



## Department

PUBLIC HEALTH | DRINKING WATER

### DHH Awards \$1.5 Million to the Town of Gramercy for Water System Improvements

Tuesday, August 13, 2013 | Contact: Media & Communications: Phone: 225.342.1532, E-mail: [dhhinfo@la.gov](mailto:dhhinfo@la.gov)

**BATON ROUGE, La.**—This month, the Department of Health and Hospitals' Office of Public Health awarded \$1.5 million to the Town of Gramercy through the State's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program (DWRLF). The loan will help the system improve and update the community's drinking water system.

Assistant Secretary for Public Health, J.T. Lane said it's imperative that all Louisiana Residents have access to safe drinking water. "This program gives local communities a source of dependable and affordable financing to bring their water treatment facilities up to the latest and most modern technology that keeps their residents safe and healthy."

"We're excited about the opportunity to bring our water system into the 21st century with upgrades that promise to improve water service, while saving taxpayers thousands of dollars," said Mayor Terry Borne.

The Town of Gramercy will use the money for many improvements to the town's aging water system including a new transfer/backwash pumping station, new sludge pumps, new filter media and drains, an air backwash system, a new control system, a canopy for the filters and pipe gallery, replacement of old piping and valves, a new operations building at the water treatment plant and painting of the water system's existing structures. The planned improvements will provide adequate space for operators to monitor and control the plant, perform plant water quality testing, and record and maintain plant records, which will extend the life of the existing treatment plant for an additional 20 years.



Congress established State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Programs in 1996 as part of the amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The program is jointly funded by an annual grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (80 percent) and the individual participating states (20 percent). In Louisiana, it is administered by DHH's Office of Public Health. The Drinking Water Capitalization Grant allowed for additional subsidy in the form of principal forgiveness of up to 30 percent of the loan principal, with a cap of \$1,125,000 of principal forgiveness per project. Through this special provision, the DWRLF is providing principal forgiveness in the amount of \$450,000.

Loans made through this program are low interest and have a maximum 20-year repayment period. Both public and privately-owned community and nonprofit, non-community water systems are eligible to apply for loans.

Once a loan is approved, water systems can use the funds to make their improvements. As the systems pay back the loans, the principal and interest are used to make more money available for other communities that have drinking water needs. All loan projects are approved based upon a priority ranking system. Among other factors, projects that address the most serious risks to human health and those that ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act are given the highest priority.

"These improvements assist the systems in complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act and protecting public health," said Jennifer Wilson, program manager for the State's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund.

For more information about the program, contact Wilson at DHH's Office of Public Health, 225-342-7499.

In the photo above, pictured from left to right: Dan MacDonald, Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program Engineer; Jake Causey, OPH Chief Engineer; Rubenstein Mitchell-Clark, Gramercy Council Member; Terry Borne, Mayor of Gramercy; Betty Coleman, Gramercy Council Member; and Jennifer Wilson, Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program Manager.

[ARCHIVES »](#)

[WWW.DHH.LOUISIANA.GOV](http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov)