

Dec. 15, 2014

Ongoing American Water projects on Fort Polk

If you live in North Fort Housing, you've probably noticed American Water representatives digging trenches and replacing water lines throughout the community. This renovation is just one of a series of modifications taking place to the water system throughout North Fort Housing.

Improvements to the water system and what the community can expect during their duration were the topics of discussion at a town hall meeting held at the Maple Terrace Neighborhood Center Aug. 20. Bob Dohoney, American Water, gave an overview. "We're working very closely with the garrison and DPW (Directorate of Public Works) to try and improve some of the old, out-dated technology that was put into place many years ago," he said.

The "looping project"

The biggest of these renovations involves what Dohoney called "the looping project." Basically, what that means, said Dohoney, is that the water lines traveling from the fire hydrant around the loop to the last house on each cul-de-sac are dead ends. "There's no water flow throughout the street." When service calls come in, American Water representatives will flush the hydrants. In turn, residents are asked to run their water, both upstairs and down, until the water runs clear.

A dead-end water system is a design problem, Dohoney said. "In most cases, standing water is not a good thing. Water needs to flow." The fix: Lines that lead from the hydrants are being replaced with primarily 8-inch lines (currently the lines are 1.5 inches), with dead ends "looped" into another main from another cul-de-sac, and so on. In the three cul-de-sacs (out of the 27 on North Fort), where dead-end lines have no viable connections, automatic water flushers will be installed. "Instead of having a dead end situation (per cul-de-sac) we'll have a large loop where all the houses are tied in we will have better water flow by connecting to a main at each end of the loop, virtually eliminating the current dead end situation.

That's going to make a huge difference," he said.

The project, at a cost of \$1.58 million, is expected to last nine to 12 months, and will primarily occur in the front and side areas of homes. However, some repairs will be necessary under cemented areas. Should this happen, a Corvias representative will notify residents.

Repairs will require scheduled water outages for up to two hours. Again, a Corvias representative will give advanced notice of outages. Once the water has been restored, remember to flush the water lines beginning at the exterior hose bibs for

at least 15 minutes. Proceed to run interior water faucets for at least 15 minutes or until clear to flush out the pipes once service has been restored. Once the water line work has been completed, all damaged sidewalks, driveways, roads, or disturbed grass, will be repaired. Residents will need to water any newly laid sod to help promote proper root establishment.

Looping project update as of Dec. 19, 2014

Construction is complete on six out of 27 streets.

Post-wide corrosion inhibition

Also in the works, Dohoney said, is a corrosion inhibition system (already funded). The design and documents required for permit applications will soon be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. The corrosion inhibition system raises water pH levels which helps prevent the degradation of plumbing fixtures inside buildings.

American Water will also place mixers in the elevated outdoor red and white water storage tanks located on the installation. The mixers enhance water quality and treatment. The goal, said Dohoney, is once again to improve water flow. Design plans are in progress.

Fort Polk 's water system is fed by several wells (two different aquifers that flow underground). Historically, well water contains higher levels of iron and manganese, said Dohoney. "Iron and manganese are not harmful to human health. They can make the water turn brown and discolored.

"Those elements are normally dissolved in water, but if placed in contact with air or chlorine, the manganese and iron may turn insoluble which may discolor the water," Dohoney said.

On Fort Polk, the State requires that all water be disinfected with chlorine, a common practice throughout the water industry. However, the potential for discolored water has prompted designs for future iron and manganese removal options.

Update on post-wide corrosion inhibition as of Dec. 19, 2014

Designs are complete and have been sent to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals for permit approval. Chemical equipment on order is to be delivered by the end of the year (2014). Construction to begin after approved permit is returned by LDHH.

Update on North Fort Housing Corrosion Inhibition as of Dec. 19, 2014

Design is complete and LDHH permit approved. Construction of a chemical building is nearly complete with electrical work ongoing. Chemical feed equipment is being installed. On schedule to meet target of feeding chemical by end of Dec. 2014.

Another ongoing program is the replacement of main water lines by American Water (the lines that go out into the main thoroughfares of Texas and Louisiana, some of which were installed in the 1940s). In the six years since Fort Polk's water operations were privatized to American Water, Dohoney said, more than 30,000 linear feet of main line has been replaced. This year alone, 14,000 linear feet will be replaced with new line.

Other project updates (all as of Dec. 19, 2014):

1. Unidirectional Flushing: (High velocity scouring of the water mains) Contract has been awarded and work is to begin by March 2015.
2. Water storage tank mixwers and 15 auto flush units for South Fort. This encompasses the installation of mixers in all major water storage tanks and additional auto flushing units to improve water age and quality. Equipment has been ordered and delivered. Installation is ongoing.
3. Design of iron and manganese removal North and South Fort water systems: Contract has been awarded and is expected to be complete by September 2015.
4. Rehabilitation of green sand filter plant at North Fort housing: Iron and manganese removal facilities currently at North Fort housing water wells are being completely renovated. Design complete and equipment on order. Construction to begin by February 2015.