



Tap Water: Safe & Reliable

Beaver Water District wants you to know that your tap water is "food grade and table ready," and it has been since the plant began operations in the 1960s. The District tests water samples numerous times each day to ensure consistent drinking water quality for customers. In addition, water is automatically sampled continuously for adequate disinfection and clarity. The District operates around the clock to make sure that your water is safe to drink. So, the next time you turn on the tap or read an article comparing the merits of tap water versus bottled water, think about all the people beyond the pipe who make it possible for you to have potable water in Northwest Arkansas. Consider that when you buy

bottled water, you are paying about a thousand times more for one bottle of water than you would if you drank water from your tap, and there's no plastic bottle waste to dispose of when you drink tap water or use a reusable bottle.

Mr. Harold R. Seifert P.E., Executive Director of the Southwest Section of the American Water Works Association, recently summed up the history of tap water and its reliability in a column that appeared in the Sept. 22 issue of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. It's reprinted in this newsletter for your information.

*By Harold R. Seifert, P.E.
Director, SW Section, AWWA*

Much has been written and said during the past several months concerning the safety and reliability of the tap water provided by your local water utilities. As the Executive Director of the Southwest Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA), which represents water utilities and their professional personnel throughout Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma, I feel compelled to weigh in on this issue. There are very few countries in the world other than the United States where one can travel and feel comfortable in drinking the local tap water in any community. The United Nations estimates that there are over 1 billion people in the world today without access to safe drinking water. The results of this inequity are the deaths of millions of people each year from very preventable



Photograph courtesy of Cheryl Barton

Continued on page 2

Tap Water continued from page 1

waterborne diseases (including approximately 1.8 million children each year). While the average American uses 100 gallons of water per day, an entire family in Africa will get by on 5 gallons. And in some locations where safe water is available, it is priced beyond the reach of those who need it most.

The availability of safe and economical drinking water in the U.S. did not develop by happenstance, but rather by the efforts over several decades of a consortium of local water utilities, state and federal regulatory agencies, academia, engineers, and national trade organizations such as AWWA. All of these groups share the common goal of doing everything within their power to provide safe drinking water to all of the citizens of this country at an economical price. An adequate supply of safe drinking water is critical in protecting your health and mine. In fact, Doctor Halfdan Mahler, who was Director-General of the World Health Organization from 1973 through 1988, once said: "The number of water taps per 1000 persons is a better indication of health than the number of hospital beds."

From my own personal experience working in this industry in Arkansas over the past 30 plus years, I can confidently state that the water coming from the taps of those Arkansans served by community water systems is consistently safe. Regulations developed under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 by the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as those state regulations developed by the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), are incredibly rigorous with respect to testing, water quality standards, operator training, and consumer education. It is interesting to note that regulations now in force on the national level had been in place in Arkansas for decades prior to their enactment on the federal level. Without a doubt, the water that you drink from your local water provider has

been tested numerous times by both the provider and the ADH to verify compliance with all of the federal and state drinking water regulations.

It is through the dedicated efforts of the over 2,650 licensed water operators (who hold over 3,650 Treatment and/or Distribution Certificates) in Arkansas that you can turn on your tap with confidence each morning, knowing that the water will be there and that it will be safe for you and your family. These individuals must complete nearly 100 hundred hours of classroom training before being eligible to sit for an examination, prepared specifically for Arkansas by a national organization specializing in water operator certification, in order to receive their license as a certified water operator. Additionally, they must complete 24 hours of continuing education credits every two years during their licensure period. These people work around the clock operating water treatment facilities, repairing water main breaks, and performing numerous other tasks to insure the delivery of pure, clean water to your homes and businesses.

According to national statistics, somewhere between 1% and 5% of the water produced by local water treatment facilities is actually consumed. The remaining 95% to 99% is used for washing clothes, flushing toilets, watering lawns, and other domestic uses, as well as in industrial and manufacturing processes within the local community. Nevertheless, 100% of the water delivered to your home must fully meet the standards for the 1% to 5% usage. At the same time, this safe, clean, highly tested product is consistently delivered to your home at an economical price. Many Arkansans pay about the same price for one gallon of gasoline as they do for 1,000 gallons of water!

The next time you turn on your tap, be thankful that you live in a country that places such a high value on the safety and reliability of the drinking water supply for all of its citizens.

