



Iowa Regional Utilities Association

1351 Iowa Speedway Drive, Newton, IA 50208

Phone: 641-792-7011 or 800-400-6066

Website: www.irua.net

Grundy Office: 205 C Avenue, Grundy Center, IA 50638

Phone: 319-824-5920

Waverly Treatment Plant: 1224 230th Street, Waverly, IA 50677

2019 Annual Report

“We flow that extra mile!”



President’s Message

By: Ron Dunsbergen

Constant Change

If I were asked to pick two words that I felt best summarized Iowa Regional Utilities Association (IRUA) it would be Constant Change. The original mission of the Jasper County Water Association was simply to provide a resource for safe and reliable drinking water to the rural population of Jasper County. After establishing that mission it did not take long for the Board to be faced with the decision of whether to focus solely on service within Jasper County, or to expand the scope of the Utility to meet the need for water service outside the county line.

Since that time, the faces on the Board of Directors have changed over the years, but the collective will of the Board to grow and expand IRUA’s service area to meet the need for safe and reliable drinking water has remained constant. That is how in addition to its 13,932 individual residential member-customers, IRUA has now come to be the water service provider for communities, rest areas, federal/state/county parks, dental offices, veterinary clinics, universities and public schools, co-ops, gas stations, banks, mobile home parks, restaurants, churches, grocery stores, hotels, golf and country clubs, rock quarries, fire stations, historical societies, youth centers, automotive dealerships and gun clubs (to name a few)! Were IRUA not available as a resource for treated quality water, each of these member-customers would be utilizing an individual well, or in some cases may never have been developed in the first place!

Through all this growth and change, IRUA’s Board of Directors is proud to say one constant has been that it has placed its trust in the hands of James R. LaPlant as CEO for the last 38 years. However, as it happens, this past year the opportunity for more change has come with Mr. LaPlant informing the Board of his intention to transition into retirement.

As we look to the future, I welcome our newly appointed CEO, Matt Mahler, to IRUA. One constant that Mr. Mahler brings with him that is similar to Mr. LaPlant is his engineering background, which like Mr. LaPlant, actually started in the private engineering consultant industry.

I look forward to working with the Board to continue progressing IRUA’s mission of providing essential water and wastewater services throughout central and northeast Iowa into this new decade. On behalf of the Board, I welcome Mr. Mahler and gratefully wish Mr. LaPlant a hearty congratulations on a well-earned retirement!



We welcome you to join us in hearing the music of Brian Herrin. Brian Herrin is a classically trained singer-songwriter now living in Iowa. Originally from Illinois, he has shared the stage with such acts as The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Vertical Horizon, Tonic, Carly Rae Jepsen, Sister Hazel and CLOVERTON. In 2008, he co-founded the band Decoy. The Des Moines based pop rock group was recently part of a national competition in which they were chosen as a top 10 finalist to perform their original music in Nashville, Tennessee. Decoy’s latest album, The Open Road, was recorded in Nashville and can be found on iTunes and Spotify. Currently, Brian can be found performing shows throughout the Midwest and is the Director of Worship at Steamboat Rock Baptist Church. He is set to release a new solo album in 2020.

Brian will perform at this years Annual Meeting on March 16 at the Grundy Center Community Center located at 705 F Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa.

**\$ SAVE TIME
SAVE MONEY \$**

Save time and save money with Automatic Withdrawal

Member-customers who receive monthly water and/or wastewater bills from IRUA are able to enroll in ACH/direct withdrawal. Member-customers can select to have payment withdrawn on the 10th or the 30th of each month. Paper bills are still sent around the 25th of each month letting the member-customer know the amount to be withdrawn. ACH/direct withdrawal has many advantages, such as:

- No more late fees
- No checks to write
- Eliminate lost or stolen check issues
- No stamps or money order fees
- Going on vacation? No worries, your bill will be paid

If you are interested in signing up for ACH/direct withdrawal, please contact our office at 1-800-400-6066 to have an enrollment form sent to you or print the form from our web-site by clicking the 'Customer Information/Payments' tab and clicking the link below the first paragraph.

