



NEWS RELEASE

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QUALITY WATER RESTORED TO SOUTHERN VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS THANKS TO STAMFORD AND USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Oxford, Neb., July 28, 2004—Southern Valley Schools' 241 students and 27 staffers will benefit from the recently approved USDA Rural Development \$479,375 grant to the Furnas County School District #540. The funding was celebrated today at a symbolic funding check presentation by USDA Rural Development to the School District. The monies will allow the school to obtain its safe and quality potable water from the Village of Stamford through a regional water system.

“We are very appreciative of the USDA Rural Development grant and we would like to publicly thank them,” stated Nathan Stineman, superintendent for Southern Valley Schools. “The USDA Rural Development grant will afford the Jr. Sr. High School the opportunity to receive clean, fresh water from Stamford and will help to lower fixed costs that are associated with doing our own maintenance and testing of our water.”

The District currently has three registered water wells, one of which is used for potable water and two for non-potable uses such as irrigation and fire protection. High nitrate and arsenic levels exceeding the limits established by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) plagued the well used for Furnas County School District #540's drinking water. The District installed a reverse osmosis water treatment system to reduce the nitrate levels to compliance levels but this process in turn caused copper levels to elevate resulting in the issuance of an Administrative Order. The installation of an orthophosphate system to remedy the copper situation would require the addition of chlorination, adding to the high expense of operating the water treatment process. The high costs associated with maintaining and improving the existing water treatment system led the District to its decision to purchase water from the adjoining community of Stamford, located 3 miles east of the school, as it would be the more economically feasible choice.

“The Village of Stamford faced the same water quality issues as the District,” stated Glen Gatz, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development. “Stamford recently completed their water project funded in part by USDA Rural Development. The Village looked at the treatment and development of a new well field but the best water source alternative for them was to purchase water from the Village of Orleans located 7 miles to their east.”

With the mandated water standards of the SDWA and the high treatment costs it can place on school districts, villages and the like, regional water systems are becoming an attractive choice. Regional systems allow rural communities facing water issues to connect to another rural

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community's SDWA compliant municipal water source. The costs incurred in developing the safe and quality water source is shared as the communities connecting to the municipal water supply purchase the water from the owner of the developed water source. This option may provide a more economical choice to the water users.

"The District's water project will include the installation of 17,000 linear feet of water main, 5 fire hydrants and 1 service connection," stated Gatz. "This water project will ensure that quality water is restored to the students and staff of Valley Public Schools."

The USDA grant was provided through the USDA Rural Development Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant program. For additional information contact Glen Gatz at 4009 North 6th Ave. Kearney, Neb. 68848 or phone (308) 237-3118, (402) 437-5093 (TDY). Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/>.

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