

## Department

PUBLIC HEALTH | DRINKING WATER | DWRLF RESOURCES

### DHH Awards \$9.61 Million to Iberville Parish Council, Point Wilhite Water System, Inc., for Water System Improvements

Thursday, November 19, 2015 | **Contact:** Media & Communications: Phone: 225.342.1532, E-mail: [dhinfo@la.gov](mailto:dhinfo@la.gov)

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) awarded a combined \$9.61 million in loans to Point Wilhite Hill Water System Inc. and Iberville Parish through the State's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF). The low-interest subsidized loans will help improve the communities' drinking water systems.

"The Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund has provided an affordable way for the residents of these two communities to improve their local drinking water infrastructures," said DHH State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry. "Safe drinking water is fundamental to community health, and this program helps communities throughout Louisiana keep their water as safe as possible without placing an undue burden in the form of expensive financing."

DHH and Point Wilhite Water System Inc. officials closed a \$1.6 million loan in September 2015. The DWRLF funding will be used for the construction of several structures and water tanks and for associated piping, electrical work, site restoration, chlorination system upgrades and emergency power equipment. Implementing these improvements will bring the system into compliance, solving existing violations.

"Point Wilhite is the first system in the area to permanently address the issue of disinfection by-products," said Henry Schuler, P.E., consulting engineer for Point Wilhite Water System Inc. "The proposed improvements will provide the system's consumers with safe, compliant water for years to come."



*Pictured from left to right: David Wolf, Adams and Reese LLP; Jimmy Guidry, M.D, State Health Officer, DHH; Jennifer Wilson, DWRLF Program Manager, DHH; Amanda Laughlin, Chief Engineer, DHH; Challana Dean, Secretary, Point Wilhite; Dianne Thornton, Board Member, Point Wilhite; Henry Shuler, P.E., Consulting Engineer, Point Wilhite; Robert Mears, President, Point Wilhite; and Eileen Moore, Accountant, Point Wilhite.*

DHH and Iberville Parish Council officials closed an \$8 million loan benefitting the Iberville Parish Water Works District No. 3 in October. The funding will be used for the installation of a 12-inch water line that will allow the water system to adequately convey average daily demand from both of the system's sources of supply, a surface water treatment plant and a ground water treatment plant. The funds will also be used to raise two of the existing 450,000-gallon elevated storage tanks, providing uniform system distribution pressure.

Congress established the State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Programs in 1996 through an amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The program is jointly funded by an annual grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the individual participating states. Louisiana's program is administered by DHH. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Drinking Water Capitalization Grant allowed for an additional subsidy to water systems in the form of principal forgiveness. Loans given in FY 2015 can have up to 30 percent of their principal forgiven, with a cap of \$1,125,000 per project. Through this special provision, the DWRLF will forgive \$483,000 for the Point Wilhite project and \$1,125,000 for the Iberville Parish project, meaning those water systems will not have to pay those amounts back into the DWRLF.

Both public and privately owned community water systems as well as nonprofit, non-community water systems are eligible to apply for loans made through this program. 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.

"This fund helps ensure access to safe drinking water to Louisiana's communities with an affordable way to improve their water systems and comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act," said Jennifer Wilson, program manager for DHH's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund.

For more information about the program, contact Jennifer Wilson at (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 residents. To learn more about DHH, visit [www.dhh.louisiana.gov](http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov). For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's [Twitter](#) account and [Facebook](#).