CEO/Engineer's Report

By: Matt Mahler

For the first time in the history of the Jasper County Water Association/Central Iowa Water Association/Iowa Regional Utilities Association this *CEO/Engineer's Report* is being written by someone not named Jim LaPlant. This is the result of the Board of Directors having unanimously adopted a resolution approving a formal CEO transition in light of the planned retirement of long-time CEO Jim LaPlant.

In his time with IRUA, Mr. LaPlant has worked under the leadership of the Board of Directors to position IRUA as a water industry trailblazer for decades. As a utility it has grown from a relatively modest sized utility meeting the water service needs of a single county to a regional utility providing a variety of services across eighteen counties. On the technical front it was one of the first water utilities in the state of Iowa to build and operate a reverse osmosis water treatment process at its water plant near Waverly. Administratively, it is one of a handful of utilities in Iowa to employ a full service construction workforce which allows IRUA to respond to unplanned repairs more efficiently and construct replacement and extension projects using its own resources without securing, scheduling and working with a for-profit contractor. With this growth in service area the Utility's water supply resources have grown through crafted partnerships with large municipalities that leverage the water resources of the entire region. At a national level IRUA was a charter member of the Association of Regional Water Organizations (ARWO), which was formed specifically to represent and defend the policy interests of our unique organization-type at the national level in Washington D.C.

Under the leadership of the Board, Mr. LaPlant has spent nearly all of his career building a forward-thinking and versatile utility that has received recognition among its peers at a national level. As large-scale and substantial as these growth decisions have been, it is clear to me that Mr. LaPlant has always held decisions against a measuring stick of how it will allow IRUA to better serve you, the individual member-customer.

I am grateful to the Board of Directors for the opportunity to step into the CEO/Engineer role here at IRUA, and I enter the role fully aware of the large shoes being left by Mr. LaPlant. It is an understatement to say he has accomplished a lot during his time here, and it is also an understatement to say that there is a lot of work ahead. I look forward to serving the Board of Directors and working with IRUA's outstanding staff in a capacity that continues to center decision making on a compass that moves the Utility forward focusing on how to better serve you, the individual member-customer.

With that said, here are the highlights from IRUA's 2019 calendar year:

- We now serve safe, quality water to 14,971 farms, rural residences, businesses, and small communities through over 4,676 miles of pipe.
- 172 new services were installed in existing service areas.
- The City of Fairbank's connection to IRUA's system was completed, and the community is now purchasing water in bulk from IRUA.
- IRUA's water tower adjacent to IRUA's water treatment plant near Waverly was recoated.
- 9 IRUA water towers were internally cleaned to "like-new" condition.

CoBank Features IRUA in Their 2019 Annual Report



The following is reprinted with permission from CoBank:

Like many rural communities across America, Iowa Regional Utilities Association (IRUA) faces a declining population as larger cities lure away residents. In response, it embodies a regionalization strategy that includes preparing for extensive future growth.

"Regional water and wastewater systems like IRUA are the only way folks living in rural Iowa can receive safe, potable water and wastewater services at an affordable price," says Jim LaPlant, IRUA CEO. "These services are critically important to the vitality of rural America and are essential to rural economic development."

Founded 43 years ago as a single county rural water system, additional demand for high quality water by adjoining communities and nearby residents led to IRUA's current size: a regional water and wastewater utility providing service to all or parts of 18 counties in central and northeast Iowa that includes 67 small communities and almost 15,000 farms and rural residents, as well as multiple business and industrial parks.

IRUA is focused on keeping its rates affordable by maintaining an adequate customer base when faced with the ongoing shift of population from rural to urban areas. In addition to actively seeking to partner with additional individual customers and small communities adjacent to its current boundaries, IRUA retains and invests in higher customer density rural areas that surround larger cities and suburbs within its existing service territory.

