

THE FOOTHILLS SUN-GAZETTE

Exeter wheeling and dealing with Tooleville for water

By Paul Myers

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Despite recent rain storms that have put some snow in the mountains and replenished the aquifers, Tooleville is hoping to get a more consistent stream flowing into their community.

For possibly a decade the Tooleville Mutual Non-profit Water Association has been working with negotiators in their dealing with Exeter.

According to Randy Groom the negotiations grew contentious early on and left the project in hiatus, but the two sides have now reached a point where negotiations can continue on.

“What I’ve said is that we are willing to do this as long as there is a benefit to the citizens of Exeter,” said Exeter City Manager Randy Groom.

Tooleville recently has decided on a site for a well on the west side of Exeter at the intersection of Firebaugh and Belmont. The property is owned by Jim Yarber, husband of Exeter Lieutenant Liz Yarber. The property has gathered some notoriety for the home that is currently being built on the triangular piece of land.

According to Self Help Enterprises Community Development Specialist Jessi Snyder this particular site has been in the works for approximately five years. Snyder works in a more technical capacity by applying for loans and grants on Tooleville’s behalf. In that time, the Tooleville Mutual Non-profit Water Association has acquired a grant to drill a test well to determine if water is reachable and meets a certain level of quality. If the test well reveals that water is at a reachable level and provides quality water the Association can then purchase the small portion of Yarber’s property for what is now an undisclosed amount. However, Snyder notes that the grant issued by state limits the amount the Association can spend on the assessed value of the property. Therefore, Exeter has been asked to enter into a partnership with the Association to help purchase the property, but the details of the partnership are yet to be determined or negotiated.

Groom notes that the benefit for Exeter is the increased volume and pressure through the Exeter water system. Once the well is constructed the water pumped from the west side well will travel through the Exeter system, and to the east side of town. Tooleville will then be able to hook onto the system near the intersection of Firebaugh and Spruce.

Snyder notes that the additional water provides a more reliable source that the residents of Tooleville have not had in a while. As well the new loop system of piping allows for cleaner water movement throughout the small, two street community, a project that was constructed in 2012 via USDA funding.

While there are several aspects of the deal left to be decided upon, such as the partnership and the agreement to wheel the water from the west side of town to the east side of town, the Exeter City Council has been open to the partnership.