

DHH Awards \$2 Million to the City of Natchitoches for Water System Improvements

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 | **Contact:** Media & Communications: Phone: 225.342.1532, E-mail: dhinfo@la.gov

Baton Rouge, La. - The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) recently awarded a \$2 million loan to the City of Natchitoches through the State's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF). The low-interest subsidized loan will help improve the community's drinking water system.

"The Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund provides an affordable financial mechanism impactful to City of Natchitoches' residents," said DHH State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry. "A benefit of adequate sanitation is improved access to safe drinking water."

City of Natchitoches and DHH officials closed on the loan Thursday May 7, 2015. DWRLF funding involves the construction of a decant clarifier, pump station with wet well, gravity and pressure mains, chemical feed equipment, electrical improvements and other related items (including permitting). All improvements are proposed at the existing water treatment facility and are necessary to properly handle, treat and dispose of the filter backwash effluent from the water treatment facility into Chaplin's Lake.

"I want to thank DHH for this loan. The loan will not only help with infrastructure but will more importantly help our local university, Northwestern State University (NSU)," says Natchitoches Mayor Lee Posey. "The water plant is located next to NSU and the water runs into Chaplin Lake. New clarifier systems will stop sludge build-up and help sustain the beauty of NSU."

As part of the amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, Congress established State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund programs in 1996. In Louisiana, it is administered by DHH's Office of Public Health. Both public and privately owned community and nonprofit, non-community water systems are eligible to apply for loans.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 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 will provide additional subsidization in the form of principal forgiveness in the amount of \$600,000.

"The fund provides the opportunity to upgrade and improve local water systems," said Jennifer Wilson, Program Manager for DHH's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund. "These improvements assist the systems in complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act, which provides comprehensive drinking water protection."

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](#).

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In the photo above, pictured from left to right: David Wolf, Adams and Reese, LLP, DHH Counsel; Henry Shuler P.E., Shuler Consulting; Jennifer Wilson, DHH DWRLF Program Manager; Mayor Lee Posey, City of Natchitoches; Bryan Wimberly, Director of Utility Systems, City of Natchitoches; Jake Causey P.E., Chief Engineer, DHH; and Edd Lee, Director of Purchasing City, of Natchitoches.