

## HISTORY

### RURAL WATER DISTRICT NO. 6, GARVIN COUNTY

In 1965 several men were standing around shooting the bull and telling tall tales. When John Tuckers turn came he said, "Why don't we have a rural water system around Wynnewood?" The other men agreed that was an excellent question and none had an answer for it. With this simple question the seeds were sown for what is now the Rural Water District No. 6, Garvin County.

In September 1965, John Tucker talked to Cullen Cofer about the possibility of developing a water system to serve rural areas around Wynnewood; Cullen was interested at that time in developing the lake of the Arbuckle as a source of water for Wynnewood.

Cullen suggested that Mr. Tucker contact Raymond Ferguson to see if the Chamber of Commerce could do anything about a rural water system. Doug Garrett was president of the Chamber of Commerce at that time so he and Raymond went to Sulphur to talk with Paul Reed about rural water systems. Paul had been the attorney for the Murray County Rural Water System and was in a position to advise the Chamber of Commerce how to get a rural water system organized.

Within a few months Woodrow Burnett had volunteered a meeting place and a temporary board was in place. The first board faced seemingly insurmountable problems, but the idea was sound and they persevered.

After considerable talk, the Chamber of Commerce called a meeting of rural residents for November 2, 1965. Approximately 100 people attended that Meeting and indicated that they thought a rural water system was needed and urged the Chamber of Commerce to proceed with plans for a system.

The F.H.A. people were contacted and information obtained as to how to set up an agreement with them. It was determined that people who were interested in a rural water system go on record as agreeing to participate by signing data sheets. This data sheet provided information as to the location of the user and approximation of how much water would normally be needed by them.

In order to have an organization responsible for accepting data sheets and working with F.H.A., another meeting of the prospective water users was called early in 1966. At that meeting five men were chosen to act as representatives for the group. Woodrow Burnett was chosen a Chairman of the group with E.M. Scott as Vice- Chairman. Other members were: Horace Hucks, Harvey Scott, and J.L. Stubblefield.

By April of 1966, 212 people had signed data sheets indicating that they were interested in using water if a system could be built. With that many prospects, F.H.A. people suggested that a water system would be feasible if a system could be designed by an engineer. Consequently, Kalman & Poe, Engineers from Norman were asked to draw up plans and make a feasibility report. It was decided that such a system would be practical and that a tap fee of \$50.00 would be required from each prospective user. The preliminary engineering report showed the Corp. to consist of 65 sq miles in S Garvin County and 29 sq miles in N Murray County.

Woodrow and Kathryn Burnett offered their services and the use of their insurance office as a headquarters for the system. After considerable work on their part, 185 people paid their \$50.00 tap fee and agreed to use water.

The first structured board meeting was held January 11, 1967 after the system had been incorporated with the County Commissioners of Garvin County, with Bryce Mayberry and L.L. Shirley as Incorporators. A meeting of water users was called in the Wynnewood High School Cafeteria and a permanent organization of Rural Water District #3 was formed. The members at this time were LL Shirley, Woodrow Burnett, C. B. Tolbert, M E Robberson, and Bonney Martin. At this first meeting the following officers were elected: Chairman- L. L. Shirley, Vice chairman- Woodrow Burnett, and Secretary-Treasurer- C. B. Tolbert. A contract for engineering was signed with the firm of Kalman Poe and Associates. At this same meeting and contract was signed with Phil Hurst of the Reed & Hurst Las firm for legal services.

The permanent Board immediately started a campaign to get a minimum of 212 paid taps. During 1968-1969 landowners were encouraged to sign up for service; cost of a Benefit Unit at this time was \$50.00. By January 1968, 290 taps had been obtained and a water system designed to serve 239 users. Rural Water Dist. #3 had to deannex part of Rural Water Dist. #1(Garvin Co.) and Rural Water Dist. #1(Murray Co.) then annex to Rural Water Dist. #3 to serve people wanting water.

April 8, 1968 a change in the legal name of the system was made to insure financing of the water system. The system, which started as Rural Water District #3 had changed to Wynnewood Rural Water Corp. and changes its structure from a water district to a non-profit corporation. It had been determined that on the basis of 239 users it would cost \$372,000.00 to build the water system. Since F.H.A. was two years behind in commitments, it became necessary to form a rural water corporation in order to obtain private financing guaranteed by F.H.A. The same directors and officers were elected to head up the new corporation and new contracts were signed with the engineers and attorneys.

Later in 1969 board members M. E. Robberson and Bonney Martin were replaced by Elmo Ray and Raymond Dixon. Also in 1969 due to health problems C. E. Tolbert resigned and was replaced by Jim Stevenson to finish out the term.

