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EL VALLE NEWS

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CONSTRUCTION COMMENCES ON PHASE 1F

Construction of Phase 1F of El Valle's multi-year construction plan is underway. Advantage Asphalt was the low bidder and secured the contract to build the additional two miles of sewer collection line. They began the construction project on April 6th. This Phase includes reaches of sewer line on the west side of State Road 68 at Cisneros Road. It also includes lines in the Talpa area. Advantage Asphalt has agreed to fully complete the construction within 120 days of commencement. This project will bring sewer to additional 80 residences. Once the sewer has been brought within 400 feet of a residence, the owner must arrange to have the home connected to the sewer. Residents have sixty (60) days to connect after being advised to do so by El Valle.

LOCAL RESIDENTS' WATER TESTED AT ANNUAL WATER FAIR

Thirty-six local families took advantage of El Valle's free water testing during the Earth Day Celebration that took place on Friday April 24, 2009 at Taos Charter School. All participants were informed, by mail, of the results of the testing. Although most well-water was determined to be within normal range, six residents were informed that their water contained excessive amounts of nitrates, which indicates that the well-water is being contaminated by untreated septage. The water was also tested for sulfates, iron and for hardness.

El Valle usually conducts annual water fair. There are two purposes for the water fairs: first, to inform individuals about the quality of their own well-water, and second, to further document the need for the construction of sanitary sewer systems for the entire El Valle area. The New Mexico Environment Department states that individual septic systems are the primary cause of groundwater contamination in the State of New Mexico.



Melene and Pat from El Valle assist customers at the water fair on April 21, 2009.

County Commission Backs El Valle

On April 21, 2009, the Board of County Commissioners for Taos County adopted Resolution 21 which put the County Commission on record as supporting funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for El Valle's Phase 2B. The County Commission stated that, "construction of needed wastewater improvements outside the boundaries of the municipalities within Taos County is and should be a priority for the County and the State." The Commission urged the Governor and the New Mexico Environment Department to support funding for El Valle.

"Sin agua no hay vida."

"Without water, there is no life."*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Gabriel Romero, Chairman
- F.R. Bob Romero, Vice-Chairman
- Meliton Struck, Secretary
- Mario Barela, Treasurer
- Andrew Chavez, Member at Large
- Alipio Mondragon – Non-voting Member

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- **Pat Sanchez, Office Manager**
- **Melene Montano, Administrative Assistant**
- **Ted Martinez, Project Manager**
- **Ivan Valerio, Assistant Project Manager**

UP-COMING BOARD MEETINGS

- **May 13, 2009**
- **June 10, 2009**
- **July 8, 2009**
- **August 12, 2009**

All meetings are held at the District Office located at 209E Camino de la Merced, Taos at 4:00 p.m. Meetings may be rescheduled by the Board. Call 751-1700 for up-to-date information.

Interested individuals are encouraged to attend.

The office will be closed on:
May 25, 2009 – Memorial Day
July 3, 2009 – Independence Day (observed).
September 7, 2009 – Labor Day.

WASTEWATER PHASE 2C ON THE DRAWING BOARD; DISTRICT ALSO GETS STARTED PLANNING ITS WATER SYSTEM.

Wastewater

This spring, staff at El Valle has been busy getting ready to proceed on its next phase in the event that El Valle is awarded money under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – better known as “stimulus money”. El Valle has applied for an award of grant and loan money to construct its next phase of sewer line. Phase 2B extends from Tom Holder Road, east along the Rio Grande Del Rancho Greenbelt, under State Road 68. For there it turns north to serve the Ranchos Plaza area. There has been a great deal of concern about ground water contamination in this part of El Valle’s District. The project is “shovel-ready.” If the District is awarded stimulus funds, it believes that it will be ready to go out to bid for a contractor within sixty days of award. In addition to the environmental improvement that will be the result of construction of this project, the project will put many local workers back to work for a period of many months. The Board of Directors has given the green light to Abeyta Engineering, Inc. to begin designing Phase 2C. Phase 2C will bring sewer service from the Ranchos Plaza area to the congested area just south of State Road 518. Construction is dependent upon funding. In the past, much of El Valle’s construction funding has been provided by grants authorized by the New Mexico Legislature. Should Phase 2B be funded under the federal stimulus plan, there is a possibility of a second phase of funding commencing in early 2010. If that occurs, El Valle wants to be in a good position to apply for and be awarded stimulus funding to build Phase 2C.

Water

El Valle has recently partnered with Llano Quemado Mutual Domestic Water Users’ Association to begin planning a domestic water distribution system in Llano Quemado on the west side of State Road 68. As a water and sanitation district, El Valle has long wished to begin providing water to those areas where there is no community water. This is a long-term project. Realization of this goal is dependent upon a number of factors. First, El Valle must acquire sufficient water rights to be transferred to the well-site. Additionally, funding for the design and construction must be obtained. The partnership with Llano Quemado Mutual Domestic is the first step in this long term process. It is also a beginning of greater cooperation between the various small political entities in the Taos Valley that annually compete with each other for the limited funding that is available. On a state-wide level, small governmental entities have been encouraged to collaborate and cooperate with each other to address the infrastructure and resource issues that many communities face.

Water Rights

Residents of El Valle’s District who are no longer using their water rights to irrigate their lands are encouraged to contact El Valle’s staff to investigate the possibility of selling their water rights to El Valle. The Board supports continued agricultural use of water rights, but seeks to purchase water rights that are no longer going to be used for agriculture.