



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

# Quality On Tap!

October 2025 | Volume 21, Issue 2

**WHERE DO ALL  
THE ROCKS  
COME FROM?**

**TOP 10 WAYS  
TO BE A GOOD  
SEPTIC OWNER**

**SMART METERS:  
SAVING MONEY,  
CONSERVING WATER,  
AND PROTECTING YOUR  
COMMUNITY**

## **OFFICIAL NOTICE OF WRLJ 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY,  
OCTOBER 15, 2025  
MURDO SHOP BUILDING  
MURDO, SD**

*Registration will be from 4:00 PM  
to 4:30 PM CT followed by a brief  
business meeting and door prizes.*

Each membership will receive a  
\$10 water credit at registration.

**NOTICE OF DIRECTOR  
VACANCIES - SEE PAGE 3**



# MANAGER'S REPORT

Jake Fitzgerald

Manager, West River/Lyman-Jones RWS



## CREIGHTON RESERVOIR REPLACEMENT PROJECT COMPLETE

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintain a safe and reliable water supply, the construction of a new 336,000-gallon ground storage reservoir near Creighton is complete. This vital infrastructure upgrade will enhance our water system's storage capacity, improve operational efficiency, and ensure long-term service reliability to the rural area north of Wall. The new reservoir is designed to meet current and future demands, replacing the aged 227,000-gallon reservoir that had served our system for decades.

The outdated ground storage reservoir was safely demolished on June 9, 2025. The tank had exceeded its useful life, and its removal marks another milestone in modernizing our water delivery system. The tank material was cut into sections and hauled off by a recycling company. Final grading and restoration of the reservoir site will be completed this fall.



*The new ground storage reservoir is constructed next to the old reservoir.*



*Left: A member of the demo team starts cutting a large notch at the base of the old tank with a large cutting torch.*



*Right: The old tank begins to topple.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Fuoss, Draper – President  
Richard L. Doud, Midland – Vice President  
Dodie Garrity, Hayes – Sec./Treas.  
Veryl Prokop, Kadoka  
Casey Krogman, White River  
Brad Smith, Vivian  
Dean Nelson, Murdo  
Quint Garnos, Presho  
Marion Matt, Philip  
Jiggs O'Connell, Creighton

## MURDO PROJECT OFFICE

307 Main Street  
PO Box 407  
Murdo, SD 57559

Jake Fitzgerald..... Manager  
Amy Kittelson..... Office Manager  
Kati Venard ..... Billing Secretary  
Brandon Kinsley..... O & M Foreman  
Ed Venard..... O & M  
Steve Baker ..... O & M  
Brian Flynn..... O & M

Ph: 605-669-2931 or 1-800-851-2349


E-Mail Address:

wrlj\_ruralwater@goldenwest.net

## PHILIP FIELD OFFICE

PO Box 144  
Philip, SD 57567

Mike Vetter ..... O & M Foreman  
Eddie Dartt ..... O & M  
John Kramer ..... O & M  
Nick Konst ..... O & M

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



# OFFICIAL NOTICE OF 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

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## WRLJ 2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

The Annual Meeting of West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water was held at the Philip Shop Building in Philip, South Dakota on Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by President Dave Fuoss at 4:30 p.m. (MT) and a quorum was declared present.

Manager Fitzgerald read the annual meeting notice as published in the October 2024 newsletter and the local legal newspapers, and the official proof of mailing statement that indicated 1,876 newsletters were mailed from the U.S. Post Office at Madison, SD on September 3, 2024.

Manager Fitzgerald followed with introductions of WR/LJ Directors, staff and attorney.

The minutes of the October 18, 2023, Annual Meeting were published in the October 2024 issue of Quality on Tap newsletter that is mailed to all members. President Fuoss asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the minutes as mailed. Motion Carried.

Manager Fitzgerald presented the manager's report. He provided a system overview of annual water sales and water sources. He updated

members on the completed projects which include a 300,000 gallon reservoir near Vivian and a 336,000 gallon reservoir near Creighton. We also completed 4.5 miles of pipeline to improve service in Haakon County and 5.5 miles in Mellette County. He also thanked the Oglala Sioux Rural Water Supply System and BOR for securing funding for an additional 5.8 million gallons of storage on the Mni Wiconi south core system.

Jessica Hegge, Attorney for West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water reported there are no pending lawsuits against it and is legally sound. A motion was duly made and seconded to approve Manager Fitzgerald and Attorney Hegge's reports. Motion Carried.

