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Celebrating the gift of water: Harlowton welcomes new waterline

Deb Hill Reporter Oct 21, 2023



Waterline Project Administrator Monty Sealey (left) and Project Engineer Bob Church toast each other with plastic cups of water in Harlowton Wednesday.
Deb Hill Reporter

“To think we are finally delivering water to one of these communities is unbelievable.”

-Dave Piccioni, Water Authority Board Member

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“It’s been a long, rough road.”

That’s how former Hobson Mayor Dale Longfellow summed up the years of work required to bring good, clean water to communities in Central Montana.

Longfellow made his comments at a ceremony held in Harlowton Wednesday, celebrating the arrival of water to the first of the communities to be served by the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System.

The waterline, which has been under development since the digging of a 2007 test well, eventually will bring water to an estimated 6,000 people in the communities of Hobson, Moore, Judith Gap, Ryegate, Lavina, Broadview, Roundup and Melstone and Harlowton. Phase 2 of the project, from Harlowton to Roundup, is currently under construction.



grandkids, agriculture, everything. It means Bob’s mom’s toilet is no longer black, and Keith is saving \$11 each time he doesn’t have to buy a five-gallon container of bottled water.”

USDA Rural Development provided funding for part of the first phase of the water project.

Roundup Mayor Sandra Jones said people have been so upset over the poor quality of water there, they’ve brought glasses of it into city commission meetings.

“I’ve seen water that looked pretty bad brought to our meetings,” she said. “I’m looking forward to the day when we open the tap in Roundup and get good, clean water.”

“This is a significant occasion years in the making,” Daines said.

“There’s not a person in the room, if you’re from Montana, that doesn’t understand what a prime commodity clean water is,” Tester said.

Weaving together state, federal and local funding, Project Administrator Monty Sealey and Engineer Bob Church have worked with communities and individuals along the proposed waterline route for decades. They now have a schedule for extending the service from the wells tapping the Madison Aquifer near Garneill to each city or town as far east as Melstone.

On Wednesday, Sealey recognized a host of elected officials and citizens who have, over the years, contributed funding and support, adding the most important person is “the person that let us drill the wells on his land, Cody McDonald.”

“To think we are finally delivering water to one of these communities is unbelievable,” said Water Authority Board Member Dave Piccioni.

Piccioni owns the IGA store in Roundup, and said he has been a supporter of the project for years, even though it means he will lose revenue from the sale of bottled water at his store.

“We sell around 400 gallons of water a day, not counting the packs of individual bottles,” Piccioni said. “But this project will deliver good water for the next several generations and I’m proud to be a part of it.”

More information on the progress of the water line construction is available on the website centralmontanawater.com.

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