

History

The City of Beatrice Board of Public Works water system is over 100 years old, with some of the original piping still in use today. In the late 1800's, water was pumped directly from the Big Blue River. Sometime around the turn of the century, well water was introduced as a new source. However, these wells were not dependable, and it was not until 1930 that Beatrice was able to find a reliable source of water. These wells are still in use today.

In 1947 the Board of Public Works was formed, and the water system was purchased from Layne-Western who had operated the wells and transmission line to the city reservoir since 1930. At this time the Water Department had four wells and a 3 million gallon underground reservoir to meet the water needs of its customers. The water from these wells was of high quality and no treatment was necessary and still is not necessary today.

The Board of Public Works' members were quite aggressive and made several upgrades to the system in 1965. A million gallon overhead storage tank was placed into service. A 5 million gallon underground storage reservoir was added, as well as the drilling of four more wells at the well-field.

Shortly after this, the Board purchased a 200 acre farm across the river from the existing well-field. This purchased land was essential to continue to provide safe drinking water to our customers. Two wells were drilled in 1990 and nine miles of 24" transmission main were installed by the Water Department from the new well-field to the reservoirs. This project was completed in stages, and the wells started serving the community in June 1997. This water is extremely low in nitrates and is being blended with water from the old well-field to ensure a low as possible nitrate level. This water is also of high quality and no treatment is necessary with today's regulations.

A second 500,000 gallon overhead storage tank was installed in 1981. With this addition, the system now has 9.5 million gallons in storage. Since the average city usage is 2.1 million gallons daily, this gives us a two day use storage with an ample fire protection supply.

The Board of Public Works moved the Service Center out of the floodway in 1996, and was relocated in North Beatrice. This was a much needed move, as the old facility was flooded numerous times. With this move, it was decided to install a SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system for the well, reservoir and elevated tank controls. This system has an automatic dialer to notify designated employees when a problem occurs anywhere in the system. This allows for better service to our customers.

The Water Department's employees are all certified operators and attend numerous seminars for additional training. We have multiple employees who hold a certification that allows them to

test and repair backflow devices. Beatrice was a leader in backflow protection many years before it was required. Beatrice has also been a model for similar sized systems, as to the proper way to operate maintenance programs. The employees of the department are dedicated and willing to serve its customers.