

NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-March 19, 2009

BEAVER WATER DISTRICT REOPENS STEELE PLANT

In 1966, a state-of-the-art 10 million-gallon-a-day (MGD) conventional drinking water treatment plant, named for Mr. Joe M. Steele of the Steele Canning Company in Springdale, began treating raw water and producing potable drinking water from Beaver Lake. At the time, the water treatment plant was owned by Springdale and the raw water intake was owned by Beaver Water District.

Forty-three years later, the plant has been refurbished and renovated, bringing total capacity of Beaver Water District to a 140 MGD capacity.

"It's a milestone. It's an historic event," said Alan D. Fortenberry P.E., CEO of Beaver Water District.

In the mid-1960s, about 125,000 people lived in Benton and Washington counties. As the population grew, so did the demands on the original Steele plant, which was renovated from 10 to 25 to a 50 MGD plant between 1966 and 1978. By 1980, more than 80,000 people derived drinking water from Beaver Water District. In 1993, another 40 MGD plant, the Hardy W. Croxton Plant, began operations. In 2006, to continue to keep pace with exploding population growth and associated water demands, a 60 MGD plant expansion was completed.

"Once that happened, we were able to take the Steele plant out of operation so it could be renovated," Fortenberry said.

Crossland Heavy Contractors began work on the project in April 2007. In December of last year, plant startup began. Then on Jan. 22, the first treated water from the Steele plant made its way to customer cities.

"This brings Beaver Water District's total treatment capacity to 140 MGD, enough to meet projected drinking water needs until the year 2020," Fortenberry said. "If it weren't for the foresight of our board of directors, we couldn't plan ahead for this kind of expansion. Thanks to them, we funded the Steele plant renovation with money from reserves. The total cost of the construction was \$26.1 million."

Today, Beaver Water District supplies drinking water to more than 250,000 people and industries in Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville and surrounding areas. These cities then resell the water to surrounding towns and communities. The 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.