Attorney Hegge conducted the election of Directors and declared that, having no opposition, incumbent Directors Quint Garnos – Zone 1A, Richard L. Doud – Zone 2, Veryl Prokop – Zone 3 and Dean Nelson – Zone 5A were re-elected to the Board of Directors. A motion was duly made and seconded to cast a unanimous ballot. Motion Carried

President Fuoss called for old business. There was none.

President Fuoss called for new business. There was none.

There being no further business to address, President Fuoss adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m. (MT).

## WRLJ NOTICE OF DIRECTOR VACANCIES

**The West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water Systems, Inc. in accordance with By-laws, Article VIII, Section I, hereby gives notice to its membership that the following seats upon the Board of Directors will be up for election at its Annual Meeting on October 15, 2025:**

**Zone 3A** – Rural Jones County; current Director David Fuoss

**Zone 4** – Rural Pennington County east of the Cheyenne River; current Director Jiggs O'Connell

**Zone 5** – Municipal at Large – Municipalities of Haakon and Jackson Co; Stanley County north of the Bad River; Pennington County east of the Cheyenne River; current Director Marion Matt

### ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION:

1. Must be a member of the corporation
2. Must have contracted for a service tap in area to represent
3. Must file a petition no later than 4:00 P.M. (CT) October 6, 2025, at the rural water system office in Murdo, S.D.
4. Petition must be signed by no less than 15 members
5. No proxy voting allowed
6. Nominations will not be allowed from the floor at the annual meeting unless no petitions have been filed for a directorship

### NOMINATING PETITIONS CAN BE ACQUIRED BY CONTACTING:

West River/Lyman-Jones RWS, Inc.  
PO Box 407 • 307 Main St. • Murdo, SD 57559  
Phone: 605-669-2931



Dave Fuoss



Jiggs O'Connell



Marion Matt



# TAPPING NATURE'S PRESSURE: Artesian Wells in South Dakota

Long before electric pumps and modern plumbing made water easily accessible, rural residents across South Dakota found a natural ally underground: artesian wells.

An artesian well is a remarkable feature of geology, where water, under natural pressure, rises above the level of its underground source. In some cases, that pressure is strong enough to send water flowing directly to the surface, creating what's known as a flowing artesian well. These wells are nature's version of pressurized plumbing, no electricity needed.

South Dakota is fortunate to sit atop several major artesian aquifers, including the Madison and Dakota formations. These aquifers typically collect water in the higher elevations of the Black Hills, where it seeps into permeable rock layers like sandstone. Trapped beneath layers of impermeable rock such as shale, the water becomes pressurized by gravity and the weight of the water above. When a well taps into this aquifer at a lower elevation, sometimes thousands of feet below ground, that pressure can push water all the way to the surface.

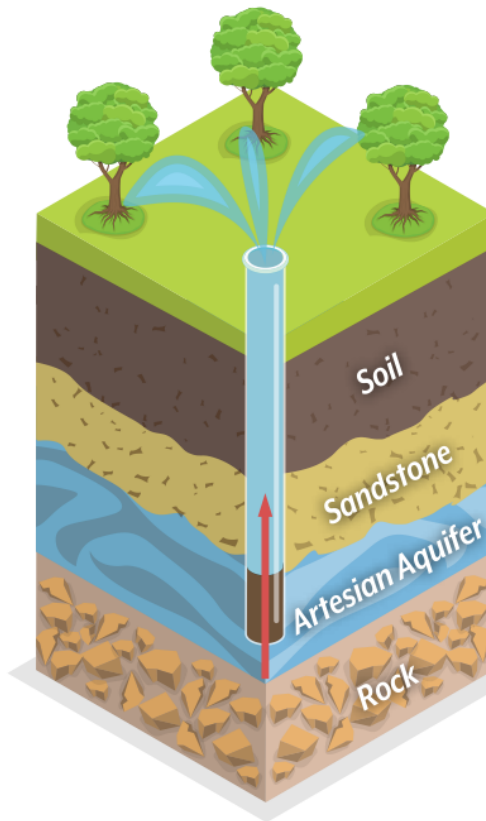
One of the most famous examples is the flowing well that has supplied water to Capitol Lake in Pierre for over a century.

Drilled to a depth of 1,300 feet, this artesian well produces warm water – around 90 degrees Fahrenheit – and even small amounts of natural gas. For years, the gas was ignited, creating a fiery spectacle that could be seen dancing above the gushing waters near the State Capitol. At one point, the gas was even used to help heat the Capitol building itself.

