

# WATER NOTES

Water Notes is published periodically by the HUNGRY HORSE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT as their official newsletter.

*“To provide and protect the highest quality and quantity of water and dependable service at the most reasonable cost to our consumers.”*

ISSUE NO. 1 ♡ May 24, 2021

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## NEWS AND NOTES

**H**UNGRY HORSE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT is officially in its thirty-fourth year and it has been a very busy year.

We believe in keeping the customers informed of the actions and steps the board takes in order to protect our system and keep costs down. The goal of this newsletter is to share these items.

The District has had an all new 5 member board this year and what an intense learning curve we have experienced! We are still focused on reduced spending, streamlining operations and getting our rates back under control.

THE FIRST GOOD NEWS is the District now has a website ([hungryhorsewater.com](http://hungryhorsewater.com)) where you can find useful District information and pay your water bill online or by a regular ACH through the bank. Please check the website for more information.

ON THE DISTRICT'S FINANCIAL END, we also have news to share:

- Last June, we paid off a loan from 1988. This was the original loan that provided the District with its new water system. The loan had been set to mature in 2028, so this early pay-off has freed up much needed resources to protect a water right under dispute with the US Forest Service, provide a website and other system improvements. We anticipate that in the long run this early pay-off will also help us set aside savings for future needs.
- In addition we have two loans from 2007, with an approximate combined balance of \$670,000.00 set to mature in 2047. The staff has been inquiring about a refinance of these loans at a lower interest rate, and are awaiting the Montana Dept. of Natural

Resources and Conservation for assistance with this. We hope to have these loans paid off early as well; since a majority of our current monthly payment goes toward loan interest rather than principal.

- The staff has also worked with the state to get a reclassification from Workman's Compensation corrected which resulted in substantial savings.
- The General Manager has proposed cost-cutting measures for the district. One of these is addressing under-insulated buildings and bringing them up to standards for increased energy savings.

THE DISTRICT NOW HAS A **computerized telemetry system**, which determines which of our wells pump and when, and provides automatic back-up in case of emergency. The General Manager helped with the equipment replacement and though the system we have chosen is quite expensive, we anticipate good savings on utility costs well into the future.

WE INCURRED a large unexpected expense this year when the US Forest Service petitioned the Montana Water Court requesting abandonment of our District's historic 1948 Sand Creek Water Right. With assistance from an attorney and engineering firm, we are near completion of defending and retaining that water right.

THE DISTRICT HIRED A SECRETARY, (as required by law) at additional expense in July. Our secretary and bookkeeper don't get a lot of visibility, but are essential for our proper function. Our bookkeeper handles the billing as part of her duties, so if you have any questions about your bill, contact her. We value our **highly competent staff** without which the District could not run.

SOME GOALS WE ARE ACTIVELY WORKING TOWARDS for 2021 include compiling and adopting District bylaws and a system operations handbook; reviewing, updating and revising the District Rules and Regulations to reflect previous changes and current concerns; organizing the extensive records in the file room in order to determine if we need the assistance of an accounting firm regarding an audit or confirmation that our finances are accurately recorded and accounted for.



**A** BIG THANK YOU! TO OUR CUSTOMERS for your support as we move forward with our efforts to fulfill our mission statement.

We invite you to contact any of us with your questions or concerns. If you have professional skills you can offer the District which may help us cut our expenses, we would be grateful to visit with you about that.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS are at 6:00 pm every third Thursday of the month at the District Office on the Lower Dam Road/Colorado Blvd, the first right after the 4-way stop. We also post meeting notices at the post office. Public participation is encouraged and welcome!

#### FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

**T**HE MONTANA DEPARTMENT of Environmental Quality has modified the requirements for lead and copper testing. This means we will be looking for volunteers to collect in-home samples. This test is designed to determine how much lead and copper are in the plumbing lines of your homes. Ten qualifying

customers will be eligible to participate, and will get their plumbing evaluated at no additional cost! To apply, please use the contact feature of our website or call Ben at the number below. We will need to know the year your plumbing system was installed, and the materials used in your pipes (galvanized steel, copper, PEX, etc.).

Please remember not to obstruct access to District facilities. Ensure your water meter pit, and remote are accessible at all times. If you have a fire hydrant on or near your property, please also remember to keep clearance around it. It could be your home which is saved.

Finally, a friendly reminder that your water meter and curbstop shutoff valve are district property and not to be operated by customers. If you need to do a repair, give me a call. I'd be happy to come turn your service on or off correctly.



## HUNGRY HORSE COUNTY WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Doug Wagner - 387-5535  
Vice President: Vivian Allen - 885-7762  
Chief Financial Officer: Jamie Foster - 309-0688  
Director: Brent Schmidt - 871-8541  
Director: Richard Hardesty - 212-0491

### DISTRICT STAFF

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Billing/Accounts: Judy Rosenbaum - 260-8421