

DHH Awards \$3.6 Million to the Town of Homer for Water System Improvements

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Baton Rouge, La. - The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) recently awarded a \$3.6 million loan to the Town of Homer through the state's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF). The low-interest subsidized loan will help improve the community's drinking water system.

"Clean drinking water is essential to the vitality of life and public health," said DHH State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry. "We are glad the Town of Homer is able to upgrade their water system and provide safe, quality drinking water to residents through the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund."

DHH and Town officials closed the loan on Thursday, May 21, 2015. DWRLF funding will be used to construct a new water well, ground storage tank and other improvements at the Mayfield Water Treatment Plant site. These renovations are necessary to replace an existing water well that is no longer in service and a ground storage tank that is in poor condition and to bring the system into compliance with the Louisiana Sanitary Code.

"The proposed project is sorely needed as the Town's water system is in such poor physical condition. Our water wells currently have inadequate capacity and because our elevated tank has not been repainted in over 20 years, much of our water distribution system is over 60 years old and is past its recognized service life," said Homer Mayor Roy Lewis. "Improvements to the water system will improve water quality and pressure, reduce line breaks and service disruptions, and ultimately ensure that our residents receive the highest-quality utility services at the lowest cost."

Congress established the State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Programs in 1996 through an amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act. In Louisiana, it is administered by DHH's Office of Public Health. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Drinking Water Capitalization Grant allowed for an additional subsidy in the form of principal forgiveness of up to 30 percent of the loan principal. 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. 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.

"The fund's intent is to provide communities a source of affordable and dependable financing for water systems facilities," said program manager for the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund, Jennifer Wilson. "The water system improvements protect public health and comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act."

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

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit www.dhh.louisiana.gov. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's [Twitter](#) account and [Facebook](#).