Artesian wells have long been part of South Dakota's story. Before widespread electrification, these wells offered a vital lifeline to communities that lacked access to pumped water. Their usefulness and uniqueness were so appreciated that one Sanborn County town proudly took its name from its most valued feature – Artesian.

Today, while many of these wells are supplemented or replaced by modern systems, artesian wells still serve as a testament to the natural forces that shape our water resources. They're a reminder that sometimes, with just

the right geology, nature does the hard work for us.





# Top 10 Ways to Be a Good Septic Owner

- ✓ Have your system inspected every three years by a qualified professional or according to your state/ local health department's recommendations
- ✓ Have your septic tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years
- ✓ Avoid pouring harsh products (e.g., oils, grease, chemicals, paint, medications) down the drain
- ✓ Discard non-degradable products in the trash (e.g., floss, disposable wipes, cat litter) instead of flushing them
- ✓ Keep cars and heavy vehicles parked away from the drainfield and tank
- ✓ Follow the system manufacturer's directions when using septic tank cleaners and additives
- ✓ Repair leaks and use water efficient fixtures to avoid overloading the system
- ✓ Maintain plants and vegetation near the system to ensure roots do not block drains
- ✓ Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free
- ✓ Prevent system freezing during cold weather by inspecting and insulating vulnerable system parts (e.g., the inspection pipe and soil treatment area)



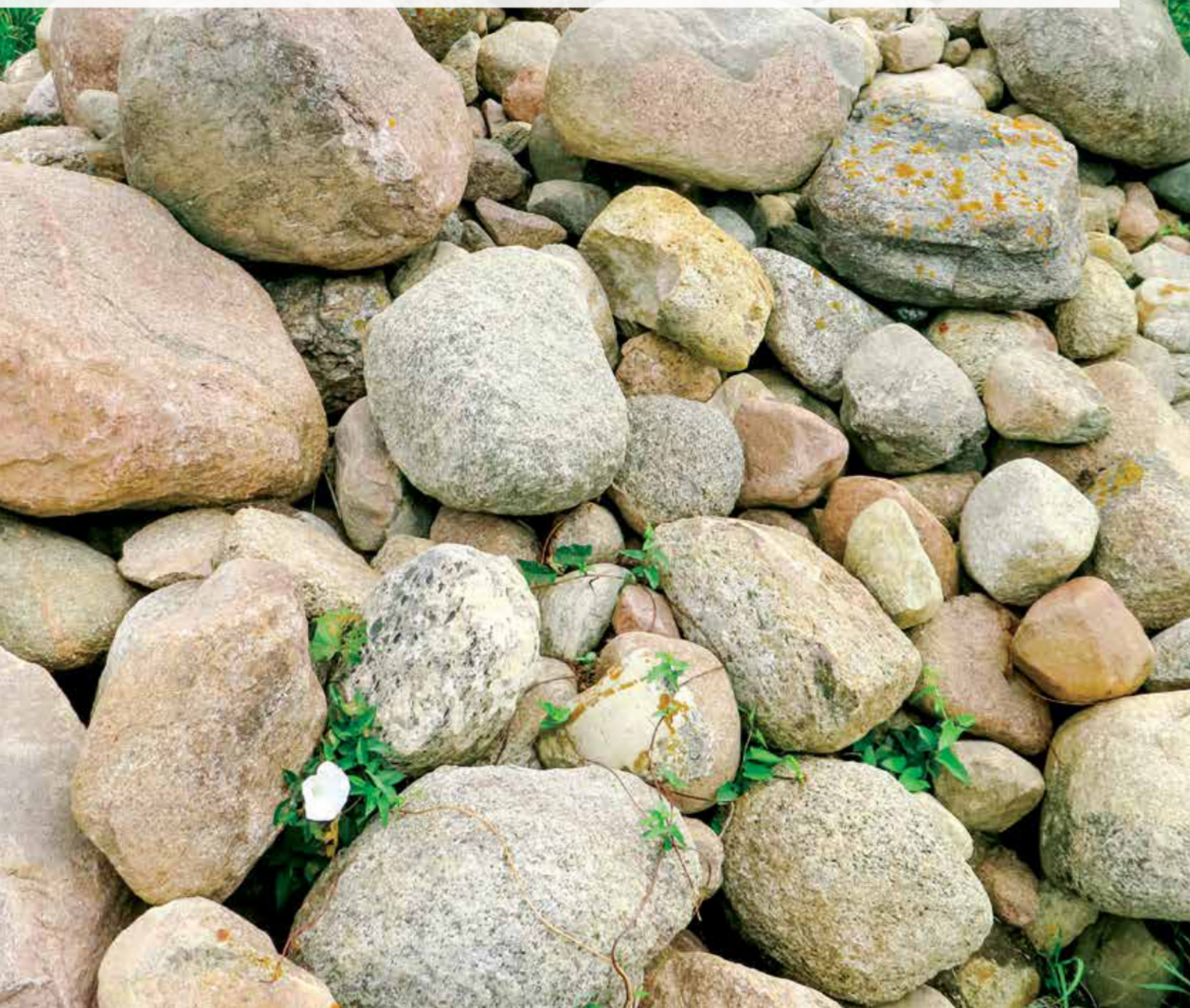
For more SepticSmart tips, visit [www.epa.gov/septicSMART](http://www.epa.gov/septicSMART)

