

# PRESS RELEASE



## **New Wholesale Water Commission to Serve Northwest Missouri**

*Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission to form July 16*

**July 6, 2009** – After more than six years of meetings, discussions, and studies, a new group, with the sole purpose of ensuring northwest Missourians have safe, clean, and abundant drinking water for generations to come, is preparing to become a reality. The group, which will be known as the Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission (GNWWC), will serve a twelve-county region as a public water utility legally formed under Chapter 393 of the Missouri State Statutes. As a public water utility, the new commission will have the authority to construct and own infrastructure, issue debt on behalf of its members, receive grant proceeds and other public assistance, and purchase and sell water from retail water systems throughout northwest Missouri.

The idea for GNWWC actually began in 2003, when a group of city and county elected officials approached the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments about the possibility of a regional solution to the drinking water challenges faced by many water providers in the region. Nancy Thomson, who was the director of the Regional Council at that time, formed an exploratory group of water experts, local elected officials, state and federal agencies, and concerned citizens to begin to examine the issues of water availability and reliability in northwest Missouri. Soon the group was expanded to include representatives from a 12-county region, and became known as the Water Partnership for Northwest Missouri.

Chaired by Northwest Missouri State University Professor Emeritus of Chemistry Harlan Higginbotham, the Water Partnership went to work defining the challenges to water provision in northwest Missouri. Support of their mission came in the form of two planning grants from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, which helped to provide administrative support for the group and provide outreach and training to water systems in the region. Through many months of research, the group found that most challenges to drinking water in the region fell into one of two categories: lack of a reliable source of raw water, and/or a deteriorating water treatment infrastructure. To solve these issues, the Water Partnership needed a plan.

That plan, which came to be known as “Sketch #7”, is an ambitious water transmission system ultimately designed to provide wholesale water to any retail distributor (municipality or public water supply district) in the 12-county region. The plan consists of 299 miles of pipeline, ranging in size from 8- to 36-inches, in addition to nine pump stations and six intermediary storage facilities. In all, the

preliminary engineering estimates have put a complete build-out cost for the system at over \$170 million.

Without question, turning “Sketch #7” into a reality will be a monumental task, requiring many years of incremental project phases and, more importantly, cooperation between water stakeholders in the region. Facilitating the implementation of such a large project requires a legally formed public water utility, with the ability to take on debt, receive state and federal assistance, and buy and sell water. As a result, the Water Partnership voted in late 2008 to form the Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission.

The GNWWC will be convened for the first time on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 2:00p.m. at the Clasbey Center in Savannah, Missouri. The initial board of directors will be comprised of those entities presenting signed membership contracts at the formation meeting. The following eight water providers will be presenting signed contracts at the formation meeting: City of Albany, Andrew County Public Water Supply District (PWSD) #1, Andrew County PWSD #2, Buchanan County PWSD #1, City of Cameron, City of Maysville, City of Plattsburg, and the City of Savannah. In addition to these water providers, a number of other systems are considering membership and eligible to join in the coming months.

The public is invited to attend this important event. The formation meeting will consist of the first call-to-order, a short business meeting, and remarks by local and state officials. The Clasbey Center is located at 500 West Duncan Street in Savannah.

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All press is invited to attend the formation meeting at 2:00 on July 16<sup>th</sup>, Clasbey Center in Savannah, MO, located at 500 West Duncan Street. For supplemental quotes for this story, please contact:

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For a listing of the original Water Partnership members, please see <http://water.nwmorcog.org>.

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