

VISALIA TIMES DELTA

Waterwise: Manson residents to get new water system

January 25, 2017

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There's a double dose of good water news for Monson residents.

On Monday, Tulare County administrators announced the State Resource Control Board authorized \$1.21 million for the Monson Emergency Water Supply Project.

The money from the state control board will be paired with \$900,000 previously-secured funds for the water project. In total, \$2.11 million will be used to drill a community well and build the first phase of the water distribution system.

On Tuesday, Tulare County supervisors were told about the six bids received for the water construction project, the first step in the process to build the well.

With cash secured and significant interest from construction companies, the water project is moving right along.

"At long last, we are going to get water," said Servando Quintanilla, who owns property in Monson. "This is something good; something good for the little town."

Similar to other Tulare County residents, Monson residents dealt with domestic wells with high levels of nitrate. The residents were also hit hard by the drought as domestic wells dried up.

"This is great news for the residents of Monson who have endured water quality issues for years, even before recent drought impacts causing reduced groundwater supplies," said Supervisor Steve Worthley, whose district includes Monson.

It was teamwork that brought the money in for the Monson water project. Monson residents, county administrators and Self-Help Enterprises staff teamed up to secure the funds.

"A lot of us spent a lot of hours working on this project," said Maria Herrera, Self-Help Enterprises community development manager. "Quintanilla was one of the community supporters who spent a lot of time discussing water issues and trying to find solutions."

Herrera said this day has been years in the making.

"This has been a true partnership," she said. "Residents, non-profit organizations and the county. We have been involved in this for years."

Quintanilla agreed.

"This project is not just us," he said. "There are many people whom we have to thank."

There's another example of partnership. The Sultana Community Services District will handle billing for the Monson community. Monson and Sultana are located three miles apart.

When completed, the community well will serve about 30 homes in Monson as well as some Sultana residents.

"This long-term solution will also benefit Sultana residents with additional water for their system," Worthley said.

A clean, reliable water source will make a huge difference in Monson.

“With the new water system, we can now stop worrying,” Quintanilla said.

After receiving the bids, county personnel will work on a contract and the award will be announced in a few weeks. A groundbreaking is expected next month.

Construction is expected to start in spring and be completed within six months.

“This project is moving full speed ahead,” Herrera said. “It’s finally real for people.”