 EPA EPA-832-F-16-010 | July 2016



# WHERE DO ALL THE ROCKS COME FROM?

*By Jay Gilbertson, East Dakota Water Development District*





**P**iles of rocks are a common sight in and around farm fields all across eastern South Dakota. These piles represent the result of years, and sometimes generations, of effort to rid farm fields of stones and boulders so that plows can move more smoothly through the earth. Did you ever wonder where all these rocks came from?

The last significant geologic event to impact eastern South Dakota was the Great Ice Age, which began about two million years ago and ended(?) about 10,000 years ago. During that time, massive sheets of ice, called glaciers, advanced out of Canada and into this part of the world. Detailed studies of the materials left behind by the ice, collectively referred to as glacial drift, suggests that there may have been over a dozen distinct ice advances during this time.



Glaciers are extremely effective earth movers, and each ice advance dramatically rearranged the landscape it encountered. In the eastern Dakotas, the pre-glacial landscape was developed on comparatively soft rocks, like shale, marl (a type of limestone) and poorly-consolidated sandstones. The ice movement ground most of these rocks to fine particles, which are now the basis for the clay-rich soils of the region.

And yet there are numerous large rocks and boulders found today scattered across the countryside. The rocks that 'survive' transport by a glacier tend to be hard, crystalline varieties, like granite or quartzite. With a few notable exceptions, there are really no 'native' sources of actual hard rocks in eastern South Dakota. As such, pretty much all of the rocks and boulders found across the landscape were brought here from other places, like Canada (mostly) and northern Minnesota, by the various ice advances, and then left behind when the ice melted. The transported rocks may have traveled a few tens of miles, or in some instances, well over 1,000 miles before coming to a final resting spot. Geologists refer to rocks that have been transported in such a way as glacial erratics.

So, if someone finds a big rock out in the field, where did it come from? The quick and simple answer is, "up north." Determining exactly where a particular glacial erratic originated from can be difficult. The mineral composition and physical characteristics of rocks are highly variable, and as such a 'granite' from one region can look markedly different from a 'granite' from another. The ability to locate a point of origin usually requires that your rock 1) has

relatively unique and readily identifiable characteristics and 2) geologists have previously identified a unique location where this particular rock type is found in place.

For example, the Sioux Quartzite, which is exposed at various places in southwestern Minnesota and southeastern South Dakota (including at the Falls of the Big Sioux River in Sioux Falls), is one such rock. Boulders of this distinctive pink rock are common in glacial deposits south of Interstate 90 in South Dakota, having been picked up by glaciers advancing

across the region from the north. with some found in remnant glacial deposits as far away as northeast Kansas.

Another, more traveled example are rocks known as omars. Omars are derived from the Omarolluk Formation, part of a group of rocks

limited to the Belcher Islands, which are located in the southeastern part of Hudson Bay. The rock is typically dark- to medium-gray in color, with a distinctive oval-shaped inclusion of lighter gray material. The rock is a variety of sandstone (graywacke), and the lighter spots are calcareous concretions. If exposed to weathering, the light spots will wear away, leaving a rounded cavity in the stone. Omars are found all across the northern United States, from Michigan to Montana. Each example started out at the same place, and was subsequently moved, often in multiple steps, to its final resting place.

So, the next time you see a rock laying out in a local field, or in a rock wall built from such stones, imagine the long and arduous journey it had to make to get here.





