

UTILITY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

If you have driven through the older part of town recently you have likely “encountered” evidence of the City’s efforts to improve the water and wastewater services. The “encounters” usually take the form of a closed street or dodging a backhoe or other equipment.

After several years of relative inactivity, the City is currently involved in a major effort to make improvements that will provide quality water and wastewater collection services for many years into the future. These projects include replacement and expansion of water lines. Completed projects include North Fourth Street (Bois d’ Arc to Front), Dalton Drive, Wilson Street, East Jefferson, Allenwood Street, and North Second Street (Princeton Drive to Jefferson). Currently, a major water line is being constructed along South Second Street (FM 982) from Princeton Drive south to CR 400. The Princeton ISD and the City jointly funded a major extension of the City’s water and sewer line system to serve Harper Elementary School. This project has the effect of making utility services available to the southwest quadrant of the community, an area that will be a development activity center as the local economy regenerates.

Significant sanitary sewer line work has been completed along Ticky Creek, North Fourth, North Second, and Main Street, as well as the new line to Harper Elementary. These improvements significantly increase the collection system capacity to provide for growth over the next 2-3 decades.

The City’s undersized pump station and ground storage tank on Dogwood Avenue has been a source of frustration and difficulty for a long time. A new pump station and a new 2,000,000 gallon ground storage tank have been recently completed. These facilities will handle the community’s needs for the next two decades or so.

The final piece of the water system that requires action is the new elevated storage tank. The City will be constructing a new elevated storage tank on Monte Carlo Boulevard, near the intersection of Monte Carlo and North Fourth. A large transmission line will be necessary to serve this new facility and will be constructed along North Fourth Street. That work will probably occur in the Spring-Summer of 2010. Once that construction begins, it would be a

good idea to avoid North Fourth (between McKinney and Monte Carlo) for a while. The completion of the elevated storage tank project will be the last major water and sewer project for probably several years.

Our water customers in the western part of town should be particularly pleased to see the new elevated storage tank. The west side of Princeton is served by the Monte Carlo pump station (on Princeton Drive near the entry to Forest Grove). That pump station and ground storage is undersized and the slightest glitch in the NTMWD system (a leak in the transmission line between here and Wylie, for example) causes low water pressure and even water outages on the Monte Carlo system. The new elevated storage tank will serve the entire community, including the west side, which will significantly improve service quality and reliability

The City has committed over \$10 million to these water and sewer system improvements. That's the primary reason that water and wastewater rates were recently increased. The secondary reason for the rate increases is the increase in cost of the water the City purchases from North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD). According to NTMWD there is more to come. The district estimates that the wholesale water rate will more than double between 2008 and 2018 as the district develops new and more distant water supplies to supplement Lake Lavon.

Similarly, wastewater treatment rates (also supplied by NTMWD) have also recently increased and are expected to continue rising over the next several years. If these forecasts prove true, Princeton water customers will continue to see annual increases in utility rates. If misery loves company, it may be some consolation that these same increases will be felt by residents and businesses in McKinney, Allen, Plano, Frisco and all of the 1.5 million NTMWD customers.

If you have comments or questions regarding the information in this note, please contact me at the email address below.

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