

Adair Co RWD #5

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Adair County, Oklahoma
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Frequently Asked Questions (updated October 2023)

In order to provide information to our members, we have developed the following questions and answers below. The current Board of Directors are committed to restoring safe water on a consistent basis as soon as possible to our families, neighbors, and friends as well as to our own homes.

OBTAINING INFORMATION:

1. What is the current contact information for RWD5?

Phone: The RWD Office phone number remains the same (918) 723-4785.

Please be advised that the current phone system cannot handle the increased call volume of approximately 600 members. The Secretary/Treasurer explored options to address this matter and the Board decided to update services with OzarkGo changing the home phone system to a corporate account with auto attendant features to handle the increased call volume. We anticipate the new phone system will allow members to

- a) During office hours: leave a call back message, or speak to our Office Manager,
- b) Anytime day or night: report outages, pay a bill.

Email: The RWD email address is rwd050@gmail.com.

2. How do I stay informed by RWD#5?

Facebook: Please follow us on Facebook for information and updates. The Facebook page for the district (Adair County Rural Water District No. 5) is now administered by the Board Chairman and another Board member and has been updated to allow public comment.

Website: The website (acrwd5.com) is now administered by the Secretary/Treasurer and is in the process of being updated with current information.

Members may subscribe to receive news and alerts via email and/or text through the website.

WATER QUESTIONS:

3. Why am I out of water?

The RWD#5 water treatment facility is the primary source of water for the District. Secondary sources are Westville Utility Authority and Watts Public Works Authority. The District plant facilities are over 30 years old and are not able to support the increasing need of the members within our service area. RWD#5 utilizes our secondary sources of water when circumstances allow. Both Westville and Watts have been good partners to our District, but they must put priority on the needs of their members. Late July 2023, the water treatment facility was not operational, and our secondary sources of water were also unavailable.

The Board took immediate action to get the treatment facility operational as soon as possible. In addition, several matters are simultaneously being dealt with including continuing to partner with our secondary sources of water, having crews prioritize reported leaks, leak detection, and installing new meters which will ultimately assist with pinpointing leaks.

4. What is being done to address the water shortage long-term?

To address the water shortage long term, the Board has been partnering with Cherokee Nation Water and Sanitation and hired the consulting firm of OKAC to develop options for our water district. RWD#5 is a member of the Oklahoma Rural Water Association and we have requested their assistance on a number of issues including a Long-Range Sustainability Plan.

On October 6th, the Board held a special board meeting and voted to authorize OKAC to prepare a proposal regarding tying on to an additional water source contingent upon Cherokee Nation funding the project.

5. What are the possible options for future water sources for the District?

RWD5 Plant: The plant facilities are over 30 years old and already over maximum capacity.

Arkansas: Benton/Washington Regional Public Water Authority is the primary source of water for Westville Utility Authority. A representative informed RWD5 that they are at capacity and not accepting any new additions.

South Delaware County Regional Water Authority: Formerly known as Flint Ridge Rural Water District, this is a regional water treatment facility which was funded by EPA, USDA, IHS and Cherokee Nation. SDCRWA Board is comprised of one member from each participating water district. The Chewey Project line extension was recently completed and could be a possible option for a water source.

6. Why do some members have water but I do not?

It is our understanding that years ago, the Board expanded into the northern part of the District with the plan of a water project coordinated with the State, which ultimately fell through. The members with water are primarily on the “old” lines (Proctor) nearest to the treatment facility. Generally, those members without water are on the “newer” or northern part of the District (Chance, New Hope, Chewy). However, breaks or leaks will result in loss of water in that particular area.

7. When will my water be back on?

Unfortunately, it is difficult to provide a definitive answer to this question for all members.

We realize the water shortage has impacted local businesses, farms and family daily life.

RWD#5 did not get in this situation overnight but has been years in the making and it will not get completely remedied overnight.

The current Board of Directors are committed to restoring safe water on a consistent basis as soon as possible to our families, neighbors, and friends as well as to our own homes.

8. Why have blow off valves been locked?

Several months ago it came to our attention that some members have been utilizing blow off valves to fill swimming pools, wash equipment, and other purposes. The blow off valves have been locked for the following reasons;

- a) these blow off valves are the property of the District,
 - b) usage of water from blow off valves is UNAUTHORIZED AND ILLEGAL as any backflow could contaminate the water supply for the entire District,
 - c) water usage has not been billed to those members utilizing large quantities of water.
- Exceptions have been made in regards to supplying water for our Rural Fire Departments operated by volunteers who protect and serve our communities.