As soon as abstraction along the proposed lines is completed and easements are obtained from property owners across whose lands the water lines will run, commitment of funds can be completed and bids taken for the construction of the water system. In November of 1969 Benefit Unit increased to \$75.00 while lines were being constructed then \$150.00 after construction crew finished with the project.

In 1969 the Rural Water Corp. acquired a loan of \$321,000, bids were taken and contracts awarded. B &G Construction of Burkburnett, TX was the low bidder to install the water system and Red Webb of Sulphur, OK was the inspector for the job which consisted of 86 miles of lines, eight pump houses and would supply the 212 users. Construction went fairly well and was finished March 1970. I-35 was beginning construction at this time and we were able to trench across the proposed I-35 N of Old Hwy 29 (17A). This saved the Corp. a lot of money. A need for an operator was soon discovered so on March 9, 1970 a special meeting was called and Clinton Hucks was hired as operator/manager of the system. Water was allowed in all the lines by April 1, 1970. At a special meeting March 19, 1970 Mrs. David Tyree who was at the time

working for the Chamber of Commerce was hired to do the billing and collecting for the Rural Water Corp. The Chamber of Commerce allowed the Corp. to use part of their office at 108 E. Kerr. We had phone service installed on April 2, 1970 and on April 15, 1970 all meters were read for the first time. The minimum at the time was \$6.90 with the first 1000 gallons of water.

The board authorized the Chairman and Secretary to enter into a 40 year contract with the Wynnewood City Utilities Authority for the purchase of water and so we were off and running, or so we thought. The price was .40 per thousand gallons but later on the price increase thru negotiations.

It did not take long for Clinton and the board to realize we had a problem with our system. At the August 6, 1970 board meeting Clinton reported that from April 1, 1970 thru July 31, 1970 we had bought from the City of Wynnewood 5,361,100 gallons of water but had sold only 1,722,300 gallons. This loss was an omen of things to come as the loss was a constant thing to be reckoned with.

The first step for the corp. was to contract B&G Construction as they had guaranteed the system for a one year period. At the next regular board meeting Bill Bean of B&G Construction and Lee Johnson of Kalmen Poe & Associates both attended. The engineering firm made several recommendations for B&G to try. As none of us had any experience with water systems we thought there might be a quick fix for ours. This turned out to be a false assumption on our part as during the period of October 1 thru December 1, 1970 over 200 leaks had been found and repaired.

B.S. Landrum of Pauls Valley was employed to do the audit for 1970. His audit showed that the corp. lost approximately 17,000,000 gallons of water that year. This was a monetary loss of \$6,956.16.

In 1971 L.L. Shirley was re-elected as director for another 3 year term. This was the beginning of a long term relationship between LL and the water corp.

The corp. continued to be plagued with an unusual number of leaks and a high water loss. Rickey Dairy paid for an extension to increase pressure at their farm.

In August 1971 the first of many additions to our lines was approved. Zita Thurman extended our lines to serve an area east of Wynnewood. The development became known as Woodland Hills.

By September 1971 it was apparent to all that we were not gaining on our water loss and the corp. decided to look to Phillips Products for help as they had manufactured the pipe used in the system. During 1970-1971 there were 467 leaks repaired.

By February 1, 1972 the corp. was serving 235 users.

By mid June 1972 we had our second extension to serve the Johnson Addition. The area was developed by Bobby and Judy Johnson.

The 75 project was a blessing for us but gave the district some severe growing pains and opened all our eyes to the growth potential of this system. Soon after the 75 project was complete Elmo Ray retired from the board June 19, 1972 and was replaced by Bethel Jackson a rancher from the Stratford area, Bethel server on the board until early 1978 when he moved out of the district, Earl Tomlinson was appointed to replace him.

In September 1972 the corp. met with Phillips Products to ask again for help with our system. By early 1973 an agreement was in place to the effect that Phillips would pay for all leaks for a five year period and would continue to pressure testing and repair of the

system. Doug Sloan started doing all backhoe work for the corp. in 1973 and continued for Phillips as long as their warranty lasted.

The minimum rate increased to \$7.59 with 1000 gallons by 1973 and a 10% increase in rates after 1000 gallons.

In early 1973 Indian Health Service extended our lines to serve 9 new users in the Byers area. This project also required a standpipe which they built on Jake Dykemans property this tank is now known as the Gray tank.

In June 1973 Thelma Holder was hired to keep books for the system.

In early summer 1973 several people asked for the corp. to extend lines to serve them and the need for a major upgrade became apparent.