Fitch Upgrades Beaver Water District's Bond Rating

Fitch Ratings, a leading global rating agency that provides credit markets with timely, prospective credit opinions, has upgraded to AA- from A+ the rating on Beaver Water District's \$55.7 million of outstanding water revenue bonds, series 2003. Fitch concluded that the rating outlook for the District's bonds is stable.

A bond rating is a measure of the quality and safety of a bond, based on the issuer's financial condition. More specifically, a bond rating is an evaluation from a rating service indicating the likelihood that a debt issuer will be able to meet scheduled interest and principal repayments (Source: *InvestorWords.com*).

"That's very, very impressive," said David Short, President of the District's Board of Directors and CEO of Arvest in Bentonville. Short is one of three board members elected to the District board from Benton County. Short made his comments during the Sept. 20 board meeting. Board meetings are held monthly on the third Thursday at noon at the Beaver Water District facility near Lowell. "Hopefully, this will serve us well long-term as we go out on the next bond issue."

Jim Fowler, Managing Director of Morgan Keegan & Company in Little Rock, said the District's effective management and operational characteristics are reflected in Fitch's upgrade. He noted that area economic considerations provide a focal point for the credit evaluation. Fowler and Morgan Keegan have served as bond underwriters for the District. Fowler said the District's moderate amount of debt allows it to manage for growth in an efficient manner.

Alan D. Fortenberry P.E., CEO of the District, praised his management team for the work they did to make the rating possible.

"A lot of credit goes to Steve and Larry for the financial plan they developed and which the board approved. In the world of bond rating, AAA is usually the highest or best rating and D is the worst, so we feel like we're doing very well. When the District's bond rating goes up, the outlook is better for investors. And like David said, that lays the groundwork with investors when the time comes for us to sell additional bonds for future projects and expansions."

Steve Russell, the District's chief financial officer, and Larry Lloyd, the District's chief operating officer, work closely throughout the year to manage assets and liabilities to maximize financial stability. The District relies solely on the sale of water for income.



Board Member Profiles



Mary Beth Brooks

Mary Beth Brooks of Fayetteville is the first woman to serve on the Beaver Water District's Board of Directors, which voted on July 19, 2007, for her to fill the director's position of the late John Lewis.

Ms. Brooks is President and CEO of the Bank of Fayetteville, which she joined in August 2004. Prior to joining BOF, she held positions with Arvest Bank Group, National Bank of Commerce in Memphis, Bancorp

South, and the Arkansas State Bank Department. Ms. Brooks is a member of the Board of Directors of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, the Boys and Girls Club of Fayetteville, The New School, the Fayetteville Public Library Foundation, the Northwest Arkansas Council, and the Kappa Kappa Gamma House. Ms. Brooks has a BSBA in Financial Management from the University of Arkansas and an MBA in Banking from the University of Wisconsin. She was named one of the "Top 25 Women to Watch" by *U.S. Banker* magazine on Oct. 22, 2007. (Washington County)

W. Herb Hawkins has owned Hawkins Petroleum Consulting & Investments of Avoca for 11 years. He has a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Oklahoma State University and an MBA in Finance from the University of Arkansas. His work experience includes regulatory compliance for the natural gas pipeline industry, as well as natural gas sales. Mr. Hawkins is an alderman on the Avoca City Council. He is a founding member/past

board member and charter member of the Northwest Arkansas/Southwest Missouri Regional Chamber of Commerce. He has served as a general board member, Deacon Chairman, and elder of First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ in Rogers. (Benton County)



W. Herb Hawkins

District News Briefs

Secchi Day: On Aug. 25, the second annual Secchi Day on Beaver Lake was held; 35 sites were selected on Beaver Lake of which 33 were sampled. Twenty-six teams participated despite rainy weather. Teams launched from Hickory Creek, Prairie Creek, Rocky Branch, and Lost Bridge. Each team took Secchi disk readings and collected water samples which were analyzed for chlorophyll a, nitrate, and total phosphorous. For a complete report, including maps and graphs, please visit the District's website at www.bwdh2o.org.

Construction Update



Steele Water Treatment Plant Improvements: The slab on grade pours have been completed and construction of basin walls is now under way. (Photograph by Danny Dearing.)

