

Groundbreaking on Route 619 Water Project

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Speedwell, Virginia

October 7, 2010

I am pleased to return to Wythe County to announce a major allocation of federal funding for the County to construct a new public water system, which when completed will provide new or improved water services to more than 350 Wythe County homes and businesses.

At my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, is providing a total of \$4,762,000 to Wythe County for the construction of a new public water system to serve the Speedwell, Crockett, and Copenhavers communities. Of that total amount, the Agency is providing \$3,388,000 in the form of a federal grant and \$1,374,000 as a low-interest, federal loan.

Adequate and reliable public water systems are essential to maintaining Southwest Virginia's excellent quality of life and are critical to achieving our economic development goals for the region. For these reasons, I work actively with local governments throughout the Ninth District to secure the federal funds necessary to construct new and improve existing public water systems.

Today, I am pleased to note that Wythe County is making great strides in improving and expanding its public water infrastructure. Last month, we broke ground on another federally funded public water project, which will provide public water service to the homes along Route 619 between Austinville and Ivanhoe. With the benefit of the federal funds announced today, Wythe County will construct a new water system to serve the communities of

Speedwell, Crockett and Copenhavers. Currently, residents in these areas rely on wells for water services and have experienced problems with water quantity as well production has declined.

To address this problem, 59,000 feet of 8-inch and 12-inch water lines will be installed from the Crockett community to the Speedwell community. In addition, a 300,000 gallon water storage tank will be constructed.

The water lines will connect to the existing Speedwell water system to the south. The new water system will also connect to the new water extension planned from Rural Retreat to Wytheville along the Route 11 corridor, which is also being constructed with the benefit of federal funds secured at my request. The water lines will be installed along Route 625, Route 690, Route 666, Route 667, Route 663 and U.S. Route 21.

When completed, 178 residents in the communities of Speedwell, Copenhavers and Crockett will have access to new public water services, and 180 residents in these communities will gain access to improved public water services. Construction on the new water system is expected to begin next summer and be completed in the summer of 2012. The total cost of the project is \$4,824,300. In addition to the federal funds I am announcing today, Wythe County is providing \$62,300 toward the project.

The new water system for Speedwell, Crockett and Copenhavers truly represents another significant step in our ongoing efforts to improve and expand access to public water service throughout Southwest Virginia. Not only will the new water system improve the quality of life by providing new or more reliable water services for residents of these communities, but the availability of adequate water services will also enable growth in the number of residents and businesses in these communities.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize a number of individuals who have been instrumental in the success we celebrate today.

I want to thank Bucky Sharitz, Chairman of the Wythe County Board of Supervisors, and Gene Horney, Jr. and Gary Houseman, who represent this area on the Board of Supervisors. The Wythe County Board of Supervisors provides excellent leadership and foresight in supporting the expansion of Wythe County's public water infrastructure.

I also want to thank the Wythe County Water and Sewer Committee, of which Gene Horney is also a member and chairs, for their outstanding work to improve and expand water and wastewater services for Wythe County residents.

Cellell Dalton, Wythe County Administrator, deserves our thanks today for his excellent work on behalf of Wythe County residents.

I want to thank Ellen Davis, State Director for the Rural Development Agency, and Travis Jackson, Area Director for the Rural Development Agency, as well as their excellent staff for their efforts in providing an allocation of federal funding for this project.

Finally, I want to thank my Project Manager, Kim McKay, for her excellent work in support of this project.

Today's announcement will greatly improve the quality of life for many Wythe County residents, and I want to offer special congratulations to the residents who will benefit from the new public water services that will soon be provided.