



West River/Lyman-Jones
Rural Water Systems Inc.

Quality On Tap!

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**2024 LEGISLATIVE
PREVIEW -
ADVOCATING FOR
RURAL WATER**

**MAKING SENSE OF
YOUR WATER BILL**

**SOUTH DAKOTA
RURAL WATER SHINES
ON A NATIONAL
STAGE**

**2023
ANNUAL
MEETING
HIGHLIGHTS**

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**ATTENTION
HIGH SCHOOL
SENIORS:**

**FOUR – \$750
SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE**

Application Deadline
February 15, 2024.
See page 15 for more
information.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Jake Fitzgerald

Manager, West River/Lyman-Jones RWS



Work has started on the ground storage reservoir (GSR) projects near Vivian and Creighton. Site preparation and excavation began in late summer and continued through October. The site piping and foundation work is complete. The contractor is shut down for the winter and will continue tank construction this spring. The GSR near Vivian will hold 300,000 gallons and the capacity of the Creighton GSR will be 336,000 gallons. These two tanks are scheduled to be complete and in service by the end of 2024.



Aerial view of the footing ring and inlet and outlet pipes at the Vivian GSR site.

We have received several questions about a construction project taking place near Ft. Pierre. The Oglala Sioux Rural Water Supply System (OSRWSS) is WR/LJ's primary source of water from the Missouri River, and they are constructing a 2 million gallon (MG) reservoir approximately 3 miles south of Ft. Pierre. Within the next few years, the OSRWSS will build an additional 2 MG reservoir between Ft. Pierre and Vivian and a 1 MG water tower near Kadoka. The OSRWSS water storage projects along the south core system will have a positive impact on WR/LJ and the tribal rural water systems included in the Mni Wiconi Project.

Construction will begin on 10.5 miles of WR/LJ water main this spring. The pipeline improvements will include 4.5 miles of pipe in northern Haakon County and 6 miles in Mellette County. The contract completion date for the 10.5-mile project is October 31, 2024.



OSRWSS 2 Million Gallon GSR.

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IS YOUR CONTACT INFO UP TO DATE?

If you have changed your landline, cell phone, or email address, please let us know. This will make it easier to contact members directly for water outages and high flow alerts.

Please email wrlj_ruralwater@goldenwest.net, call 800-851-2349 or fill out the form below and mail it to PO Box 407, Murdo, SD 57559. Thank you!

Name:	_____	Account Number	_____
Address:	_____		
City:	_____	State:	_____ Zip: _____
Home Phone:	_____	Cell Phone:	_____
Email Address:	_____		

FREE SERVICE

WR/LJ provides two free trips each calendar year to shut off/ turn on water at locations that will not be in use for a period of time. Please give advance notice by calling the main office in Murdo a couple days prior, so our field staff can make arrangements.

In observance of the following holidays, WR/LJ Rural Water offices will be closed on the following days:

December 25, 2023 – Christmas Day

January 1, 2024 – New Year's Day

January 15, 2024 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 19, 2024 – Presidents' Day

In case of an emergency,
please call the Murdo area at 530-0932
or the Philip area at 530-1136 for assistance.

PAYMENT OPTIONS



1. **Online Payment:** Go to www.wrlj.com (accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover and Electronic Check)
2. **Pay-By-Phone:** Call 1-855-325-8898 to use our automated bill payment option.
3. **Pay-By-Phone:** Call 1-800-851-2349 and a WR/LJ customer representative will take your payment information over the phone.
4. **Electronic Direct Payment:** Your payment is automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month.
5. **US Mail:** Mail payment along with the bottom portion of your bill.
6. **Pay-in-Person:** During regular business hours you may bring your payment to our office.
7. **24-Hour Drop Box:** Available at the Murdo office near the main entrance.

For forms or more information on these payment options, please call 1-800-851-2349.

Visit us online at: www.wrlj.com

BODIES OF WATER

Did you know that our planet is covered with lots of different bodies of water? These watery places come in all shapes and sizes, and they're super cool!

Let's start with oceans. Oceans are the biggest bodies of water on Earth. There are five oceans: the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern (or Antarctic), and Arctic Ocean. They're so vast that they cover most of the Earth's surface. Oceans are home to amazing creatures like whales, dolphins, and colorful fish.

Next up, we have rivers. Rivers are like natural streams of water that flow from high areas like mountains down to lower places like seas or other rivers. They're fantastic for animals and plants that need water to survive. You might have seen ducks swimming or fish jumping in rivers!

Lakes are another kind of water body. They're like big puddles or bowls filled with water. Some lakes are tiny, while others are enormous! Lakes can be home to different kinds of fish and plants. They're great spots for fishing or just enjoying a peaceful day by the water.

Ever heard of a pond? It's like a small lake, but usually, it's even smaller and shallower. Ponds can be found in parks or forests, and they're home to frogs, turtles, and colorful dragonflies!

Let's talk about seas. Seas are like big salty lakes that are connected to oceans. They're not as vast as oceans, but they're still pretty huge! Seas have their own unique creatures and sometimes beautiful coral reefs.



