing an adequate supply of quality water to their area. They are the next scheduled phase of construction, and we fully intend to provide service to that area contingent upon securing the necessary funding. We currently have a contract to serve Zap. It is also noted this area has 700 rural sign-ups," he said.

"SWA is still committed to providing service to the Oliver-Mercer, North Dunn phase."

Ray Christensen, SWA Manager/CEO

2004 holiday schedule for Southwest Water Authority

Southwest Water Authority office will be closed the following holidays:

- Presidents Day, February 16
- Good Friday, April 9
- Memorial Day, May 31
- Independence Day observed, July 5
- Labor Day, September 6
- Veteran's Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, November 25
- Christmas Eve, December 24
- New Year's Day observed, December 31

An operations and maintenance staff member will be on-call to provide assistance, if needed.



Director Steier honored for service

Joseph Steier of Reeder received the North Dakota Water Wheel award during the 40th Annual Joint North Dakota Water Convention and Irrigation Expo, this December in Bismarck.

Steier was recognized by the North Dakota Water Users and North Dakota Water Resource District Associations for his distinctive leadership and perseverance in motivating development of the state's water resources, as well as, fostering a better quality of life for southwest North Dakota residents.

"It is an honor to recognize Joseph Steier for his perseverance and dedication in getting quality water to southwestern North Dakota," said North Dakota Water Users Association Executive Vice President, Michael Dwyer.

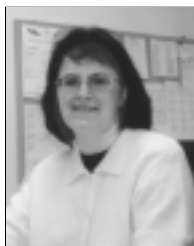


Steier's efforts, and those of his colleagues, proved to be successful with the formation of the West River Joint Board, an organization that initiated the early efforts to secure authorization and funding for the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). Steier also served on the Southwest Pipeline Advisory Committee to further promote the idea of bringing Missouri River water to southwestern North Dakota. As his dream slowly became reality, Steier's steadfast commitment to the cause only grew with his appointment to the Southwest Pipeline Advisory Committee. In 1991, when the Southwest Water Authority (SWA) was formed to manage and maintain the SWPP, Steier had already logged over 20 years of volunteer service to the water industry and

residents of southwest North Dakota.

Steier has been, and continues to be, an outspoken champion for water projects throughout the state. Colleagues rely on his experience and expertise, as well as his honest, tell-it-how-it-is approach and leadership. Steier continues to serve the water industry in southwest North Dakota as a director for the Southwest Water Authority. He has devoted more than 30 years of tireless, committed dedication and hard work bringing the area affordable, quality water. "The hard work and enduring efforts of Joseph Steier make him highly deserving of a North Dakota Water Wheel Award," said Dwyer.

Vickie's Water Notes # by Vickie Franchuk, Customer Service



Vickie Franchuk
Customer Service

Frequently, we are asked questions regarding reconnection.

What are the charges to reconnect service, if my account becomes delinquent and water service is disconnected?

Payment will need to be made in full prior to reconnection. Service can be restored provided water capacity is still available. Payment shall include the accumulated monthly minimum bills since the date service was disconnected, any requested deposits, any unpaid water usage and a service charge. Total charges will not exceed the current hookup fee.

What if my water service is permanently disconnected?

Once water service is permanently disconnected, it can only be restored after unpaid minimums, expenses incurred in the collection of past due amounts and a reconnect charge are paid; or a new hookup fee is paid; whichever is less. The cost to reconnect service will never be more than a new hookup fee. A new hydraulic study will be required.

Please feel free to contact our office with additional questions regarding your service.

Southwest Water Authority (SWA) Board of Directors

To obtain information in your area regarding SWA, contact your county or city representative.

Adams

Leonard Jacobs (2004)*
 401 Highway 22 North
 Reeder, ND 58649
 853-2219

Billings

James Odermann (2004)
 2767 129th Avenue SW
 Belfield, ND 58622
 575-4767

Bowman

Don Flynn (2006)*
 PO Box 531
 Scranton, ND 58653
 275-6351

Dunn

Emanuel Stroh (2004)
 101 Eger Street
 Manning, ND 58642
 573-4552

Golden Valley

Darrel Oech (2006)
 16690 40th Street SW
 Beach, ND 58621
 872-4807

Grant

Brian Roth (2004)
 7260 77th Avenue SW
 New Leipzig, ND 58562
 584-2470

Hettinger

Ray Bieber (2006)
 PO Box 125
 Mott, ND 58646
 824-2712

Mercer

John Klein (2006)
 PO Box 56
 Beulah, ND 58523
 873-2162

Morton

Steve Tomac (2006)
 2500 59th Street
 St. Anthony, ND 58566
 445-7364

Oliver

Duane Bueligen (2004)
 4251 29th Street
 New Salem, ND 58563
 843-7239

Slope

Joe Steier (2004)
 PO Box 1127
 Hettinger, ND 58639
 567-5294

Stark

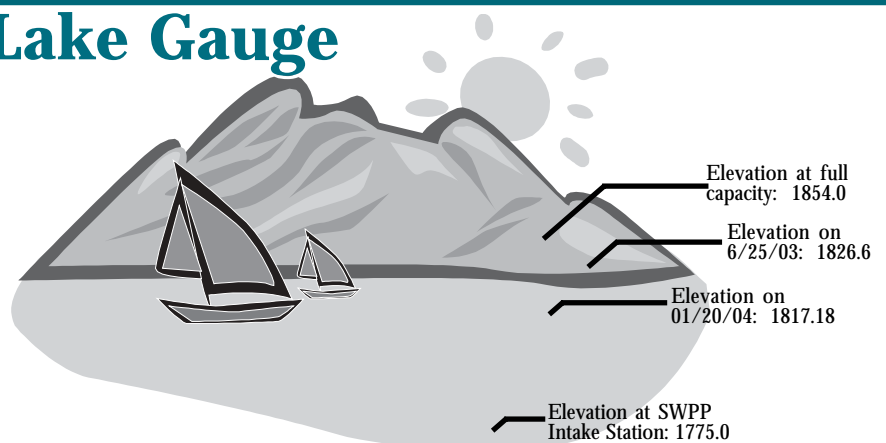
**Loren Myran (2006)*
 9440 32nd Street SW
 Taylor, ND 58656
 974-3644

Dickinson

Larry Ziegler (2004)
 887 13th Street West
 Dickinson, ND 58601
 483-3054

Larry Bares (2006)
 1131 Senior Avenue
 Dickinson, ND 58601
 225-2030

Lake Gauge



*Executive Committee Members
 **Chairperson

Watch for updated lake levels from Lake Sakakawea each newsletter!