# SMART METERS:

## Saving Money, Conserving Water, and Protecting Your Community

In recent years, rural water systems across South Dakota have been making major investments in technology. But this technology isn't hidden away in a treatment plant or tucked inside an office – it's right where you might least expect it: in the water meter at your home.

Today's smart water meters are packed with advanced features that provide enormous benefits to both customers and utilities. By pairing these meters with software that interprets the data, water systems can save time, reduce costs, conserve water, and even prevent costly leaks before they spiral out of control.

Smart meters come in a wide range of models, from simple designs that measure basic usage to advanced meters that can detect leaks or abnormal patterns in real time. Many

rural water systems in South Dakota use cellular networks to transmit meter data – working much like a safe and secure text message that can reach even the most remote locations. In more populated areas, utilities may rely on strategically placed radio antennas to gather and deliver the information. Smart meters meet strict safety standards and use secure, low-level radio signals – far lower than most common household electronics. They're not only safe, but they also deliver better service, transparency, and reliability for customers.

Regardless of the method, the data is invaluable. A smart meter can track gallons used, water temperature, flow volume, and even the time and duration of water use. While that may sound like a lot of detail for something as simple as filling a glass of water, it allows utilities to bill accurately



without sending staff house to house. That efficiency saves countless hours and reduces costs – savings that ultimately benefit customers.

Perhaps one of the most exciting features of smart meters is leak detection. When unusual usage patterns are detected, utilities can notify a customer quickly – sometimes even before the customer realizes there's an issue. With a little investigative work, operators can often pinpoint the source of the leak, whether it's a dripping faucet, a running toilet, or a broken irrigation line.

Many systems also offer customer portals, where households can log in and monitor their own water use. This empowers customers to identify leaks early, track conservation efforts, and avoid the shock of an unexpectedly high bill.

Utilities also benefit from smarter planning. With access to real-time usage data, rural systems can better predict demand, prioritize upgrades, and make smarter investments for the future.

The newest generation of smart meters takes things a step

further with acoustic leak detection technology. Don't worry – these meters aren't "listening" to conversations. Instead, they pick up on the distinct frequencies that leaks produce as water escapes into the ground. With the right software, utilities can locate leaks down to within a few feet.

This breakthrough is a game changer. While it's relatively easy to spot leaks after water passes through a customer's meter, leaks on the utility's side of the system are much harder to find. Acoustic-enabled smart meters give utilities the ability to stop water loss at its source, saving money, reducing wasted water, and protecting vital infrastructure.

Water is one of our most valuable resources, and rural water systems are committed to managing it wisely. By reducing water loss and improving efficiency, smart meters not only keep customer bills affordable but also ensure that rural water systems remain strong and sustainable for years to come.

Smart water meters save money, conserve water, and improve service, making them a win-win for customers, communities, and the environment.



*Through the customer portal, smart meter users can view real-time water usage, track daily and monthly trends, set up leak alerts, and manage their accounts – all from their smartphone, tablet, or computer.*

# SYSTEM SPOTLIGHT

## BIG SIOUX COMMUNITY WATER

For more than half a century, Big Sioux Community Water has been providing safe, reliable drinking water to Moody and Lake Counties, and portions of Brookings, Minnehaha, and Pipestone, MN. From its beginnings in the early 1970s to today's modern, expanding system, Big Sioux has been built on community vision, steady growth, and a commitment to delivering the best water possible.

The story began in 1972, when a steering committee met at Sioux Valley Energy in Colman to explore the idea of a rural

relied on. Through the 1980s, the system grew steadily with new towers, wells, the first treatment plant at Brant Lake, and additional pipelines. By 1979, the system surpassed 1,000 members. The addition of SCADA monitoring in 1989 improved reliability, and by 1990, membership had reached 1,350. The construction of a lime softening treatment plant in 1994 raised water quality even higher and helped push membership past 2,000 by 2010.

Growth also came through partnerships. In 2000, Big Sioux began supplying bulk water to Flandreau as well as more than 200 million gallons annually to Dakota Ethanol. Demand around Lake Madison and Lake Brant led to the construction of a smaller membrane treatment plant, which began operating in 2010. In 2017, a new pipeline connection with Minnehaha Community Water provided additional capacity and extended service to Madison and Chester. The results have been striking: in 1980, annual sales were about 150 million gallons; by 2021, they had grown to over one billion gallons.