There are currently three farms within the District that have authorized metered blow off valves, in other words they 1) have a backflow preventer 2) have been paying for the water usage for agricultural purposes. Please contact the District to request installation of metered blow off valves.

9. Is there a boil order?

Currently, there is not a mandatory boil order. However, with the inconsistency of water flow through the lines, it is recommended that you boil the water before ingesting. Please refer to the Facebook page and website for any updates.

10. What can I do to assist?

- a) Report any suspected leaks to the RWD#5 Office.
- b) Those members who have water, please conserve water in order to assist our families, friends and neighbors in the northern part of the District.
- c) All members visit this website for water conservation tips. <https://wateruseitwisely.com>

METER AND BILLING QUESTIONS:

11. Why did our rates go up?

The last rate increase was in **2018**. After a rate study conducted by Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA), the Board of Directors discussed and voted on the new monthly water rate schedule. The new rate schedule was approved to take effect on the June 2023 billing cycle. This increase was designed to cover the expenses of the District's aging infrastructure needs.

12. Why did our meter get changed?

The District received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the State via Adair County Commissioners which is being utilized to upgrade our system meters some of which are original meters over 30 years old. The new meters will enable an automatic meter reading system that is more accurate and efficient than manual collection which is prone to human error and is time consuming. Should you have an issue with your meter reading or water usage increase please contact the office via phone or email.

13. Will I be charged a late fee considering the billing issues during the transition?

The Board has agreed that no late fees will be assessed during this transition period, as the issues are not the fault of the members.

14. How can I pay my bill?

The current payment methods are outlined below. **However, the Secretary/Treasurer explored options for payment methods and presented to the Board those options. We anticipate a transition to a new payment system approximately in December or January. Members will be notified as details become available.**

By mail: RWD#5
P. O. Box 248
Proctor, OK 74457

Over the phone: (918) 723-4785

In-person: At the RWD#5 Office in Proctor

Online Bill Payment: <https://acrwd5.com/bill-payment> (\$4.95 Service fee)

Automatic Bank Draft: With this service, the amount of your monthly bill is automatically deducted from your bank account and credited to your utility account. There is no set-up fee or charge associated with this method of payment. To set up Automated Bank Draft, simply download and fill out the form then drop it off or mail it to the office along with a voided check.

Online Bill Pay: Many financial institutions such as major banks offer their customers the ability to pay their bills via an online bill payment service (through your bank's website). Normally, these services debit the customer's checking or savings account to pay the bill. Depending on the financial institution, they may or may not charge a fee for the service.

MEETING AND BOARD QUESTIONS:

15. Who is currently on the Board?

RWD#5 is governed by a 5-member non-paid Board of Directors.

Chairman:	Ivan Hargis
Vice- Chairman:	Kevin Hooper
Secretary/Treasurer:	Vickie Hanvey
Member:	Colt Weaver
Member:	Vacant

16. How are the Board of Directors selected?

The Board of this District shall consist of five members, all of whom shall be participating members of the District. At each annual meeting participating members shall elect for a term of three years the number of Directors whose terms of office have expired. Any vacancy in the board, other than from the expiration of a term of office, shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the Board.

17. Why were there changes in staffing and crews?

The Board is not at liberty to discuss specific personnel matters. However, on Thursday, July 21st, the Board voted to transition our crew and office staff as well as approved a contractor to operate the plant. The contractor was on site Friday morning at 8am maintaining the grounds, operating the plant, fixing leaks and performing system analysis. A Board member returned phone messages and fielded office calls.

During a Special Meeting on Friday, July 28th, an Office Manager was hired and began work the following Monday. Thank you for bearing with us during this transition.

18. What is the role of South Delaware County Regional Water Authority: SDCRWA Board

has authorized their crew to assist our District with operations. They have assisted with leak repairs, plant operations and meter readings.

19. Has the Board applied for grants?

The Board has received funds from Cherokee Nation to complete our system mapping project as well as other funds for a system hydraulic analysis and an engineering report. The Board also received funds from the Adair County Commissioners. We are also exploring applications for other grant funds.