



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Amy L. Wilson, Director of Public Affairs
Beaver Water District
479-756-3651
awilson@bwdh2o.org
www.bwdh2o.org

NEWS RELEASE

BEAVER WATER DISTRICT CELEBRATES 50th ANNIVERSARY

For immediate release: September 17, 2009

Fifty years ago last month, on August 27, 1959, a circuit court order officially established Beaver Water District. Shortly thereafter, the District executed agreements with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for storage for water supply in Beaver Lake sufficient to yield on average 120 million gallons per day. The District also executed agreements with Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers and Springdale to pay for storage rights and supply drinking water.

Few people realize that without Beaver Water District, Beaver Dam would not have been built. The story of how Beaver Lake and Beaver Water District came into being is one worth remembering.

“So many of us today take water for granted,” David Short of Bentonville, President of the Board of Directors, said. “To our benefit and their credit, the individuals who formed Beaver Water District understood that water is precious and necessary for a region’s prosperity.”

Alan D. Fortenberry P.E., CEO of the District, added that clean drinking water ensures the continued health of the population of a region.

“Abundant, accessible and affordable water has ensured the ongoing economic vitality of Northwest Arkansas, as well as the high standard of living and quality of life we enjoy. Would there be a thriving food processing industry here were it not for Beaver Water District and Beaver Lake? Would other businesses have taken off like they did all those many years ago? It’s not very likely.”

The story began shortly after World War II, when the Beaver Dam Association formed to promote construction of a dam on the White River southwest of Eureka Springs. By 1954, progress had been made when the U.S. Congress finally authorized dam construction for flood control, hydroelectric power and other beneficial uses. However, the project could not move forward because the Corps of Engineers could not demonstrate a sufficient cost-benefit ratio based on these uses. That’s when Arkansas’ congressional delegation took decisive action that would change Northwest Arkansas history. These forward-thinking leaders pushed for a national Water Supply Act. Finally, in 1958, this historic act recognized that the federal government needed to play a role in the development of water supplies.

With the stroke of a pen, reauthorization of the construction of Beaver Dam had been accomplished, with the understanding that local interests would pay the additional costs for water supply storage space within reservoir. In the meantime, Arkansas legislators were busy as well. They passed statutes to

enable the creation of nonprofit regional water distribution districts. In the case of Beaver Dam, that meant that Beaver Water District was formed to pay for water storage rights in Beaver Reservoir and, just as important, to pay for building and operating a water intake and water treatment facilities.

Present board members, past board members, and mayors and Chamber executives from the four cities got together today (September 17) during the District's monthly Board meeting to honor the occasion. Additionally, guests toured the new Administration Building and viewed an historical presentation about how abundant, economical drinking water supplies became a reality in Northwest Arkansas half a century ago.

Today, Beaver Water District is the second largest drinking water facility in the state of Arkansas. The District provides water at the wholesale price of \$1.20 per thousand gallons to its four customer cities – Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, and Bentonville. These cities resell the water to numerous cities and communities throughout the region. Beaver Water District's plants can produce up to 140 million gallons per day (MGD) of drinking water. In total, the District provides water to more than 250,000 people and industries, or more than 9 percent of Arkansas' population.

Beaver Water District's mission is to serve our customers in the Benton and Washington County area by providing high quality drinking water that meets or exceeds all federal and state regulatory requirements in such quantities as meets their demands and is economically priced consistent with our quality standards. For more information, visit www.bwdh2o.org.