

Athens Rewiew

Company will bottle water from area wells

Also, Henderson County has new representative on Neches & Trinity Valleys Groundwater Conservation District

By Kelly Young

JACKSONVILLE — The Neches & Trinity Valleys Groundwater Conservation District members approved the drilling of three new water wells in Anderson County last week.

Water-bottling company Mountain Pure will drill two of the wells in Palestine's Willow Creek Business Park, and the third will be drilled in Elkhart.

Jason Temple of Atoka Inc., the engineering firm doing the work, and Tracy Bush, Mountain Pure vice president of operations, were present to answer any questions regarding their applications.

"This location was selected because of some onsite springs. Mountain Pure is wanting to capture that resource and bottle it for their spring water bottling line," Temple said. "These wells would capture that spring water just upstream of where it outcrops."

Temple said the operation will only require 50-foot wells because of a very shallow aquifer.

"The water is going to be anywhere from 14 to 25 feet below the surface, and there won't be any impact on anyone else because everyone out there is either on rural water or city water, and no other wells are tapping into the spring aquifer," he said.

The district unanimously approved Mountain Pure's seven applications — three drilling permits, three operating permits and an export permit. No one from the public spoke in opposition to the applications.

General Manager Roy Rodgers also briefed the board about last month's GMA-11 joint planning meeting, where representatives from several local groundwater districts gathered to discuss the desired future conditions of the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer. According to Rodgers, those present agreed to increase their outreach programs to gain input from unprotected counties.

Two of the board's directors said their good-byes to the district as their terms expired this month. Tom Martin, who represented Henderson County, has been serving the district since 2003, and Robert Sedgwick of Palestine just completed his two-year term.

"I just want to express my appreciation for the wonderful experience this has been for me to serve with you guys. It's been an honor to represent Henderson County as far as water issues are concerned," Martin said. "With GIS (geographic imaging system) information and a good database, I don't see any reason why this couldn't be one of the best water districts in the whole state."

Each of the departing men received their name plate and a commemorative pocket knife.

"We appreciate everything that you have done for the district, and we've learned a lot from you. We will miss you, and we hope that you will want to come back in the future," said Bart Bauer, district president.

The cities of Palestine, Athens and Jacksonville take turns filling the board's seventh director slot, while each member county holds two positions on the board. Utility Director David Brock will represent Jacksonville on the board for the next two years. Donald Foster will fill the vacant Henderson County seat.

In other business the board approved:

- the minutes from previous meetings;
- the district's budget for 2008; and
- paying the bills.

The NTV Groundwater Conservation District meets at 1:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at their offices at 212 S. Main St. in Jacksonville.

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