



**Robert Lee Water Meeting!** James Busby, an engineer with Burgess and Niple Engineering, addressed the huge crowd in attendance at the town water meeting held in Robert Lee Tuesday evening, August 9, 2011.

**... Robert Lee Water Meeting**

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water consumption already in effect, the 200,000 gallons should sustain Robert Lee with the current restrictions. The pipeline will be set-up as a one-way pipeline to start. Once the immediate danger has passed, there are plans to make it a two-way pipeline. All future water sales will be applied to the debt incurred from the pipeline's construction until that debt is satisfied.

Construction of the pipeline is the first priority for city officials. Once it is in operation, other funds received may be used to research potential water well fields and correct any problems with the city's water treatment facility.

The City of Robert Lee has applied for grant funds from several different agencies. Although most sound like they are Texas organizations, the funding is all federal. With federal funding, come federal regulations, restrictions and delays.

Robert Lee was ranked as the #1 critical city for assistance from the Texas Water Development Board State Drinking Water Program. This organization has made available to the City of Robert Lee funds totaling \$9.8 million dollars in a 70% grant/30% loan distribution. If Robert Lee accepted the entire amount, a debt would be incurred of \$2.94 million. City officials are aware that is an impossible amount to repay for the citizens of Robert Lee. Therefore, they are currently accepting only the money necessary for the pipeline that other programs will not cover.

The Texas Small Towns Environment Program (S.T.E.P.) is the same program that Bronte used in the past to lay the pipeline

to the wells they drilled when Oak Creek Lake was at critical levels. It requires communities who receive the grant to demonstrate a 40% savings off the retail price of the project by using local effort. Local effort means volunteer labor. One requirement of the Texas Department of Rural Affairs is that there be more volunteers on site than paid professionals. Citizens can volunteer with the skills they already have – equipment operators, general laborers, materials handlers, record keepers, scheduling and telephone committees, and food committee. This application for \$350,000 has to be in by October 14, 2011, and notification of funding should be received by the end of that month.

Robert Lee has also applied for a \$500K USDA grant. The application is pending and is now at the federal level. The city should be notified by September 1, 2011, of the obligation and funding of this grant.

The tone of last night's meeting was mostly positive. Following comments from three members of the audience, longtime City Secretary Kay Torres spoke with eloquent passion about the situation. She explained that she has been with the City for eighteen years and that during this time, they never quit searching for solutions to Robert Lee's water problems. They looked at drilling wells locally and also as far away as Maryneal. These solutions were not viable due to either poor quality, low quantity or impossibly high cost levels.

Many members of the audience expressed appreciation to Robert Lee city officials and personnel for all of their efforts to keep water flowing to Robert Lee's citizens. William "Pistol" Hood recognized the opportunity of the majority

of Robert Lee's citizens to come together in prayer for Robert Lee. Pastor Irving Smith delivered a beautiful heart-felt cry to God asking Him to relieve our situation.

The people of Robert Lee have come together in the past when faced with enormous problems, most recently the fires that have scorched our county. Their presence and attitudes last night proved they were ready and able to face this problem and resolve Robert Lee's water shortage.



**Conserving Tips for the Kitchen and Bathroom**

**Kitchen:**

- If you wash dishes by hand, fill one half of the sink with soapy water and the other with clean water instead of letting the water run.
- Place a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of letting the tap run to get a cool drink.
- Water your houseplants with water saved from washing your fruits and vegetables, waiting for the water to warm up, or even when you clean your fish tank!
- Select one glass to use for drinking each day. If you do this, your dishwasher will take longer to fill up and it will not need to be run as frequently.
- Thaw foods in the refrigerator or in a bowl of hot water instead of using running water.
- Let your pots and pans soak instead of letting the water run while you clean them.

- Purchase an instant water heater for your kitchen sink so you don't waste water while it heats up.

- Scrape the food on your dishes into the garbage instead of using water to rinse it down the disposal.

**Bathroom:**

- Switch to an ultra low-flow showerhead. This could save you as much as 2.5 gallons every minute you shower.
- Take shorter showers—try to keep it under 5 minutes.
- Put dye tablets or food coloring in your toilet tank and wait to see if the color appears in the bowl (without flushing). If it does, you have a leak!
- Check to assure that your toilet's flapper valve doesn't stay open after flushing.
- When taking a bath, start filling the tub with the drain already plugged instead of waiting first for the water to get warm. Adjust the temperature as the tubs begins to fill.

- Turn the faucet off while you shave, brush your teeth and lather up your hands.
- Buy an electric razor or fill the sink with a little water to rinse your razor, instead of rinsing in running water.

- Take a short shower instead of a bath. While a five minute shower uses a 12 to 25 gallons, a full tub requires about 70 gallons.

Every little thing we can do in the home will help conserve WATER.

**Water Conservation: How Does Your Home Check Out?**

The availability of water, now and in the future, should be a concern for everyone. In most areas of the country and most of the time, water has been readily available. The situation is changing. There are constantly new demands on our water supply. Sometimes that supply may be less than at other times because of climatic conditions such as a drought, a disaster, or just a breakdown in the water system. Conserving water also conserves other resources-energy and money. It costs money to pump water and make it available in our homes, for irrigation, and for business and industrial uses. Energy is required to pump, move and to purify water. Both energy and money are required to heat water-whether it is the water we heat and use, or the water we heat and waster through poor management practices.

Becoming more aware of your water use habits-both old and new-you can reduce water use (consumption), eliminate water, and save energy and money in your home.

**Plumbing:**

Inspect the plumbing system to see that there are no leaks. Turn off all water if you are going to be away from home on a vacation or trip. Check all faucets, inside and out, for drips. Make repairs promptly. These

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