

## **Groundbreaking held for Scott water project**

By [Wes Bunch](#) Published July 12th, 2010---Kingsport Times News

HILTONS — Heavy rain didn't dampen the spirits of local, state and federal officials who gathered in Hiltons Monday morning to help break ground on the Scott County Public Service Authority's stimulus-funded Otterhouse water project.

The \$2.25 million project is being constructed entirely with grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that were made available through the Virginia Department of Health's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

U.S. Rep. Rick Boucher, D-Va., who helped secure the funding, said the project is a "significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to expand the region's water ... infrastructure" that will not only alleviate water quality problems for current residents, but also make future residential growth in the area possible.

"This project will improve the quality of life for the 119 homes that will receive water service, and it carries another benefit of a larger nature for the region," Boucher said following the groundbreaking. "It will enable an expansion of growth in the Hiltons area. There's a practical limit on growth today because of the absence of a public water system."

That growth, Boucher said, will also help stimulate the economy of not only the Hiltons area, but Scott County as a whole.

Boucher also praised the work of Delegate Terry Kilgore, R-Gate City, and state Sen. William Wampler, R-Scott County, for their help in making sure the project went forward.

The project will install 13 miles of water lines and 22 fire hydrants along seven roads — Route 58, Otterhouse Road, Roberts Creek Road, McMurray Hollow Road, Spurrier Cemetery Lane, Bright Hollow Road and Palomino Drive — in the Hiltons area.

Clintwood's S.B. Construction officially began work on the system Monday and is expected to wrap up sometime in early 2011.

Scott County Supervisor Joe Horton, who represents the Hiltons area, said the community has been in need of improved water infrastructure for a number of years.

Horton said he was thrilled about the project since it would benefit so many Hiltons residents, including those who live along the North Fork of the Holston River and routinely experience problems with well water.

"A lot of these people that are in this project have houses located along the river, and they're in the floodplain, and during a flood their wells would be contaminated and it was a problem to keep them cleaned up," Horton said. "Also, when we pulled the water samples for this project, you could look at them and tell the water was bad from just the smell and the color."

Those concerns about water quality and the health problems it could cause were among the main reasons the Otterhouse water project was designated as one of the top stimulus projects in Virginia, Scott County PSA Director Dan Danko said.

"When we looked at this project it had all of the qualifications to be a good application," Danko said. "There were health issues involved, the people living there wanted the system, and there

were a number of houses to pay for itself. So based on that, we felt it was an excellent project to pursue.”

Without that federal funding, which covers all of the construction costs, Danko said the project would most likely still be in the planning stages instead of the first stages of construction.

“I’m not going to say the project wouldn’t go, but it probably wouldn’t have gone as quickly,” Danko said. “Without this funding, we probably wouldn’t have been able to start until next year in the late fall. It’s been a quick turnaround.”