

PUBLIC WORKS NEWS

By Pete Vorbeck

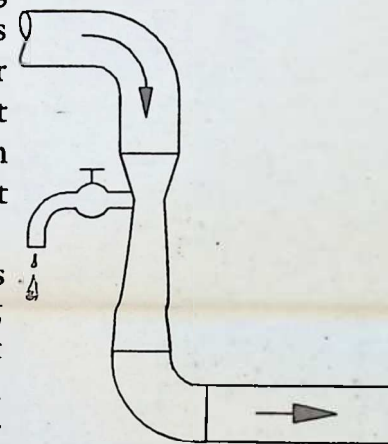
Construction, maintenance, and operation costs for water and waste treatment facilities have risen sharply in recent years. Estimated cost for the Butte Falls Water System Improvements is 1.7 million dollars. The project includes replacement of the Town's aging water lines, installation of water meters and fire hydrants, and the construction of a large reservoir tank that will replace two older smaller tanks.

Funding for the improvements comes from grant and loan money, half grant and half loan. Repayment of the loan will cost Butte Falls \$45,000 a year over the next 40 years. And, although grant monies-whether for water or sewer projects-need not be repaid, they come with a stiff condition: Water and sewer user rates must match current average Oregon user rates. The reason for the condition is straightforward: It does not make economic sense to fund high cost water or sewer improvements IF user rates do not pay for their operation and maintenance. The Butte Falls Council has already begun to consider the setting of future water and sewer rates for the Town.

A matter of more immediate concern -- shortly after Tom Hayes was appointed Town Public Works Director last June, on July 17, The Department of Environmental Quality conducted an inspection of the Town sewage treatment plant and disposal system. A subsequent inspection report listed SERIOUS operational deficiencies and violations. The report specifically noted that many of the violations were the result of A LACK OF PAST TREATMENT PLANT MAINTENANCE. Some of the violations date back to 1991. Operational violations included inadequate metering and testing equipment, mechanical and electrical equipment needing repair or replacement, as well as necessary equipment for proper functioning of the plant that was not in place. Also, there were administrative violations: Reports not filed or filed improperly, non-response to DEQ letters and notices, and absence of current operation and testing manuals. As a result of the inspection, the DEQ issued a Formal Notice of Noncompliance to Oregon Environmental Law to The Town of Butte Falls.

AND THE GOOD NEWS? Two presentations were made to the Town Council at its last meeting in February. Shady Cove Public Works Director George Bostic summarized the Town's responsibilities concerning the DEQ notice of violations at the treatment plant -- George is a licensed treatment plant operator and supervises the Town's plant by agreement between Shady Cove and Butte Falls. He said that the past violations were being corrected by present Town Public Works personnel and singled out Director Tom Hayes for doing an excellent job toward restoring the treatment plant to working order. He also said that Butte Falls needs to provide adequate support for its Public's Works both at present and in the future.

During the second presentation, HGE planning and design engineer, Matt Grey discussed the progress of his firm's work on the Butte Falls water improvement project. He said the design process was nearing completion and that all related administrative matters were moving in the same direction. And when Matt was asked about an actual time line for the project, the best of news appeared: Construction will begin in June and should be completed by the end of October this year. *HEY BUTTE FALLS!* Come November maybe we could all do a celebration in the Town Park. We could raise our glasses, toast one another, and take a sip of our sweet Butte Falls water.



TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Community Hall

March 9th
7 pm

APRIL
DEADLINE
Articles for
THE BULLETIN
due to City Hall
March 22nd

RON HAILICKA



THANKS FROM BUTTE FALLS