

Sponsored By: **McKenna Agency** WIN FREE Mortgage FOR A YEAR \$15,000 Price! Enter for a Chance to Win! November 6-December 12, 2023

TOP STORY

After 20 years, water about to flow to Central Montana communities

Deb Hill Reporter | Mar 29, 2023



1 of 2

“We have a contract agreement with BOR for that funding,” Sealey said. “The new funding, \$25 million, is not under contract yet, but it will be, and it’s for Phases 3 and 4.”

The lines built in Phases 3 and 4 will carry water to the communities of Melstone and Musselshell.

While the federal funding is a big chunk of what is necessary for the water system to move ahead, there is also a required match of 17.5% from the state and 17.5% from local communities.

“Right now with the work we’re doing, we have 11 loans and grants open. Tracking all those and doing the reporting can be kind of complicated,” Sealey said, adding it is his job to ensure all the funding is used and reported correctly.

Sealey said another consideration for each of the phases is whether to break them into several smaller projects to facilitate bidding.

“Phase 2 is the big one, running 67 miles or so,” Sealey said. “We broke it into three parts. By breaking it up, we got bids from more Montana contractors because most of them are too small to get bonding for a \$100 million project.”

to next meeting on April 12.

“We received five bids, and the apparent low bidder is the company that worked with us on a prior section of the project, C and C Excavation out of Havre. However the bid award is up to the board,” Sealey said.

Sealey said Phases 3 and 4 involve shorter pipeline distances and smaller pipes, so likely won’t cost as much as the first two phases have.

“There are huge differences in price based on the project distance, pipe sizes and everything else. In Phase 1, for example, we had a storage tank that was \$4.5 million just by itself,” he explained.

Sealey said because much of the work to identify a waterline route and acquire property is already finished for Phase 4, that part of the project may be completed prior to Phase 3.

As the water system continues to attract support, Sealey said some communities that had opted out are now reconsidering.

“Both Hobson and Ryegate have contacted us to say they might want to join on after all,” he explained. “I know it’s a ‘hard sell’ to tell an older person on a fixed income their water bill will go up \$30 or \$40 a month, but what’s the alternative? No water? Bottled water? There’s a cost to that, too.”

For towns that agree to hook on, upgrading infrastructure can come with a hefty price tag.

“Roundup has spent over \$15 million to replace all of their old water pipes,” Sealey said. “This isn’t for the faint of heart.”

Still, he is thrilled to see the project coming to life.

“I lined up the funds for drilling the first well in 2003,” Sealey said. “Then for about 15 years we tried to build support and get the funding figured out, and it seemed like not much was going on. But at the end of May or June, we’ll turn the water on in Harlowton. That’s huge.”

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR MONEY, 24/7. SEE HOW!

SUBMIT YOUR NEWS

We’re always interested in hearing about news in our community. Let us know what’s going on!

Go to form

McKenna Agency Real Estate & Insurance
Visit us! at 110, S Dawes St., Lewistown, MT
Call us (406) 538-8736
www.McKennaAgency.com
RENTALS • INSURANCE
RESIDENTIAL • INVESTMENT
COMMERCIAL • BUSINESS • FARM AND RANCH • LAND

Visit us! at 110, S Dawes St., Lewistown, MT
Call us (406) 538-8736
www.McKennaAgency.com
RENTALS • INSURANCE
RESIDENTIAL • INVESTMENT
COMMERCIAL • BUSINESS • FARM AND RANCH • LAND

Visit us! at 110, S Dawes St., Lewistown, MT
Call us (406) 538-8736
www.McKennaAgency.com
RENTALS • INSURANCE
RESIDENTIAL • INVESTMENT
COMMERCIAL • BUSINESS • FARM AND RANCH • LAND

Visit us! at 110, S Dawes St., Lewistown, MT
Call us (406) 538-8736
www.McKennaAgency.com
RENTALS • INSURANCE
RESIDENTIAL • INVESTMENT
COMMERCIAL • BUSINESS • FARM AND RANCH • LAND

Visit us! at 110, S Dawes St., Lewistown, MT
Call us (406) 538-8736
www.McKennaAgency.com
RENTALS • INSURANCE
RESIDENTIAL • INVESTMENT
COMMERCIAL • BUSINESS • FARM AND RANCH • LAND

Let the news come to you
Get our free email newsletters — latest headlines and e-edition notifications. Explore newsletters

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR MONEY, 24/7. Stockman Bank

Market keeping you up at night? Schwab is here 24/7 with answers, insights, and support. WE'RE HERE FOR YOU. Charles Schwab. Own your tomorrow.