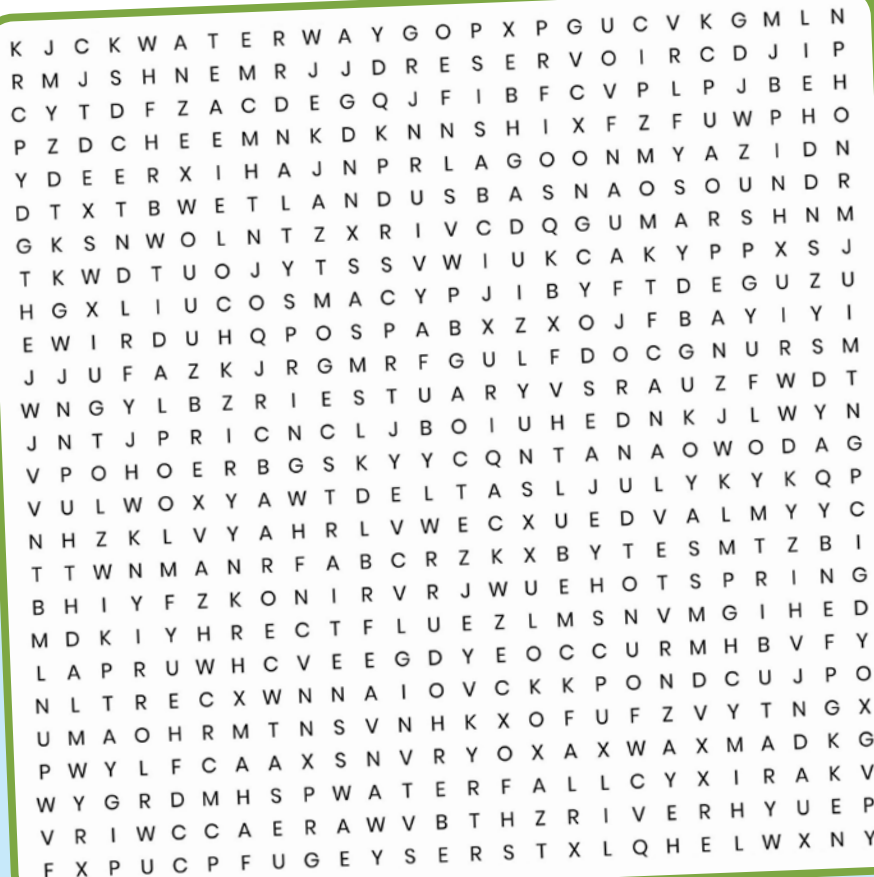
Last but not least, we have streams and creeks. They're like tiny rivers! They can be found in forests or mountains, and they're important for lots of animals to get their water.

Remember, all these bodies of water are super important for plants, animals, and people too! They help keep our planet healthy and are awesome places to explore and have fun!

So, next time you see a puddle after the rain, a big lake, or a flowing river, think about the amazing world of water around us!

SEARCH AND FIND

OCEAN	LAGOON	TRIBUTARY
POND	SOUND	HOT SPRING
STRAIT	BROOK	RIVER
DELTA	CANAL	GULF
LOCH	GEYSERS	ESTUARY
CREEK	LAKE	RESERVOIR
RAPIDS	BAY	WETLAND
OASIS	INLET	WATERWAY
SEA	FJORD	SPRING
STREAM	MARSH	TIDAL POOL
CHANNEL	WATERFALL	





2024 LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW: ADVOCATING FOR RURAL WATER SYSTEMS

As we step into 2024, the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) gears up for an eventful year of legislative efforts on both the state and federal levels. Our mission is clear: to be the loudest voice in the room when it comes to advocating for water and wastewater issues in the political arenas. This article provides an overview of the critical issues and activities SDARWS will be involved in throughout the year.

Advocacy on the State Level

SDARWS takes its role as strong and tireless activists for rural water and wastewater seriously. We continuously monitor and engage with a wide range of Bills that are crucial to the well-being of water and wastewater systems in South Dakota. Some of the key areas we will focus on at the state level include:

1. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Building on the success of the 2022 Legislative Session, where \$600 million was directed to benefit water projects, we continue to push for further allocation of the remaining \$100 million (+) in ARPA funds. Our efforts to secure these additional funds were unsuccessful in the 2023 session; they remain in the state coffers, but we are determined to advocate for their allocation to water projects in the 2024 session.

2. Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law (BIL): Monitoring and engaging with this law ensures that water and wastewater systems receive the attention and funding they deserve as part of the broader infrastructure plan. This includes fair and equitable funding distribution of SRF funds and providing needed assistance with initiatives to address Lead Service

Lines and PFAS contamination.

3. Pipeline Task Force Recommendations: Working closely with the authorities, such as the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), addressing issues and recommendations related to pipeline infrastructure. Including carbon delivery pipelines and the plethora of concerns inherent to the case.

4. 1926b Court Cases: We will watch legal developments impacting rural water systems and the protections offered through 7 USC 1926(b). We are exceptionally watchful of efforts to try and circumvent or weaken the protections provided under this statute.

5. Rural/Municipal Service Territory Issues: Advocating for fair and sustainable service territories to support rural communities' water needs. This includes 1926(b) issues spoken of earlier. Still, it also recognizes the autonomy of rural and municipal systems to exercise self-governance and control through public ownership and civic authority.

6. South Dakota One-call: Ensuring efficient and streamlined processes for locating, excavating, and constructing all infrastructure that involves digging or moving earth. South Dakota One Call is essential in protecting underground pipelines and water and wastewater infrastructure.

7. State Regulatory Issues: Engaging with state regulators to represent the interests of rural water systems. SDARWS will be particularly engaged in Lead Service Line inventories

...continued on page 13

MAKING SENSE OF YOUR WATER BILL: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Understanding how water utilities decide on rate changes can help you, the consumer, better understand the value of what you're paying for. Here's a breakdown of what goes into those decisions and how they impact your monthly bill.

Providing clean, potable water to your community is no small task. It's a long-term commitment that requires a lot of resources. The biggest of these resources? Money. When you pay your water bill, that money goes back into paying debt as well as maintaining and improving the system.

