

## SOME TULARE COUNTY RESIDENTS WILL SOON BE HOOKED UP TO VISALIA CITY WATER

By Brian Johnson

April 29, 2016



VISALIA, Calif. (KFSN) -Help is on the way for some Tulare County residents, who will soon be hooked up to Visalia city water when a long-awaited project is completed.

A couple of years ago, Donald Gearing panicked when his well went dry on Avenue 322. He has a family, plus animals.

"This is our home my wife loves this house, we love it, our animals," Gearing said.

Knowing they weren't going to leave, they lived

temporarily on half gallon containers of water.

"So I just started scrambling around, (and) I found someone who was willing to send me a tank," Gearing said.

Gearing now has two tanks on his property. The second came via Visalia's Self-Help Enterprises, and now his tank is filled every week for free. That's been a temporary fix, but living off the tank can't last forever. So it was with great pleasure that Gearing noticed construction on a major project had started late last week.

The project will eventually bring city water to his house, and others whose wells have gone dry along Avenue 322.

"It's been a long wait and I'm so happy that we're finally to this point," said Jessi Snyder, with Self-Help Enterprises.

The main line should be completed within a month's time. But the project almost didn't happen altogether. Tulare County secured most of the state drought emergency funding for the \$190,000 project. But those funds couldn't be used for necessary fire protection services. Eleven local rotary clubs along with the Visalia Rotary Community Foundation stepped up to fill the nearly \$30,000 gap.

"There are a lot of people that are suffering and you have to take one project at a time," said Rotary Club of Visalia Breakfast President Bill Mathis. "This particular project came to our attention and we felt that it was a worthwhile project that we felt that we could actually may have an impact and so something for the community."

It's long-awaited relief for residents like Donald Gearing. Officials say it's a permanent fix, and in this drought, a silver lining project.