Improvements to the Joe M. Steele Water Treatment Plant-\$26.1 million: This project, begun in mid-April of 2007, will put another 40 million gallon a day treatment capacity on line and is scheduled to begin operation in April 2009. This will bring the Beaver Water District's total treatment capacity to 140 MGD a day, enough to meet projected drinking water needs until the year 2020. (Contractor: Crossland Heavy Contractors)



New Administration Building: The slab pour for the foundation is complete and structural steel will begin to go up soon. (Photography by Danny Dearing.)

New Administration Building-\$4.5 million: The District awarded the bid on construction of a new administration building in April and notice to proceed was given on Aug. 1, 2007. The new building will accommodate space needs for staff and increase accessibility to the public for educational and other purposes. The project is being built in accordance with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, a green building rating system. Educational components of the building will include a drinking water plant model and a model of the Beaver Lake Watershed. The project is to be completed by August 2008. (Contractor: Crossland Construction)

Southwest Section Water Works Event Hosted in Northwest Arkansas



Southwest Section Director Donna Skidmore (left) observes Oklahoma City's Team H2O, who won the Pipe Tapping competition. Footage of the team made the local television news. (Photograph courtesy of Malcolm Evert Cowdin.)

"Water sustainability is *the* issue," said Don Degen, a drinking water expert from British Columbia, Canada. Degen, Vice President of the American Water Works Association, was one of more than 300 people who gathered in Northwest Arkansas Oct. 7-9 to discuss drinking water issues during the annual convention and trade show of the Southwest Section of AWWA.

"Let the community know who you are and what you do," he urged conventioners. Degen was on hand to present the George Warren Fuller Award for distinguished service to the water supply field to Alan D. Fortenberry P.E., CEO, of Beaver Water District. The District supplies drinking water to one in eight Arkansans and is the second largest drinking water supplier in the state of Arkansas.

Water professionals from Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas met at the Holiday Inn and Northwest Arkansas Convention Center in Springdale. In the past, this meeting has been held in Central Arkansas, but the Northwest contingent made the case for hosting the meeting here this year.

Founded in 1881, AWWA is the authoritative resource for safe water, providing knowledge, information and advocacy to improve the quality and supply of water in North America and beyond. AWWA advances public health, safety and welfare by uniting the efforts of the full spectrum of the water community.

Many Beaver Water District staffers played a part in making this event happen. Bill HagenBurger, Plant Engineer, chaired the Program Committee, which put together 27 technical sessions that ran concurrently in three tracks for two days. Steve Russell, Chief Financial Officer, took charge of finances for the meeting. Stacy Cheevers, Plant Manager, led the plant tour for about 15 folks, who boarded a bus one afternoon to tour the Beaver Water District facility. Mindi Crosswhite, Lab Supervisor, coordinated catering and facilities arrangements for the myriad of functions that took place over the three days. Fortenberry served as chair of the Local Host Committee for the past year, leading the planning process for the meeting, which rotates every three years among the member states. Cassandra Roberts of the District designed materials, booklets and flyers for the event.

The Local Host Committee also included staff from Rogers Water Utilities, Benton-Washington Regional Public Water Authority, Garver Engineers, McGoodwin Williams and Yates, the City of Fayetteville, and Central Arkansas Water. The event included a trade show, social activities, a water taste contest, spouse activities, and a golf tournament. Local news teams showed up at the convention center one afternoon to shoot footage of the pipe tapping contest, which involved teams competing in a timed competition to tap a pressurized ductile iron pipe and cut and flare water service copper tubing for installation of a water service line. Team H2O of Oklahoma City won the competition and will compete in the national competition to be held June 8-12 in Atlanta.