One of the most fundamental interactions we have with our local water utilities isn't just when we turn on the faucet but also when the bill arrives in the mail or our inbox. Both these experiences, obtaining water and understanding the charges for it, should be seamless and transparent.

Every time we turn on the tap, we expect clean, safe water to

come out. This expectation isn't just about the physical infrastructure but also trust. We trust our water utility to maintain high standards, and they, in turn, rely on our understanding of the costs and efforts involved. Water utilities are unique in that they provide a product that is regularly tested to meet community health needs. Every drop of water is intended to be drinkable, regardless of its intended use.

When the bill arrives, it's more than just a notice. It's a reflection of your consumption, the utility's expenses, and the value it provides to its members. Any changes to this bill, especially unexpected ones, can lead to confusion or even frustration.

The relationship between a water utility and its members is built on more than just pipes and bills; it's constructed on trust. And trust, like any relationship, thrives on open,

transparent, and consistent communication.

Utilities often use a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to forecast and plan expenses. It helps them see what rates might look like years down the road. Regular rate updates and good communication help avoid sudden and surprising hikes in your bill.

Typically, a water bill has two main parts:

Minimum Rate: This is the basic charge for having water service. It covers big, long-term expenses like infrastructure projects and servicing debt.

Commodity Rate: This depends on how much water you use. It covers the day-to-day operations of getting water to your home, like treatment and distribution.

For fairness, larger households or properties with bigger water needs might see a slightly higher base charge.

Looking at a utility's finances over several years can give clues about its health and future plans. When a utility is reinvesting wisely in infrastructure and expanding its services, it's a good sign for the community.

For those of us with an agricultural background, depreciation is a familiar term, often associated with managing investments and optimizing our tax position. Just as we account for the wear and tear on our equipment and structures to ensure our operations run efficiently, our water utility also plans for the natural aging of its infrastructure.

In a water system, depreciation isn't just a financial concept; it's a practical reality. Assets like treatment plants and distribution networks gradually decline in efficiency and effectiveness. Recognizing depreciation on these assets is more than an accounting practice—it's an acknowledgment that these vital components require attention and reinvestment.

A forward-thinking utility sees depreciation as a signal to plan ahead. By setting aside funds today – much like a farmer who plans for next season's seed or equipment repair – the utility prepares to maintain and enhance the system's integrity. This foresight ensures that when parts of our water system need updating or replacement, the resources are there to do so without placing a sudden burden on us, the members.

When we talk about reinvesting in our water system, it mirrors how we think about reinvesting in our land and tools – it's about longevity and prosperity. Allocating funds for future improvements means that our water system can remain robust and capable of supporting our needs, just as

our ongoing investments ensure that our farms can continue to flourish for generations to come.

In this light, depreciation is not just a line item but a measure of our utility's commitment to sustaining the lifeline of our community: our water supply. It reflects a shared understanding that to preserve and enhance the value of our collective investment, we must continually reinvest with foresight and purpose.

As our community grows and the demands on our water system increase, it's not just about ensuring we have clean and safe water – the capacity of our system becomes equally important. Maintaining adequate water pressure is as crucial as the rigorous health standards that our system operations specialists consistently test and monitor.

Ideally, the overall value and capacity of our member-owned water system should grow over time, surpassing the rate of inflation. This isn't just about numbers; it represents our collective foresight in improving and expanding the

system to meet the increasing water needs of our community members, including those in agriculture who rely heavily on water for their livelihoods.

Just as a farmer anticipates the need for more resources to support a larger harvest, our utility plans for the future. We must ensure that our infrastructure can keep up as members' water usage evolves

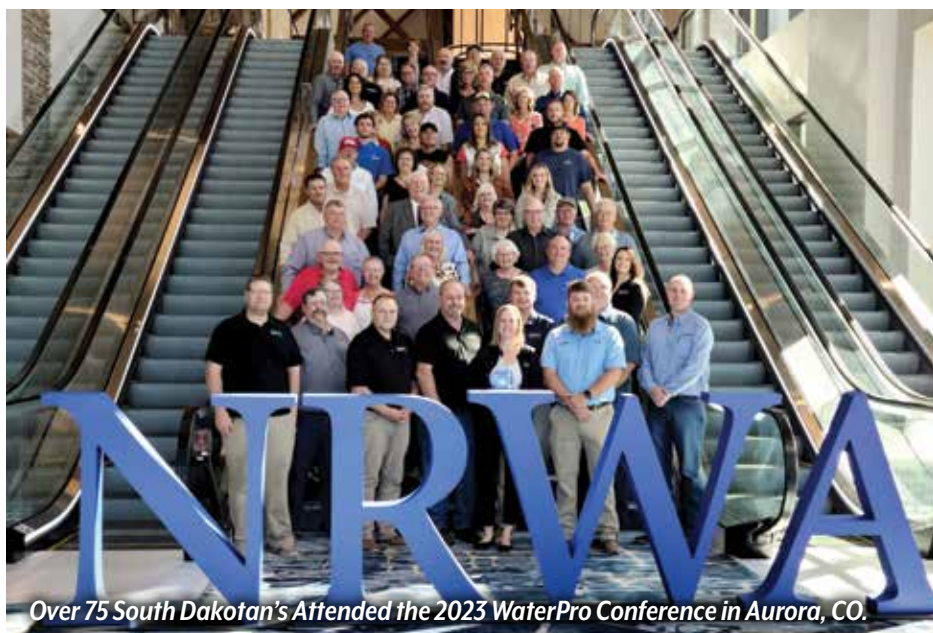
– whether it's expanding operations or supporting new homes and businesses. This is why a portion of the funds collected from water rates is directed toward scaling up the system, maintaining adequate water pressure, and ensuring reliability for every member, every time they turn on the tap.