For 30 years, CoBank has financed IRUA's delivery of clean, safe, and reliable water – which has been recognized as the best tasting water in the country by the National Rural Water Association. Beginning with a \$5 million construction loan in the early 1990's CoBank today provides \$49 million in commitments for lines of credit and term loans, including a 2019 \$7.7 million refinancing that is expected to deliver savings of more than \$1 million over the remaining loan term. CoBank also provides cash management services so that [available revenue] is directed to the line of credit account every day to reduce interest expense.

"CoBank is our key financial partner in developing new projects sometimes on a very short timeline to meet EPA compliance schedules and to enable us to meet all the conditions to close state or federal loans," says LaPlant. "The CoBank water team understands our business and works with us to develop and use the right financial products for our needs".

"IRUA's leadership has been extremely savvy in leading their system to tremendous growth even as the population they traditionally serve is shrinking," says Chris Shaffner, CoBank senior vice president of Water and Community Facilities. "By building relationships and collaborations, they've overcome previous boundaries to deliver an essential service to their rural communities."

Partnering for Success

A strategic partnership with a County's economic development team, a rural electric cooperative and a railway company results in a \$60M win for rural Iowa!

It is well understood that access to treated, reliable, affordable, high quality drinking water is a critical ingredient in the recipe that allows for development and growth to occur. This is why, in the early 2010's, IRUA partnered with the Butler County Development Corporation, the Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative and Iowa Northern Railway Company to develop a "shovel-ready" industrial site that was named the Butler County Logistics Park.

The industrial park is a large land area located immediately west of the city of Shell Rock. Since construction of the development was completed, it has been marketed locally, state-wide and nationally as a large "shovel-ready" industrial site with water service, wastewater service and on-site access to train rail.

In June of 2019, it was announced that the site was selected by a Dallas-based rail car company as the location for its first-ever rail car maintenance facility that has been custom-designed for the purpose of receiving, cleaning, repair, refurbishing and shipping of existing rail cars.

The following news article is reprinted with permission from the Butler County Tribune-Journal:

"Trinity Rail Maintenance Services, Inc. recently announced plans to invest approximately \$60 million in a new facility at Butler Logistics Park near Shell Rock and create at least 263 new full-time or career positions in the next three years. The Iowa Economic Development Authority board recently approved the company's plans to expand in Butler County by constructing a 230-acre railcar maintenance, retrofitting and re-manufacturing facility.

Trinity Rail Maintenance Services (TRMS), a division of Trinity Rail, performs comprehensive railcar services, including railcar repairs, maintenance, modification and complete railcar manufacturing rebuilds and retrofitting.

"Trinity Rail Maintenance Services is extremely pleased to announce the construction of what we expect will be North America's premier railcar maintenance facility in Butler County near Shell Rock, Iowa," said Neil J. West, President of TRMS. "We have worked closely with Iowa EDA and Butler-Grundy Development Alliance officials, and they have been outstanding in our site selection process."

Shell Rock was one of 10 sites originally considered, and in the final three, outshined Illinois and Nebraska options as the ideal location."

This is an exciting project that could never have come together without the hard work of our staff and committed partnerships between IRUA and area leaders.

IRUA is proud to be a part of this success story and will continue to do its part maintaining and growing rural vitality within our service area!

Water Project Updates

Fairbank, population 1,123, Buchanan and Fayette Counties

Fairbank has battled issues with capacity and radium levels in their well supply for many years. The city contracted with IRUA for water supply from our membrane treatment plant near Waverly in early 2018. IRUA substantially completed installation of a new supply main and two booster stations necessary to serve the community in 2018. In 2019, IRUA completed electrical connections, final testing, disinfection, control system programming and start-up. Fairbank is now purchasing water in bulk. Please join us in welcoming Fairbank to IRUA!

Westgate, population 198, Fayette County

The city of Westgate initiated the process for USDA-Rural Development funding to construct a 10.1-mile IRUA water supply main to the city and upgrade old and undersized distribution mains within the city. The city has also submitted an application for funding with a request for consideration for partial loan forgiveness to the Iowa State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program. The city is currently waiting on a determination from the SRF program.

