

Contact: Tye Parsons  
NWMORCOG  
tye@nwmorcog.org  
www.nwmorcog.org

114 West Third St.  
Maryville, MO 64467  
Phone 660 582 5121  
<http://water.nwmorcog.org>



# Press Release

## Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission One Step Closer to Reality

### Water Symposium serves as kick-off for new initiative

Maryville, MO, January 30, 2009: The idea of a regional water system for northwest Missouri became a little clearer last month as officials with the Water Partnership for Northwest Missouri announced a new organization would soon be formed to help get drinking water to retail providers throughout the region.

The Water Partnership is a grassroots, volunteer organization that has been meeting for over three years to develop ways of solving northwest Missouri's drinking water problems. Tye Parsons, director of the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments and co-chair of the Water Partnership, noted, "Drinking water in northwest Missouri is a substantial challenge. Not only do you have surface water systems that are susceptible to drought, but you also see many towns with shallow groundwater wells which are threatened by continually decreasing underground water levels. The Water Partnership was formed to examine the ways that a regional approach could be used to guarantee a source of safe, abundant drinking water for the entire region."

At the Water Partnership's Water Symposium held on January 30<sup>th</sup>, Bill Hills, Water Partnership consultant, noted that, of the 39 water systems in the 12-county region with their own water source, only 11 have an estimated lifespan of 15 years or more. Hills, who has more than 40 years of experience working with northwest Missouri water systems, said, "The source and water treatment plants for some of the water systems have outlived their useful life, and need to either be replaced or the systems should purchase treated water from another source."

D.J. Gehrt, city administrator for the City of Plattsburg and chair of the Water Partnership transition subcommittee, reported that the Water Partnership had voted to form a new legal entity under Chapter 393 of the Missouri Revised State Statutes. The new organization, known as the Great Northwest

For Immediate Release

Wholesale Water Commission, will be formed with the expressed goal of constructing a 12-county wholesale water network that will provide safe drinking water to those cities and water districts that need a dependable, high-quality water source. When asked about the timetable for construction, Gehrt explained, "We obviously aren't going to benefit from this process tomorrow, or even next year; but with proactive planning we may be able to design a working regional water system that can meet the needs of northwest Missouri for decades to come." During his presentation, Gehrt noted that five water systems have tentatively agreed to become charter members of the Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission, paving the way for the commission formation this spring.

So what's next for the Water Partnership? According to Parsons, the show goes on the road: "The next step is for members of the Water Partnership to talk with the 83 water systems in northwest Missouri about the advantages of becoming a member of the Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission. We know that not every water system will join right away, but we really need a good number of committed water systems to get this project off the ground."

For more information on the Water Partnership and the Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission, visit their website at <http://water.nwmorcog.org>.

---

---