White River Documentary Emphasizes Value of Ozarks Waterways

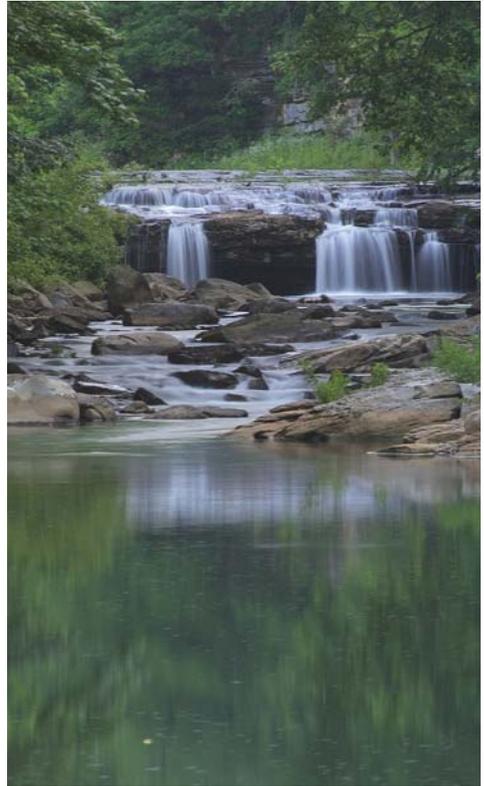
For some experts, like Dr. Bobby Wixon of Springfield, Mo., taking care of the White River is a no-brainer. That's because he's convinced that "water is the essence of the Ozarks." When you watch this new documentary about the White River, you'll find out that a lot of people feel the same way, and they want to bring the general public along with them on the journey to safeguard this great resource.

On Sept. 12, the Upper White River Basin Foundation released "White River Heritage: Guarding the Treasure," a documentary produced by stream advocate Brian Shipman of Springfield, Mo. The Beaver Lake Watershed is a subwatershed of the Upper White River Watershed, so the documentary's importance extends to Northwest Arkansas. Since Beaver Lake provides drinking water to one in eight Arkansans, the health of the watershed plays a pivotal role in the health and welfare, including the economic vitality, of the region.

Featuring interviews with local water quality groups, university researchers and rare film of Ozark waters, the program documents the history of the White River and how population growth and development have impacted water quality. Viewers will learn the importance of the rivers and lakes in the Ozarks and how they can help protect and preserve the quality of their water.

Dr. Marty Matlock of Fayetteville, an associate professor of ecological engineering at the University of Arkansas, appears in the film. Matlock focuses on low-impact residential development techniques, when he frames the issue of water's importance by referencing what we often refer to as "the good old days."

"It is so obvious," Matlock says in the film. "Our grandparents understood that



*Richland Creek Falls
Photographed by Randy L. Paris*

... you don't waste water. You don't waste nutrients." Matlock emphasizes that the core idea is simply to think about "reconnecting the water to the landscape." Matlock points out how runoff should be directed to stay on the property and filter into the landscape rather than being directed off the property using downspouts and guttering, for example.

What the film does well is take day to day tasks, such as fertilizing the lawn, and explain the right way and the wrong way when it comes to watershed health. For example, when fertilizer runs off the

Continued on page 8

White River continued from page 7

lawn with water into the watershed, then the fertilizer causes algae to grow in the water, just like it causes grass to grow on your lawn. So it's important not to use too much fertilizer. It's easy to do it the right way; just have your soil tested for free at your local county extension office. The extension agents will be glad to help you.

Shipman, the producer and director of the documentary, heads up the video production program at Drury University in Springfield and has owned and operated On Air Media for close to a decade. Before that, he spent about 10 years as a news reporter and photographer for KFSM in Fayetteville and KYTV in Springfield.

"I did a wide range of reporting on water quality issues during my years as a reporter in Springfield," Shipman said. "We did an hour-long documentary on water quality problems in the Upper White in '92 and then a series on the issues every year after that till '96."

Shipman said deciding what to shoot for the documentary was not that difficult.

"In this case it was all about rain runoff. The fact that it rained a lot in June made the job much easier. It's usually not hard deciding what to shoot. The harder decision comes in the writing phase when you have to decide what to leave out."

When asked what he considers the most interesting segment in the documentary, he said he's particularly proud of the animated watershed map, which is the first digital creation of the Upper White.

"My hope is that it will clearly explain how unique the watershed is from a geographical standpoint," he said.

"White River Heritage: Guarding the Treasure" was produced as part of a 2003 Targeted Watershed Grant awarded to the Upper White River Basin (UWRB) Foundation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The UWRB Foundation is a bi-state, non-profit 501(c)3 organization working to keep Ozark waters clean. For more information, visit www.whiteriverbasin.org or call Dr. John Moore, Executive Director, at 417-334-7644.



In Memoriam: On September 20th, David Short of Bentonville (left), President of the Beaver Water District Board of Directors, presented Helen Lewis, wife of the late John Lewis, and David Lewis, John's brother, with a resolution honoring Lewis for more than 30 years of service to the District's board. John passed away on June 1 of this year.