

COMMUNITIES UNITE ON WATER ISSUES

Outline Of Need: Safe drinking water was the concern for five communities from Arapahoe to Indianola. All of the communities struggled with water quality issues such as high levels of arsenic, uranium, copper and lead. These communities united in looking for a solution that would benefit everyone and reduce costs.

How Rural Development Helped: Due to time restraints, Arapahoe needed to move forward with a new source with Holbrook joining them. Bartley, Indianola and Cambridge (BIC) decided to form the BIC Joint Water Agency through an inter-local agreement. Total project cost was \$5,653,000 comprised of USDA Rural Development loans of \$1,651,000 and grants of \$2,299,800; USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG) of \$1,202,200 and a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$500,000.



The Results: Establishing the regional water system reduced the capital costs for each community, saving over \$2 million. Today, a well field north of Bartley serves all 3 communities or 907 households via 3 wells and a 150,000 gallon storage facility.

The BIC Joint Water Agency had its' bumps in the road but the communities made this a project to be proud of. They were committed to work through the details as a group. BIC board members adopted bylaws, set up voting rights, appointed members, worked through and avoided community conflicts in order to complete the project. Working together the residents saved the greater expense of completing individual community projects.

A tremendous effort was put forth by the communities of Bartley, Indianola, and Cambridge, Miller & Associates Consulting

Engineers, USDA Rural Development, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (Community Development Block Grant), Republican Natural Resources District, Lower Republican Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Rural Water Association to make BIC a reality.

BIC Board President John P. (JP) Trumble commented, "The BIC project has been an excellent experience for me. I was lucky enough to participate in not only a three community building process that was unheard of in this area, but I also got to know and become closer to the people that made it happen. Obviously, it is a long list and so I can't thank everybody in the entirety that made it happen."