

DHH Awards \$351,200 to Southeast Grant Water System Incorporated for Water System Improvements

Loan to help rehabilitate the system's aging elevated water tank

Thursday, August 15, 2013 | Contact: Ken Pastorick; (225) 342-1881 or (225) 335-0235 (cell)



This week, the Department of Health and Hospitals' Office of Public Health awarded \$351,200 to the Southeast Grant Water System through the State's Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program (DWRLF). The loan will help the system make repairs and improvements to 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."

"Our elevated water tower is in need of repair right now, it has some minor leakage, and it will get worse if we don't address the problem soon," said George Wagoner, Southeast Grant Water System President. "We're tickled about the State Revolving Loan Fund Program. We couldn't afford to do this project without it."

Water system leaders and state officials closed on the loan, Wednesday, August 14, 2013. DWRLF funding will be used to repair the system's aging and leaking elevated water tower. These repairs and renovations are expected to extend the water tower's life by 20 years. Southeast Grant Water System serves approximately 190 customers in Pollock, Louisiana.

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 \$105,360.

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; Melisa Herrington, Dement, Herrington and McManus Service Group; Gregory Jones, Attorney; Virginia Wagoner, Southeast Grant Water System Secretary/Treasurer; George Wagoner, Southeast Grant Water System President; Jennifer Wilson, Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program Manager; Jake Causey, OPH Chief Engineer; David Wolf, Adams and Reese, LLP.

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