Today, Big Sioux is part of the Shared Resources project, a major collaboration with Minnehaha Community Water Corporation. Together, the two systems are building

a new eight million gallon-per-day water treatment plant near Trent, along with new wells, reservoirs, a booster station, and 15 miles of treated water pipeline. Backed by a \$110 million funding package provided through the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) and federal ARPA funds, this project is designed to provide added capacity and reliability while keeping costs efficient through shared resources. It is one of the most significant rural water collaborations in South Dakota.

As the new year approaches, the Big Sioux Board of Directors and staff are looking ahead to growth and expansion in 2026 and beyond. Future upgrades and maintenance are top priorities, along with planning for added capacity to ensure uninterrupted, reliable service for all customers.

At the 47th Annual Meeting in 2019, longtime Director Andy



*Big Sioux Community Water tower next to the Dakota Ethanol plant in Wentworth, SD*

water system. Two of those early leaders, Dan Carlson (now retired after 50 years) and Andy Groos (retired after 52 years), went on to serve decades on the Board of Directors. With support from DeWild Grant Reckert and Associates (DGR), a preliminary engineering report was developed and submitted to the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) for funding. With around 700 original sign-ups, the system delivered its first water in 1975. A well field was established east of Egan in the Big Sioux River valley, and three production wells were drilled. Remarkably, one of those original wells is still producing water today.

In the early years, treatment was simple – primarily disinfection and fluoridation – but it was still a major improvement over the private wells many families had



# BIG SIOUX COMMUNITY WATER

Groos said, "Rural water is probably the most precious commodity we have on the farm, especially given the quality we enjoy." Retired Director Dan Carlson added, "Having quality rural water at my home gives me many of the advantages of city living while getting to enjoy the benefits of country living."

Now under the leadership of Manager Jodi Johanson, Big Sioux Community Water continues to carry forward that vision – protecting water resources, investing in infrastructure, and ensuring the best quality water for the communities it serves.



