

# The Porterville Recorder

---

## East Porterville water hookups two weeks away

July 20, 2016

Rick Elkins

The project to hook up at least 40 residences in East Porterville to the city of Porterville's water system appears to be at least two weeks from beginning, but when it does start more than the original 40 homes may be hooked up.

Porterville City Manager John Lollis confirmed Tuesday the state has asked the city to now hook up approximately 70 homes in East Porterville.

Lollis said the city had identified 115 homes along city water lines which run through parts of East Porterville. He said the state originally estimated only 40 of those did not have working wells, but it now appears that number has grown to 70.

Paul Boyer, program director for Community Development with Self-Help Enterprises, said they have still not signed a contract to begin the physical work of connecting the homes without water to the city's water lines. He said they have received two price quotes and are awaiting a third before going over them and hiring a contractor.

The project has three moving parts. One is for a contractor to extend pipes from city main water lines to the property line of the home. Then, city workers will install water meters and backflow devices before workers with C-SET (Community Services Employment Training) will remove the existing temporary water tank and then connect the home to the city's water line.

When the Department of Water Resources (DWR) met with East Porterville residents on June 23, it was announced the work would begin to hook up an initial 40 homes around July 1. However, paper work has pushed that starting date back.

Boyer said while Self-Help has gotten a funding commitment from DWR, it does not yet have a signed contract. Also, they are working on obtaining the building permits from the county, and what may be most time consuming, getting the property owners to sign the necessary agreements.

Each property owner has to agree to be hooked up, must agree to any future annexation by the city, must allow an inspection of their property and must agree to have their existing well — even if it is dry — be abandoned.

Lollis said at last count they had 30 signed agreements and two hold outs. He said one resident is refusing because he does not want to be annexed into the city at any time. However, the city manager pointed out refusing to be hooked up to city water will not keep a property from being annexed should that occur.

Boyer said another glitch could come with scheduling the C-SET crews which are presently hooking up homes to a water system in New London, a small rural community south of Dinuba. That work may not be done before the end of the month.

"We're maybe a couple of weeks away," said Boyer from finally hooking up the first homes. "That is assuming everything goes well," he cautiously added.

"We realize for a family without water we haven't moved fast enough, but we are moving as quickly as possible," he added.

The state has stepped in and has agreed to hook up approximately 500 homes in East Porterville, including about 80 in the area of Vandalia Avenue between Main and Plano streets, to alleviate the pain of suffering of families whose water wells have gone dry because of the drought.

The first 40 homes are those which are along existing city water lines in East Porterville, an unincorporated area just east of the city limits. The state plans to begin installing water lines and then hooking up the remainder 400 homes later this summer and the ambitious goal is to have most of those residents connected to city water by the end of this year.

The plan is to within the next 18 months provide water to all homes in East Porterville, approximately 1,800 homes. There is no cost to the homeowner now for the connection, but it is voluntary.