When you look at your water bill, it's more than just a ledger of usage. It's a snapshot of our collective investment in a resource that's vital for both our daily lives and our economic well-being. Understanding the intricacies of rate determination helps illuminate the broader picture: each dollar is a building block in a structure designed to sustain our community's growth and health.

Always remember, when we talk about investing in our water system, we're talking about investing in the foundation of our community's prosperity. Just as we care for our crops and herds, we must nurture and develop our water system. It is a commitment that goes beyond today, securing a thriving and well-watered future for all members.

In this way, paying our water bill is not just a routine part of living in our community; it's an active contribution to an ever-improving, robust water system that supports each member's needs, ensuring the health and vitality of the place we call home.

When you look at your water bill, it's more than just a ledger of usage. It's a snapshot of our collective investment in a resource that's vital for both our daily lives and our economic well-being.



SOUTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL WATER SYSTEMS SHINES ON A NATIONAL STAGE



The recent National Rural Water WaterPro Conference at the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center in Aurora, Colorado, witnessed an impressive turnout from South Dakota, with over 75 attendees from South Dakota making their mark. The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) made waves from the get-go, starting the week on a high note by securing the esteemed Outstanding Achievement in Communications, Publications, and Public Relations award for the fourth time in seven years. Within SDARWS' array of communication mediums lies the *Quality on Tap* magazine – a collaborative publication crafted by SDARWS and shared among 17 rural water systems. Notably, South Dakota stands as the sole state producing a cooperative water-centric magazine.

The excitement continued as the SDARWS team took center stage in the spirited Rural Water Feud competition. Led by Jeremiah Corbin, Kurt Pfeifle, Jennifer Bame, Paul Dorwart, and Gavin Graverson, the team triumphed over Minnesota Rural Water, claiming victory at the Membership Appreciation Luncheon. Their win was no small feat, earning them a substantial \$5,000 credit at USA BlueBook. Demonstrating their prowess, Corbin and Bame also excelled in the “fast money” round, further bolstering the credit by an additional \$2,500, resulting in an impressive total of \$7,500.

The talent and artistry of SDARWS members extended beyond the competition floor. Paul Dorwart and Kevin Christenson showcased their photographic skills in the Rural Water on Display Photo Contest. Dorwart secured second place in the “WaterWorks” category, while Christenson clinched first place in “Water in Rural America” and claimed the prestigious “Grand Prize” for the best overall picture, underscoring the talent within the South Dakota contingent.

Not merely participants, SDARWS members were also invited to share their expertise through informative sessions at the conference.

Communications and Marketing Coordinator Jennifer Bame spearheaded a session titled “Public Relations and Customer Engagement,” highlighting the *Quality on Tap* publication to a wide audience, while Executive Director Kurt Pfeifle and Deputy Director Jeremiah Corbin jointly hosted a presentation titled “Getting Results From Your Experts.” Their contributions added value to the conference, further highlighting the knowledge and professionalism within the rural water community.

Reflecting on the event, it was a resounding success for SDARWS in an exceptional location. The camaraderie, skill, and dedication displayed by South Dakota’s rural water professionals underscored the association’s commitment to excellence and innovation in serving rural communities.

The achievements at the National Rural Water WaterPro Conference stand as a testament to the dedication and expertise within SDARWS. As South Dakota continues to shine on a national platform, it reaffirms the association’s pivotal role in championing rural water systems and ensuring the provision of safe, reliable water services to communities across the state.

Established in 1979, SDARWS is a nonprofit organization located in Madison, SD, committed to supporting the needs of rural water and wastewater systems in South Dakota. Its primary mission revolves around assisting and promoting the interests of its members – comprising water and wastewater systems, industry professionals, and stakeholders – ensuring they have the resources and support necessary to provide safe and reliable water services to rural areas.

One of the pivotal roles of SDARWS is to serve as a unified voice for rural water systems, representing their interests at the state and federal levels. The association actively engages in legislative advocacy, working with policymakers to address issues pertinent to rural water infrastructure, funding, and regulatory compliance. By leveraging collective expertise and advocating for favorable policies, SDARWS helps secure vital resources for its members, enabling them to upgrade and maintain infrastructure, adopt advanced technologies, and comply with evolving environmental standards.

Education and training lie at the core of SDARWS’s initiatives. The association offers a diverse range of training programs, workshops, and certifications aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of water and wastewater professionals. These educational opportunities cover various aspects of utility management, technical operations, safety protocols, and regulatory compliance, empowering personnel to effectively manage and maintain water systems.

Moreover, SDARWS fosters a collaborative network where members can exchange ideas, share best practices, and learn from each other’s experiences. Through conferences, seminars, and networking events, the association facilitates invaluable opportunities for professionals to connect, learn

about emerging trends, and address common challenges faced by rural water systems.

The commitment to excellence and innovation within SDARWS is evident through its emphasis on embracing technological advancements. The association actively promotes the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, encouraging the implementation of sustainable practices and efficient solutions. By staying at the forefront of innovation, SDARWS assists its members in optimizing operations, reducing costs, and improving service delivery to rural communities.

SDARWS’s dedication to community extends beyond technical assistance. The association values community engagement and outreach, recognizing the importance of

public education on water conservation, quality, and safety. Through outreach programs, SDARWS educates the public on the significance of responsible water usage and the role individuals can play in preserving this invaluable resource.

The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems plays a pivotal role in supporting and empowering rural communities across the state. Through advocacy, education, technological innovation, and community engagement, SDARWS continues to be a driving force in ensuring that rural areas have access to safe, clean water and effective wastewater management. As it moves forward, the association remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for South Dakota’s rural residents, demonstrating that even the smallest drops can make a significant ripple in the community’s well-being.