*Big Sioux Community Water Headquarters in Egan, SD*



*Progress photo of the Shared Resources plant near Trent, SD*

## DIRECTORS:

**Chairman** – Dan Dannenbring

**Vice Chairman** – Vince Nelson

**Secretary/Treasurer** – Gaylen Backus

**Director** – Tom Hagedorn

**Director** – Reggie Gassman

**Director** – Kent Whipkey

**Director** – John Mousel

**Director** – Rick Olivier

**Director** – John McCorkle

## STAFF:

**General Manager** – Jodi Johanson

**Chief of Distribution** – Chad Kneebone

**Chief Plant Operator** – Aric Olson

**Small Systems Operator** – Jeff Carruthers

**Distribution Operator** – Lucas Dailey

**Distribution Operator** – Taylor Bult

**Bookkeeper** – Kim Hansen

**Office Manager** – Lenhi Olson

## STATISTICS:

**Service Connections:** 2,395

**Miles of Pipeline:** 900

**Water Source:** Wells – Big Sioux Aquifer,  
Skunk Creek Aquifer

**Counties Served:** Moody, Lake and  
portions of Brookings and Minnehaha;  
Pipestone, MN

**Towns Served Individual:** Rutland

**Towns Served Bulk:** Flandreau, Egan,  
Trent, Colman, Wentworth, Chester

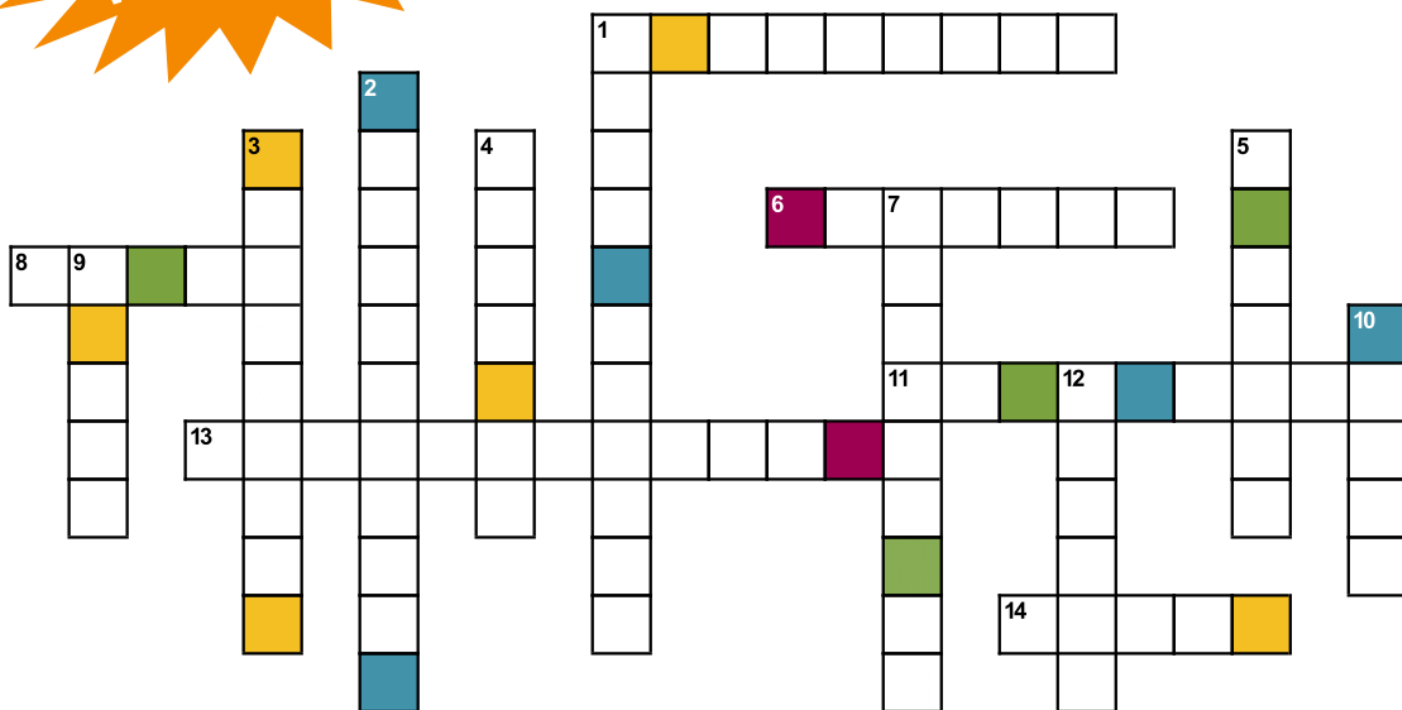
**Contracted Management Water Systems:**  
Egan, Wentworth, Chester

# RURAL WATER CROSSWORD & WORD SCRAMBLE CONTEST

## PIES

Enter to  
Win \$100

### SCRAMBLE ANSWER



### Across

1. Sweet purple fruit-filled pie
6. Traditional Thanksgiving dessert
8. Classic American pie made with spiced fruit
11. Rich dessert pie for cocoa lovers
13. Tart citrus filling with a fluffy topping
14. Pie filled with custard and topped with whipped topping

### Down

1. Custard pie with slices of yellow fruit
2. Creamy orange pie, often mistaken for pumpkin
3. Savory pie topped with mashed potatoes
4. Tart green citrus dessert from Florida
5. Tangy stalk used in spring pies
7. Traditional pie with spiced fruits and sometimes meat

9. Southern favorite made with nuts and corn syrup
10. Summer fruit pie popular in the South
12. Tart red fruit often paired with a lattice crust



**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](http://www.sdarws.com/crossword.html) with the correct phrase by October 15, 2025 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 Idell Moritz from Sioux Rural Water who had the correct phrase of "Savor sunshine and smiles" for July 2025.





**#RURALWATERSTRONG**  
[www.ruralwaterstrong.org](http://www.ruralwaterstrong.org)

# TELL CONGRESS: RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**S**mall and rural communities rely on access to affordable loans and grant opportunities through USDA Rural Development to make repairs and upgrades and to build new critical infrastructure for their communities.

While affordable financing is vital for these communities, it is not the complete solution. After these projects are completed, the need for training for water and wastewater operators does not go away. Technical assistance ensures the government's and public's investment is secured. For small and rural communities to remain sustainable, they need ongoing training and technical assistance.

Technical assistance for small and rural communities includes providing training, energy audits, certification, financial management, environmental compliance, governance, and on-site technical assistance necessary to ensure that water and wastewater facilities operate at the highest possible level. Through the grants provided through USDA WEP, these services are provided at no cost through technical assistance providers like NRWA and its State Affiliates. The loss of funding for this essential technical assistance will jeopardize the sustainability of rural water systems and their communities. System managers will be forced to choose between not addressing ongoing operational and management issues or contracting for these services at steep costs.