Wastewater Project Updates

Green Mountain, population 120, Marshall County

The Marshall County Board of Supervisors and IRUA partnered in a public meeting with residents of Green Mountain to discuss the details of the project. Since the meeting, IRUA has worked with the Board to secure easements with property owners within the community and to coordinate wastewater service agreements with residents. With rights now secured, the engineering firm is progressing with final design of the proposed wastewater infrastructure. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2020 with completion expected in 2021.

JUST A REMINDER ...

Bills are due by the 10th of each month. If not paid by the 10th, the bill becomes delinquent and the account will be subject to late fees and possible disconnection of service.

IRUA is not responsible for the mail service. Failure to receive a bill does not exempt you from monthly payment, late fees, or disconnection. Bills are mailed out around the 25th of each month. If you have not received a bill by the 1st of the month, please contact our office.

For your convenience, we offer automatic withdrawal, a night drop box at both the main office and branch office, and online or over the phone payments through Paystar.

Iowa Regional Utilities Association System Facts

CORPORATION - Jasper County Water Association was organized in 1977 as a corporation not-for-profit under the provisions of Iowa Code Chapter 504. Due to expanding service areas across many county boundaries, the Association changed its corporate name to Central Iowa Water Association in 1988. In 2000, due to the addition of rural sewer services, the Association changed its name to Iowa Regional Utilities Association. The Association is member-owned and headed by a nine-member Board of Directors.

TOTAL MILES OF PIPELINE - 4,676 miles in the ground, with sizes from 2" - 20" in diameter, 1" and 1 ½" service lines.

ELEVATED WATER TOWERS - 27 towers which are located near Prairie City (200,000 gallons), Baxter (200,000 gallons), Laurel (200,000 gallons), Sully (300,000 gallons), State Center (150,000 and 300,000 gallons), Marshalltown (100,000 gallons), Gladbrook (150,000 gallons), McCallsburg (400,000 gallons), Collins (500,000 gallons), Wellsburg (2,000,000 gallons), Colo (300,000 gallons), Lincoln (300,000 gallons), Otley (500,000 gallons), Marshall County Jail (300,000 gallons), Newton (2,000,000 and two 500,000 gallons), LeGrand (300,000 gallons), Aurora (300,000 gallons), Waverly (1,000,000 gallons), Greeley (300,000 gallons), Quasqueton (300,000 gallons), Rowley (300,000 gallons), Oakland Acres (300,000 gallons), Dike (300,000 gallons) and Radcliffe (300,000 gallons) with a total storage capacity of 12,300,000 gallons.

WATER SUPPLY CAPACITY - 90 million gallons per month provided by IRUA's water treatment plant near Waverly. Also, 90 million gallons per month provided by the City of Newton, 90 million gallons per month available from the City of Marshalltown, 3 million gallons per month available from the City of Pella, and 7.5 million gallons per month available from the City of Nevada. Current average demand is approximately 130 million gallons per month.

HIGH SERVICE PUMPING - Water purchased from the City of Newton is stored in an 86,000 gallon reinforced concrete surface reservoir under the high service pumping station and pumped by three 500 gpm pumps to elevated towers. There are also thirty-one booster pump stations capable of pumping a total of 20,000 gpm.

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST - Including the main office, pump stations, towers, water lines, etc. was approximately \$212,246,000. To finance the construction, IRUA received numerous USDA-RD/CoBank loans and \$27,904,715 in RD/CDBG grants. Customer contributions accounted for \$24,163,948 with interest and other income providing the balance of funds.

TOTAL METERS IN SERVICE - 14,971 including larger meters which monitor water served to city customers.

CITY INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMER METERS (43) - Attica, Aurora, Austinville, Bangor, Buckeye, Clyde, Dillon, Dunbar, Dundee, Farrar, Ferguson, Fernald, Frederika, Galesburg, Garden City, Green Mountain, Greeley, Haverhill, Iowa Center, Ira, Kesley, Killduff, Lamoille, Lincoln, Littleton, Marietta, Metz, Morrison, Newburg, Oakland Acres, Otley, Park Hills, Pershing, Quarry, Quasqueton, Reasnor, Rowley, St. Anthony, Valeria, Van Cleve, Vandalia, Voorhies, and Whitten.