SDARWS Executive Director Kurt Pfeifle and Communications & Marketing Director Jennifer Bame address the crowd at the 2023 WaterPro Conference in Aurora, CO.

PERKINS COUNTY RURAL WATER SYSTEM

Perkins County Rural Water System, Inc. (PCRWS) stands as a testament to the power of community collaboration and perseverance in ensuring access to clean water. The journey of PCRWS, from its inception to its ongoing expansions, exemplifies a community's dedication to securing a vital resource for its residents.

A Vision Takes Root (1982-1993)

The seeds of PCRWS were sown in 1982 when a group of farmers, ranchers, and local representatives were approached by the Southwest Water Pipeline Project with an ambitious proposal to provide water to Perkins County. However, it wasn't until 1992, when the Southwest Water Authority reintroduced the idea to the county, that momentum began to build.

A dedicated committee comprising approximately 25-30 individuals from diverse backgrounds across the county convened in 1992, leading to the formation of PCRWS. A volunteer Board of Directors, representing different districts within the county, was established to guide the initiative.

From Vision to Reality (1993-1999)

In March 1993, PCRWS was officially organized as a non-profit entity, backed by initial funding from the State of South Dakota in the form of two \$50,000 grants under the State Water Plan. The feasibility study commissioned by PCRWS, conducted by KBM, Inc. of Grand Forks, ND, and The Alliance of Rapid City, validated the potential of building a distribution system and purchasing water from Southwest Water Authority.

The next several years were spent working with US Congress, towns of Lemmon and Bison, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Grand River Grazing Association. In 1998, both of the towns signed a contract with Perkins County Rural Water to furnish them with 100% of their water needs. The pivotal moment arrived in the spring of 1999 when the Governor's office and the State legislature sanctioned PCRWS, earmarking one million dollars for the Southwest

Pipeline construction in North Dakota. The system engaged in persistent lobbying efforts at the federal level, ultimately resulting in the US Congress passing an authorization bill in 1999 (Public Law 106-136) to support the construction of the distribution pipeline in Perkins County. The authorization stated that the federal government would cost share 75% grant money of 28 million dollars to build the distribution pipeline in Perkins County. The appropriation was spread over at least six years of construction time.

Building Foundations and Expansions (2003-Present)

PCRWS secured the purchase of 400 gallons per minute of water plus any excess water in the line from Southwest Water Authority, paving the way for distribution to Perkins County Rural Water members. The system embarked on initial construction in 2003, officially breaking ground on May 1, 2004.

Over the ensuing years, PCRWS achieved milestones, completing Phases I to VIII in 2012 and initiating the repayment of \$5.144 million over 40 years from the state in 2015. Ongoing projects such as the DOT-mandated realignment on highways and the installation of an automatic meter reading system underscore the commitment to modernization and efficiency.

A Testament to Community Commitment

The evolution of PCRWS embodies the dedication and resilience of a community that came together to secure a reliable water supply. From initial discussions to navigating legislative channels and overseeing infrastructure development, PCRWS stands as a beacon of community-driven initiatives ensuring a fundamental resource for generations to come.

As PCRWS looks towards the future, it continues to uphold its commitment to providing accessible and reliable water to the residents of Perkins County, ensuring a thriving and sustainable community for years ahead.

PERKINS COUNTY RURAL WATER SYSTEM



Perkins Co. Office in Bison, SD



Booster Station on Highway 20



Main pump station near Lodgepole.

DIRECTORS:

Lodgepole District

President – Donald Melling Jr.

Bison District

Vice President – Brian Morris

Lemmon District

Secretary – Lynn Frey

Municipal Appointed Directors

Town of Bison

Treasurer – Luke Clements

City of Lemmon

Pat Dalzell

STAFF:

O&M Manager – Shiloh Baysinger

O&M Operator – Eric Newman

Office Manager – Brandi Baysinger

Attorney – Eric Bouge

STATISTICS:

Hookups: 883

Miles of Pipeline: 850

Water Source: Southwest Water Authority,
ND

Counties Served: Perkins

Towns Served Individual: Lemmon, Bison

RURAL WATER CROSSWORD & WORD SCRAMBLE CONTEST

WINTER VACATION DESTINATIONS

Down

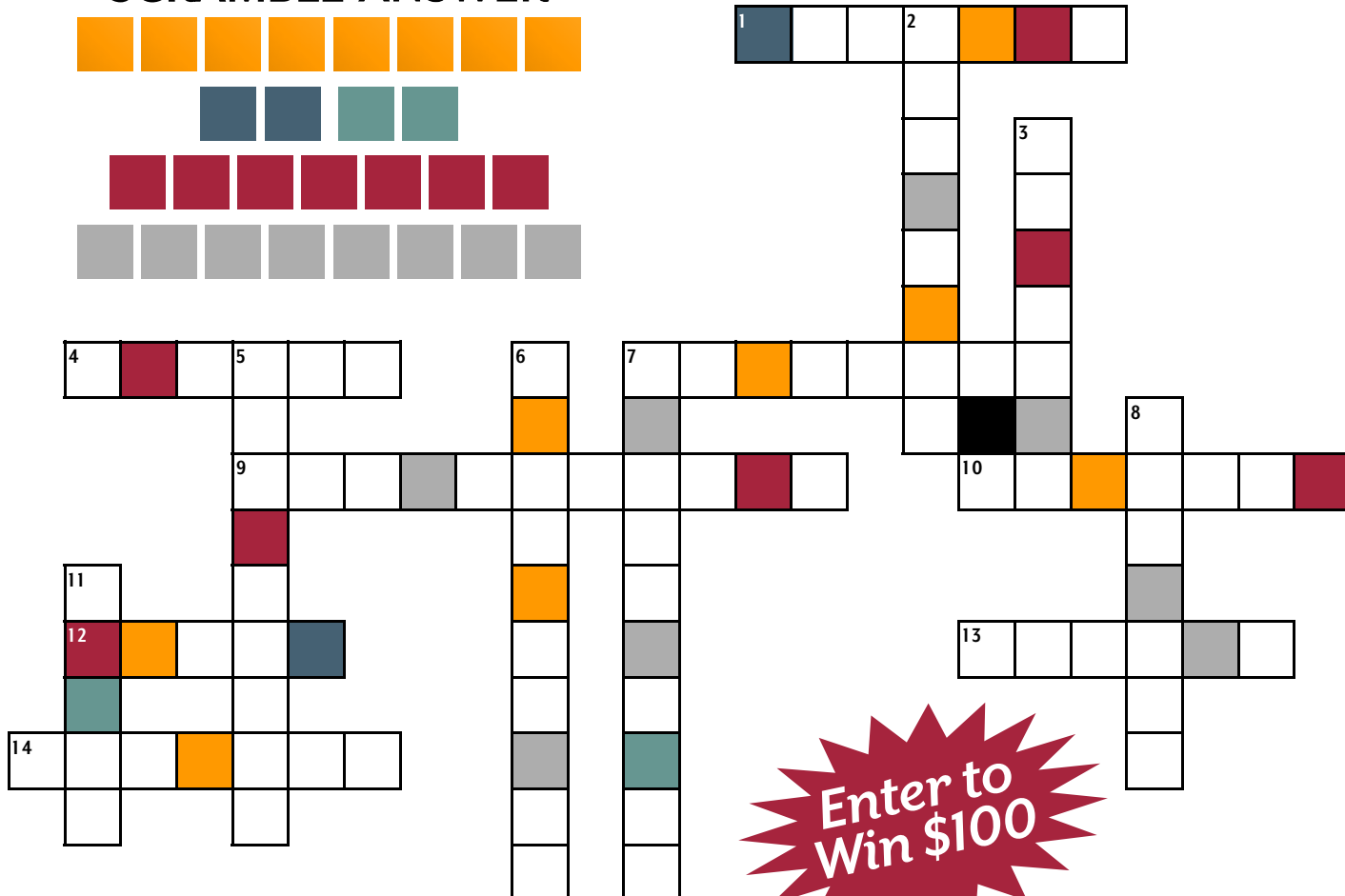
2. Gambling empire
3. Popular desert retirement destination
5. Land down under

6. US island territory
7. Has its faults
8. Third largest island in the Caribbean
11. European peninsula

Across

1. Northern Lights and Blue Lagoons
4. Luau location
7. Rocky Mountain ski state
9. Alpine country
10. Islands north of Cuba
12. Largest gulf state
13. South of the border
14. State of many keys

SCRAMBLE ANSWER



RULES: Use the colored squares in the puzzle to solve the word scramble above. Call your Rural Water System (See page 2 for contact information) or enter online at www.sdarws.com/crossword.html with the correct phrase by January 15, 2024 to be entered into the \$100 drawing.

Only one entry allowed per address/household. You must be a member of a participating rural water system to be eligible for the prize. Your information will only be used to notify the winner, and will not be shared or sold.

Congratulations to Don & Lura Kirkpatrick with West River/Lyman-Jones who had the correct phrase of "Everything Comes Back to You" for January 2024.

and replacement and issues such as PFAS and the UCMR-5 issued by EPA.

8. Health Care, Property & Liability, and Worker's Comp.

Insurance: Supporting measures that benefit water wastewater system employees and their coverage needs. Always on the lookout for increased efficiencies and lower premiums.

9. Permitting Process and Fees for Railroad Crossings: This seems to be a perennial issue. When you think you've "put it to bed," something new arises. An effort in the last Legislative Session to increase crossing fees and add new terms to crossings is an excellent example of how this issue keeps returning. SDARWS will always be watchful and address issues related to railroad crossings to enhance water infrastructure development and protection.

10. Economic/Workforce Development: Promoting initiatives that foster workforce development in the water and wastewater sector. This will include SDARWS's continued support of the Water & Wastewater Apprenticeship program crafted by NRWA and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Advocacy on the Federal Level

SDARWS collaborates closely with the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) in congressional efforts to bring about positive change for rural water systems. Some of our main focuses on the federal level include:

1. EPA Regulations: Monitoring and advocating for regulations that support and protect rural water systems. With a particular emphasis on the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) fifth (5) version. This includes the "forever chemicals" such as PFAS. It will also involve monitoring the developments and funding for the Lead Service Line Inventory and replacement programs. The latter is addressed in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) passed by Congress in prior years.

2. Funding through EPA and USDA – Rural Development:

Ensuring that rural water projects receive federal financial support. SDARWS will especially keep a watchful eye on funding provided through the USDA – Rural Development Water & Environment Program (WEP) and funds provided to the states by EPA through the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program. Both of the preceding are crucial to the advancement of rural water and wastewater.

3. Training and Assistance Programs:

Supporting federal water, wastewater, and source water programs, including Circuit Rider programs that offer valuable assistance and training. The support and advocacy are provided as we work in connection with our partners at the National Rural Water Association (NRWA).

4. Farm Bill: Actively participating in developing and advocating the next Farm Bill, scheduled for consideration and adoption in 2025. Farm Bills are considered and reauthorized every five years. Congress is busy at this very moment writing the next Farm Bill for consideration in 2025. SDARWS and NRWA are in constant contact with our Congressional Delegations to ensure that the language of the next Farm Bill is favorable to South Dakota.