By early 1974 the Corp. was serving 299 users. April 1974 Poe & Associates were hired as engineers and preparation of plans for a major upgrade of our system. August 1974 the preliminary work was started on a loan and grant from FHA to upgrade the system. Phil Hurst was again hired as the attorney of record.

In 1974 Doug Sloan reported that he had not been paid by Phillips for 3 months and the board agreed to pursue this matter fully.

April 1, 1975 we now have 286 active users. May 1975 we moved into modern times with the purchase of C.B. radios to help keep up with Clinton and allow his wife Sharon to contact him without driving the lines. The minimum rate stayed at \$7.59 with 1000 gallons and a 3.5% increase after 1000 gallons.

May 1976 DEQ approved plans & specs engineered with Kalman & Associates, Inc. and Reed, Hurst & McNeil the Attorneys for extensions and upgrades. Hare Construction of Chickasha was the low bidder on the pipeline and Cooper Scott of Lubbock Texas was low bidder on the standpipe. Construction started with Clinton doing the project inspection. This project was funded through FHA loans in the amount of \$120,000.00 and \$313,742.17. This seemed to the board to be a good investment in the future of Wynnewood Rural Water Corp.

Clyde & Bernis Hare were the owners of Hare Construction and did an excellent job for us. There were some odd things about the Hare Construction crew. The man who operated the ditching machine was a deaf mute but was as good an operator as I have ever seen. Herbert Wulf did all the backhoe work. He was at the time 73 years old. One day I asked him how long he had been running a backhoe. He answered with a question "How long have they been making the damn things?" Herbert stayed through this project then retired the next year and died shortly after.

In 1977 the corporation had 516 users, only about 115 were from the original 213 members.

Mid 1978 the board was approached by a group of people south of our existing lines in the Stratford area concerning the possibility of extending a line to serve their homes. Max Scarce & Aline Franklin were the shakers and movers on this project.

During the summer of 1978 it became apparent that the 2" line from Pierces corner to the Rickey Pump station, could no longer keep up with the demand and we looked to FMHA for a \$40,000.00 loan to replace the 5 miles of 2" line.

At the October 1978 board meeting Joe Cowan was given the ok to extend our water line east of Joy. Clinton installed the extension. The board also approved the extension proposed by Max Scarce and Aline Franklin with them doing the work and Clinton doing the inspection.

November 1978 Gene Dotson was given permission to extend our line north of town to serve his property. He was to do the work with Clinton as inspector. At the same meeting Claude Courtney was approved for an extension on Meridian line with Clinton doing the installation.

As of November 1978 the corp. has 413 active members.

December 1978 Glen Byrd brought the preliminary engineering report for needed improvements to our system.

Early 1979 the need for additional lines north of the old Stubblefield store became apparent. This area was to be included in the system upgrade we were working on at the time. As always when the word got around that we were planning extensions we were covered up by request for service. That spring Howard Moore attended the board meeting to inquire about a line extension to serve his property west of Wynnewood. This was approved with Doug Sloan doing the work and Clinton doing the inspection. At the same meeting LB Norwood was given approval to extend our lines east of Bill Sheets corner with Clinton doing the installation.

August 1979 Bill Smith was given approval to extend our lines to serve the Wynn view Acres subdivision with the stipulation that Poe & Associates did the engineering and Clinton did the installation.

In November 1979 the first of many meeting with the city council was held. The council assumed the position that we were going to run them out of water and that our rates were too low. This was the start of a long and troublesome time of negotiation and renegotiation between us and the city.

1980 started as a slow year except for our water loss which was still averaging around 20% to 25%. The Wynnewood City Utility negotiated a new purchase price for the Corp. at .70 per thousand gallons. July 1980 cost of a benefit unit was revised to \$175.00 which would allow us to break even on the cost of meter installation.

Coy Erwin was appointed to the board in December 1980 to replace Earl Tomlinson who had resigned from the board.

March 1981 a line to serve Skip Dixon was approved with Skip doing the construction under Clinton's inspection. At the same meeting Larry Gales was approved for an extension north of Stubblefield store with Clinton doing the installation.

In June of 1981 Don Sharber was given the go ahead to construct line to serve his property west of town.

By July 1981 it became apparent to the board that we were reaching an impasse with the City of Wynnewood over cost and amounts of water we were buying. Our cost increased to \$1.00 per thousand gallons, the board instructed Clinton to contact HF Cooper about the possibility of buying water from the old city wells north of town. We entered into a contract with Mr. Copper and proceeded to test pump existing wells. The wells we tested averaged 100 gpm. There were two problems with the well, the quality of the water was poor and the City of Wynnewood had a perpetual permit on the property which they did not want to give up. This problem put Clinton and the board on the hunt for an additional source of water.

