

Groundbreaking on Old Woodway Road Water Project

Woodway, Virginia

September 7, 2010

I am pleased to return to Lee County today to join with you in breaking ground on a new public water system, which when completed will provide safe and reliable public water services for the first time to 20 homes along Old Woodway Road.

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, we take another significant step forward in this effort as construction begins on a new, federally funded public water system for the homes on Old Woodway Road. Currently, residents in this area rely on wells and have been experiencing frequent water shortage problems.

To address this problem, at my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, has provided a low-interest federal loan of \$261,167.95. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, through its Community Development Block Grant program, has provided \$250,000 for the project. The total cost for construction for the new water system is

\$511,167.95, and the two allocations of federal funding represent the entire project cost.

With the benefit of the federal funding, construction begins today on a new water system that will include the installation of 9,115 feet of feet of six inch water lines along Old Woodway Road. Construction is expected to be completed early next year.

When completed, this new water system will provide a safe and adequate supply of drinking water to 20 homes along Old Woodway Road, which currently do not have access to public water service.

The new water system will also provide a connection between the Eastern Lee Water system and a water system that serves another portion of Old Woodway Road. That project was completed in 2006 with the benefit of \$350,000 in federal funds provided through the federal Community Development Block Grant Self-Help Program. The connection will create a looped water system in which water can be supplied from two different sources, providing more reliable water service along both Old Woodway Road and in Eastern Lee County.

The availability of the new water services along Old Woodway Road and a more reliable Eastern Lee water system will not only improve the quality of life for Lee County residents but will also enable new growth in the number of residents and businesses in this area of the County with attendant economic benefits to the area's current residents.

Today's groundbreaking truly represents another significant step in our ongoing efforts to improve and expand access to public water service throughout Southwest Virginia.

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 Claude Ray, Chair of the Lee County Public Service Authority and member of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, for his leadership and foresight in providing safe and reliable public water service to Lee County residents.

Larry Mossley, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, and the other members of the Board and the PSA also deserve our thanks today for their longstanding efforts in support of expanding the County's water infrastructure.

I also want to thank the PSA's Executive Director, Doc Parson, and the County Administrator, Dane Poe, for their excellent work on behalf of 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.

I also want to thank Jimmy Wallace and Joe Blevins with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, which administers the federal Community Development Block Grant Program in Virginia. Jimmy and Joe provide excellent assistance to communities throughout the region.

Additionally, Bill Shelton, the Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and Denise Ambrose, Project Manager deserve our thanks today for their support of this project.

Several members of the Old Woodway Road community deserve recognition today for their outstanding efforts to obtain user agreements and move this project to construction, and I would like to thank Joe Bud Tankersley, Frank Reasor, J.C. Wade, Mary Ethel Jessie, and Basil Collier at this time.

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

Today's groundbreaking marks a major success for Lee County. Residents of Old Woodway Road will benefit from the provision of more reliable water service and the enhanced opportunity for residential and economic development. For the cooperation and successful work to bring this project to construction, I want to thank all here. And I want to offer special congratulations to the residents who will soon benefit from public water services.