5. Federal Authorization and Funding for Water Projects:

Monitoring and advocating for federal authorization and funding for vital water projects in South Dakota, including large Bureau of Reclamation Projects and projects utilizing traditional financing paths through Rural Development and EPA. Three large projects are currently under consideration and development in South Dakota. Water Investment in Northern South Dakota (WINS); Western Dakota Regional Water System and Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System. These projects potentially represent billions (with a "B") of dollars of water investment in our great state.

Conclusion: Join the Advocacy Chorus

In 2024, SDARWS anticipates a busy year of legislative advocacy at the state and federal levels. We invite everyone to actively engage in political and legislative issues related to rural water and wastewater systems. By joining us in telling the story of water and wastewater needs loudly and proudly, we can ensure that rural water systems receive the support and attention they deserve.

With your support, SDARWS is confident that 2024 will be a prosperous year for rural water and wastewater systems in South Dakota. Let us stand together as a united voice and make a difference for our communities and the future of water infrastructure.

Join us in advocating for quality on tap!
Together, we can make a difference.



34TH ANNUAL MEETING

West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water Systems, Inc. held its 34th annual membership meeting on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at the Murdo shop building in Murdo, SD. Registration began at 4:00 pm (CT).

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance. Board President Dave Fuoss called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm (CT) and declared a quorum present.

Manager Fitzgerald read the annual meeting notice and official proof of mailing statement that was published in the October 2023 issue of the *Quality on Tap* newsletter. He then introduced WR/LJ board of directors, staff, and consultants.

In his report, Manager Fitzgerald mentioned that WR/LJ maintains 3,500 miles of pipeline operates 15 reservoirs, four wells, and 17 pump stations. He explained that WR/LJ gets 80%-85% of our water from the Mni Wiconi Water Treatment Plant in Ft. Pierre, and the other 15%-20% comes from 4 wells located in the Creighton, Quinn, and Wall areas.

He updated the members on upcoming projects, which include a 300,000-gallon reservoir near Vivian and replacing an existing 227,000-gallon reservoir near Creighton with a 336,000-gallon reservoir. We will also be installing 10.5 miles of pipeline to improve service north of Plum Creek School in Haakon County and north of Cedar Butte Pump Station in Mellette County. Manager Fitzgerald informed the members that these projects will be paid for with an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant of \$1.2M and WR/LJ received a loan of \$2.8M from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF).

Manager Fitzgerald thanked the Oglala Sioux Rural Water Supply System and the Bureau of Reclamation for securing funding for an additional 5.8 million gallons of storage on the Mni Wiconi south core system. "These storage improvements projects will increase operational flexibility and redundancy to effectively reduce risks and system vulnerability during future leak repairs and times of high usage," said Fitzgerald.

Attorney Jessica Hegge presented her legal report and stated West River/Lyman Jones has no pending lawsuits against them, and they are legally sound. She then announced that four incumbent directors were appointed to three-year terms: Dodie Garrity – Zone 1, Brad Smith – Zone 2A, Kirk Cordes – Zone 4, and Casey Krogman – Zone 4A.

Drawings for door prizes were held at the end of the meeting.



President Fuoss welcomed the crowd to Murdo.



Manager Fitzgerald presented his manager's report.



The winner of the beef certificates was Ted Nies.



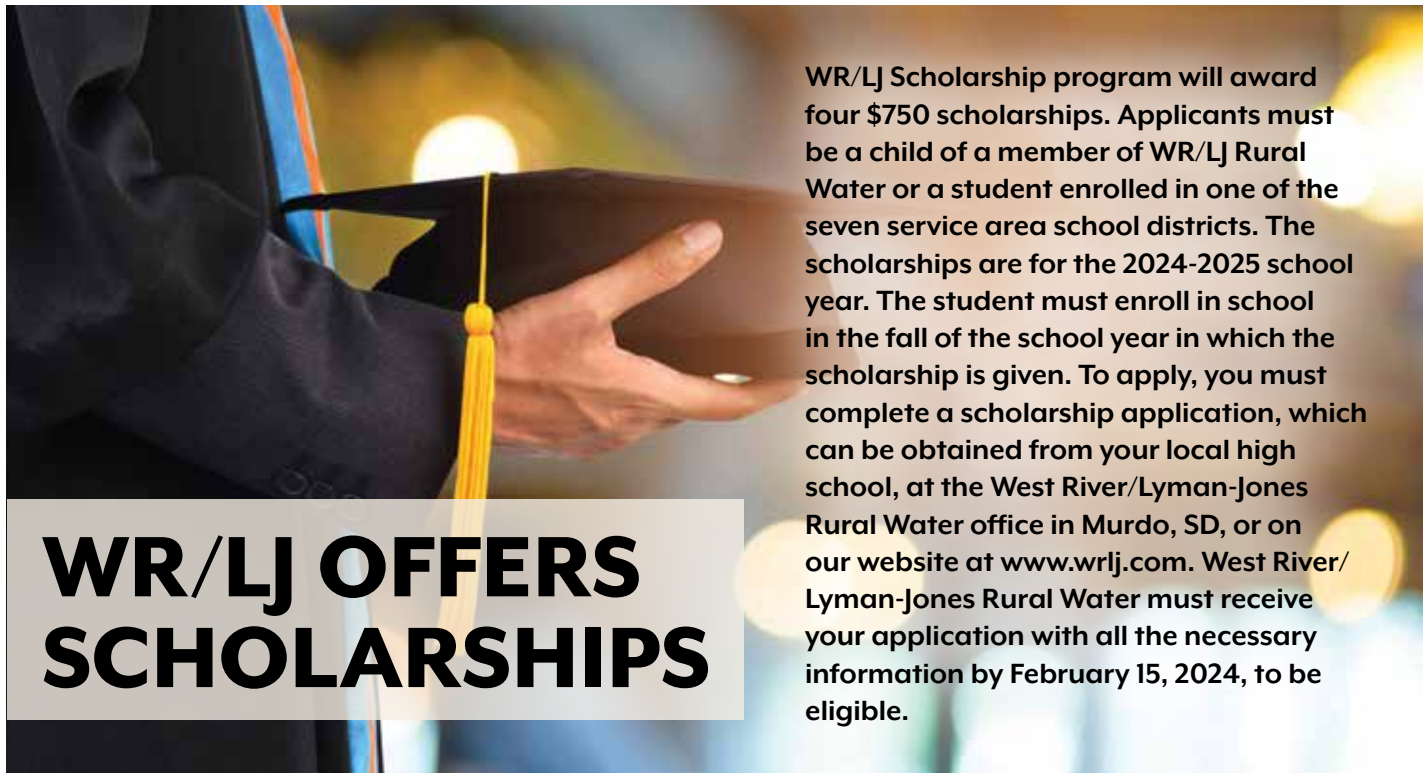
David Zolnowsky won the flex hose, and Robert Styles was the winner of the zero-gravity lounge.