December 1981 the board approved the preliminary engineering report for upgrading our system and signed the preliminary application with FMHA.

It was in February 1982 at the annual meeting that the general membership voted to proceed with the loan and grant application. There were 42 users at the meeting which



was one of the largest meetings we had had to date. It was about this time that we started to limit the growth of our system due to the problems with city over water supply. I believe that I speak for the board at that time, when I say that turning down someone when they ask for water service is the hardest thing I have ever had to do. About this time Tom Whitaker started doing our backhoe work for us. He attended the Health Department schools and got his certification.

The district had to turn down 6 people for water service at the June 1982 board meeting. At the same meeting the board agreed to stop adjusting water bills for users who had leaks. The user would be allowed to make payments up to 6 months. Board Members at this time were as follows: LL Shirley – Chairman, WW Burnett, Jim Stevenson, Raymond Dixon and Coy Erwin.

In February of 1983 the contract with the City of Wynnewood to purchase water ended to old contract dated June 22, 1981 and was renegotiated to cost of \$1.00 per thousand gallons with a maximum usage of 5,500,000 gallons per month good thru November 4, 2008. This contract was amended on October 10, 1983 changing the expiration date to be October 6, 2016.

In July of 1984 an contract (agreement) was entered into by Wynnewood Rural Water Corporation and the Smith Brothers to purchase 100 ft easement for improvements with the existing water well on the property in section 17 4N 3E at a price of \$10,000.00 and the right to produce water. The cost of water was \$1,000.00 per month for minimum of 1,666,000 gallons per month and .60 cents per thousand after that not to exceed 300 acre ft of water a year. The Corp. installed line from the existing well southwest thru Section 17 4N 3E to start the distribution water line for the district to use the water. This contract was amended several times from 1989 to 1993 extending the contract terms and excluding the use of fertilizer, herbicide, pesticide, fungicide and other harmful material to safeguard the water quality. August of 1984 Wynnewood Rural Water Corporation has 619 active members.

Thelma Holder quit in 1986 and Linda Bolton was hired for the office. Linda work 27 years and retired in February of 2014. Linda went from working with ledgers to several computer programs wearing many hats for the district: the billing, accounts receivable & payable, payroll and payroll taxes and even insurance/employee benefit coordinator.

On October 24, 1988 our name changed from Wynnewood Rural Water Corporation to Rural Water District No. 6, Garvin County, Oklahoma was approved thru the Garvin County Commissioners. Wynnewood Rural Water Corporation was dissolved on May 14, 1990.

As more water production was needed Clinton and the Board of Directors had drilling a new well, pump housing and water lines engineered with William Ward Jr. P.E. and was approved, permitted by DEQ on December 18, 1995 but pushed back and an extension granted for one year on December 13, 1996. Meyer Pump Service completed the new well in 1997 to supply the district with needed water to serve its members.

Rural Water District No. 6, Garvin County purchased the property where the office and shop is currently located from Jackie Pitmon in April of 2003. The office/shop building was built and in 2008 the office was opened for business.

Rural Water District No. 6, Garvin County decided to make an investment for the future of the district by purchasing the 255 acres and water rights from the Smith Brothers in April of 2005. The district took out a loan with the State Bank of Wynnewood and combined the existing loan we were paying for other upgrades in the district. We also purchased water rights at the same time in the same section and in a section nearby giving the district 300 acre ft of water a year to pump thru the two existing wells.

Board Members that have served or are serving Rural Water District No. 6, Garvin County:

Horace Hucks 1966-1967

Harvey Scott 1966-1967

JL Stubblefield 1966-1967

EM Scott 1966-1967

Woodrow Burnett 1966-1983

LL Shirley 1967-1985

CB Tolbert 1967-1969

ME Robberson 1967-1969

Bonney Martin 1967-1969

Elmo Ray 1969-1972

Jim Stevenson 1969-1987

Raymond Dixon 1969-1995

Bethel Jackson 1972-1978

Earl Thomlinson 1978-1980

Coy Erwin 1980-1996

Jim Waters 1985-1993

Tom Nabors 1988-1995

Duane Bevers 1989-1992

Stubby Giles 1991-1997

Louis Perry 1993-1998

Frank James 1995-2001

Bobby Haigood 1996-2001/2010-2011

Tommy Leonard 1996-2017

Judy Phillips 1998-2013

Curtis Stubblefield 1998-2010

Joe Cowan 2002-2010

Sherry Harrell 2002-2017

Patrick Campbell 2010-2017

Lanea Dill 2011-2017

Billy Johnson 2013-2017