

Water and sewer upgrades

Written by Sean Green
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Recent and ongoing public works projects position Bossier City to maintain growth

It may not be the most glamorous or thrilling aspect of a growing city, but it's essential to ensuring Bossier City keeps expanding — water and sewer upgrades.

“I was reading recently it would take, nationwide, \$1.7 trillion to get water and sewer up to where it needed to be within the next 20 years and we're already there,” said City Councilman David Jones. “I'm extremely proud of the dilligence we've put forth in addressing water and sewer needs because that's the lifeblood of what we do.”

The city has invested millions into upgrading, replacing, and rehabilitating Bossier City water and sewer systems.

“The whole idea is to keep up for growth and in planning, you want to outpace your growth. I've been here three years and I've seen a lot of growth in that time, and to keep up with that is demanding and everyone I've worked with is all about that,” said Public Utilities Director Jeffery Anderson.

He said the city's proactive approach helps give the proper time for planning and makes execution easier.

“Once you get to that stage where you need to start planning, Bossier actually starts planning. I know in some places, things have to get where it has to be replaced before anything happens,” said Anderson.

Recent project tag prices include \$60 million for a new sewer plant at the Red River, \$73 million for rehabilitation of a water plant, and this past summer's water line replacement totaling \$5 million.

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“What we've done is easily in the \$200-\$250 million range with annual capital improvements and regular maintenance,” said Anderson. “Even if you get done planning and expanding, there's still infrastructure in the ground that will require maintenance and replacement, it's a never ending deal.”

Some of the recent water and sewer projects include:

- Upgrading of the city's third water treatment plant that wrapped up late spring/early summer this year, and the current rehabilitation of plants one and two that are expected to be completed this summer.

Currently as the rehab continues, the city's water supply is just above normal operating capacity and will be more than double normal capacity after all plants are brought back online.

“The peak times for capacity are during May through September when you're running at 85-100 percent to keep all the water supply and pressure we need,” said Anderson. “Some of that is driven by weather — the hotter, drier summers create a bigger demand on our water system.

- New version of the city's wastewater plant.

This facility expands capacity from from 8 million gallons to 12 million gallons. It is expected to be completed in the contract's specified three year time period.

“With all the development in south Bossier, we reached that threshold of 80-90 percent where you start designing for future needs,” said Anderson.

- Emergency replacement of massive water line along Shed Road from Airline to Swan Lake.

Approximately 11,000 feet of 20-inch water main running water from the treatment plant to the northeast part of town that also carries 60 to 70 percent of the plant's water overall, was

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replaced by a 36-inch main. The city accelerated the plan to replace the line, with the city's new plant needing the 36-inch diameter pipe in order to adequately distribute the proper amount of water at the proper pressure.

The two-month-long project cost \$10 million, including some funds set aside for contingencies. The money will come from the 2008 Utilities Bond Issue.

“That's type of thing other towns are facing,” said Anderson, “There's an aging infrastructure as far as water and sewer. And we've found some materials that were used in the past aren't the best materials and the design wasn't the best way to go about it.”