Ray Pike was the winner of the Keurig, and his wife Janice won beef certificates.



The winner of the flat-screen TV was Norman Bower.



WR/LJ OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

WR/LJ Scholarship program will award four \$750 scholarships. Applicants must be a child of a member of WR/LJ Rural Water or a student enrolled in one of the seven service area school districts. The scholarships are for the 2024-2025 school year. The student must enroll in school in the fall of the school year in which the scholarship is given. To apply, you must complete a scholarship application, which can be obtained from your local high school, at the West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water office in Murdo, SD, or on our website at www.wrlj.com. West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water must receive your application with all the necessary information by February 15, 2024, to be eligible.

NOTICE: ACCESS TO WR/LJ WATER METER PITS IS NOT PERMITTED

Metering equipment in several locations has been damaged due to unauthorized persons getting into meter pits and tampering with the equipment. When lids are removed and not replaced properly, the sensitive equipment within the meter pit will freeze and break. Additionally, lids that are not replaced properly will allow animals, such as rodents and snakes, to enter causing damage to the equipment.

Meter pits are the sole property of WR/LJ, even though meter pits are located on private property. Only WR/LJ employees may access meter pits. It is WR/LJ's responsibility to maintain and repair the meter pit and equipment inside. The cost of damages or loss to WR/LJ's meter pits and equipment due to tampering will be passed on to the water user.

Water users should furnish and maintain a private shut-off valve on the user's side of the meter. If water must be turned on or off at the meter, please contact the WR/LJ office in Murdo at 605-669-2931.

Thank you for the Keurig coffee maker and beef certificates we won at your annual meeting. We enjoy your meetings.

Ray & Janice Pike

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

from the Board of
Directors and Staff of
WR/LJ Rural Water



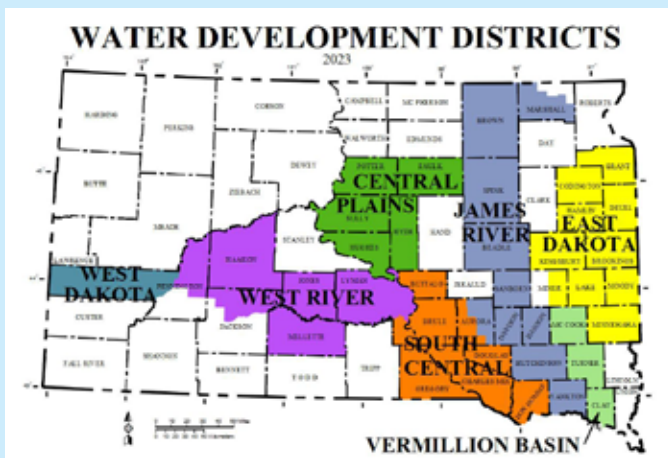


**West River/Lyman-Jones
Rural Water Systems Inc.**
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WATER MATTERS

WATER DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS



Water Development Districts (WDDs) are political subdivisions of the State. WDDs promote the conservation, development, and proper management of water resources according to district priorities. They can provide technical, organizational, and financial assistance to prospective and existing projects and activities. While sharing many common efforts, each of the seven existing WDDs (see map) have developed programs and expertise designed to address those issues most important to their area.

Each WDD is governed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of 5, 7, or 9 members, depending on population. The Board hires or contracts for staff and other services as necessary. WDDs have a limited taxing authority, being able to levy a tax of no more than thirty cents per thousand dollars of taxable valuation (0.3 mill). They also pursue external grant support for priority activities.

If an organization, entity, group or individual has a project or activity that needs technical, organizational, or financial assistance, contact the WDD for that area. Staff has extensive experience in developing and supporting projects. They can assist in preparing an application to include a project on the State Water Plan, an important step if a project needs state or federal assistance. They can also help project sponsors search for funds from other sources.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

East Dakota WDD – Jay Gilbertson
605-688-6741 • edwdd@brookings.net

Vermillion Basin WDD – Brad Prehiem
605-563-2883 • vbwdd@hotmail.com

James River WDD – Dave Bartel
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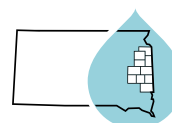
Central Plains WDD – Lynette Eckert
605-280-6763 • cpwdd@midconetwork.com

South-Central WDD – Peg Haenfler
605-724-2624 • scwdd@unitelsd.com

West River WDD – Jake Fitzgerald
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