South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems, in partnership with USDA RD WEP provides the following technical assistance to rural communities in our state:

- **Circuit Rider Program**
- **Disaster Recovery Circuit Rider Program**
- **Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training Program**
- **NRWA Apprenticeship Program**
- **Decentralized Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training Program.**

Rural Development will continue to play a vital role in modernizing, preserving, and protecting rural America's infrastructure and public health. You can help secure its future today by signing the pledge and writing to your Congressional representatives today.

Providing adequate support and resources necessary to protect and enhance the environment, public health, sustainability of utilities, and economic vitality of rural America with clean, affordable, and safe water service is a primary responsibility for our federal elected officials.

## CALL TO ACTION

Join us in supporting the USDA Rural Development Water and Environmental Programs essential to strengthening rural water and wastewater systems. These programs are critical for ensuring:

- **Public Health** – Clean and safe water for communities across America.
- **Economic Vitality** – Supporting jobs and sustainable growth in rural areas.
- **Technical Assistance** – Empowering operators with the tools and training they need.
- **Affordability** – Keeping water and wastewater services accessible for all.

By signing the Rural Water Strong pledge, you demonstrate your commitment to the future of rural communities. Together, we can protect the health, prosperity, and resilience of small towns and rural areas across the country.

**Sign the pledge today and make your voice heard!**

Scan the QR code to fill out the pledge form or visit [ruralwaterstrong.org/pledge](http://ruralwaterstrong.org/pledge)



# 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:**

**October 13, 2025 – Native American Day**

**November 27, 2025 – Thanksgiving Day**

**November 28, 2025 – Day after  
Thanksgiving**

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](http://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](http://www.wrlj.com)



## 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](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_



# DANR RECOGNIZES WEST RIVER/LYMAN-JONES FOR DRINKING WATER EXCELLENCE



**T**he South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) announced the West River/Lyman Jones public water system and the system's operation specialists have been awarded a Secretary's Award for Drinking Water Excellence.

"Repeated success is a true measure of excellence," said DANR Secretary Hunter Roberts. "With more than 21 years of consecutive compliance, the West River/Lyman Jones has demonstrated its commitment to providing its customers with safe and reliable drinking water."

To qualify for the Secretary's Award for Drinking Water Excellence, public water systems and their system operations

specialists had to meet all of the compliance monitoring and reporting requirements, drinking water standards, and certification requirements for ten consecutive years or more.

The system's operations specialists are Jake Fitzgerald, Michael Vetter, Ed Venard, Brandon Kinsley, Eddie Dartt, John Kramer, Steven Baker, Nicholas Konst and Brian Flynn.

To qualify for the Drinking Water Excellence Award, public water systems and their system operations specialists had to meet all of the compliance monitoring and reporting requirements, drinking water standards, and certification requirements for 2024.

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

**M**etering 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

*Dear WR/LJ Rural Water:  
Thank you so much for  
selecting me as a 2025  
scholarship recipient! I plan  
to attend Sheridan College  
this fall!*

*Sincerely, Lucy Moon*

*Thank you for selecting me as  
a recipient of your  
scholarship. It truly means  
a lot to me. The support  
and encouragement you  
have given me is greatly  
appreciated.*

*Gunnar Whitney*



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# WATER MATTERS

## LONE ROCK



About 8 miles, as the crow flies, southeast of Flandreau, and just a mile from the Minnesota border, sits Lone Rock, the largest glacial erratic yet identified in South Dakota. With a diameter of over 25 feet, and standing roughly 20 feet above the prairie surface, this rock has been a local landmark for ages. As testimony to its uniqueness, a local church, cemetery and the township in which it resides all bear its name.

Lone Rock is a block of pink granite, carried to the area by glaciers many tens of thousands of years ago. Although its exact point of origin is unknown, the nearest rocks of similar composition are found in the valley of the Minnesota River, some 90 miles to the northeast. Here, ancient crystalline rocks, ranging in age from 1.5 to 3.5 billion years, are exposed, and could have been the source

of Lone Rock. Another large glacial erratic, the Three Maidens at Pipestone National Monument, has a similar composition and likely a comparable origin story.

The rock sits in a pasture near the corner of 487th Avenue and 235th Street. This is private property, so visitors are encouraged to admire the feature from afar. But don't worry, it's big enough to be seen from the road. The Lone Rock Lutheran Church and the Lone Rock Cemetery are located less than a mile west of the intersection.

### BACK PAGE CONTENT PROVIDED BY:



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