CITY BULK PURCHASE METERS (25) - Beaman, Clemons, Collins, Colo, Conrad, Dike, Fairbank, Garwin, Gilman, Gladbrook, Grundy Center, Holland, Janesville, Laurel, LeGrand, Liscomb, Lynnville, McCallsburg, Melbourne, Mingo, Monroe, Rhodes, Sully, Wellsburg and Zearing.

EMERGENCY CONNECTIONS (16) - Communities of Albion, Baxter, Cambridge, Eldora, Hazleton, Lamont, Maxwell, New Hartford, Prairie City, Reinbeck, Roland, State Center, Stout, and Union. Interconnections have been established with Poweshiek Water Association and Rathbun Regional Water Association.

WASTEWATER SERVICES - Provided to Whitten (1998), Hunter's Ridge near Pella (1999), The Harvester (2000), Pine Lake near Eldora (2001), Rustic Ridges near Grinnell (2001), IDOT-Grinnell rest area (2001), IDNR-Rock Creek State Park (2001), Lakeview Heights, Diehl's Acres and Homesites Subdivisions near Rock Creek (2003-2004), Colo Business Park (2003), Haverhill (2003), Lincoln (2004), Pollard Development near Grinnell (2004), St. Anthony (2005), Morrison (2006), Grundy County Industrial Park (2006), Oakland Acres (2007), Park Hills (2009), I-35 Dows Interchange (2009), Stout and Camp Wallashuck (2011), Butler Logistics Park (2014), North Overlook Lake Red Rock (2015), and Red Rock Marina (2016).

CONSTRUCTION DATES - Construction began on the original Jasper County System in April 1980 and was completed in December 1981. Major expansions to the system have occurred each year, beginning with Marshall-Story Counties (1983-1985), Northeast Marshall System (1986-1987), Northeast Polk County (1987-1988), Northwest Tama County (1989-1990), Story County (1991-1994), Grundy County (1994-1997), Southwest Black Hawk County (1997-1998), Northern Grundy County (1998-2001), Northwest Black Hawk County (2000-2002), Hamilton and Hardin Counties (1999-2002), Southern Butler County (2001-2004), Southeast Butler County, Newton to Marshalltown transmission main, and Garden City (2005), Bremer, Black Hawk, and Buchanan County projects, cities of Aurora and Dundee (2007-2008). Delaware County projects and cities of Greeley and Quasqueton, I-35 Dows Interchange (2009), City of Rowley (2010), Stout sewer and Camp Wallashuck sewer (2011), City of Littleton (2013) Bremer Station (2014), North Overlook Sewer (2015), Red Rock Marina (2016), Frederika supply main (2016-2017), and Hamilton and Hardin Counties II (2017-2018).



Planned or Emergency Notification System

IRUA has contracted with Swiftreach Networks for the use of Swift911. The Swift911 system provides IRUA with the ability to quickly deliver voice, text or e-mail messages to our member-customers about planned or unplanned water outages and other important information.

We encourage you to log on to our website - www.irua.net - and register with Swiftreach - Swift 911 so you will receive notifications in the future and be able to keep your information current. Please note: This will only be used for IRUA notification purposes.

Those without internet access may call IRUA's office during regular office hours to provide their information. Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions regarding the SwiftReach system.

Board of Directors

Ron Dunsbergen, President
Dan Brandt, Vice President
Delwin Van Zante, Secretary
Virtus Brockman, Treasurer
Don Struthers, Director
Gene Wiemers, Director
Curt Mackie, Director
Doug Enyart, Director
Kevin Nessa, Director

Matt Mahler, P.E., CEO/Engineer
James LaPlant, P.E., Legislative & Administrative Consultant

Frank Smith, Attorney

IRUA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider