



Connection

April 23, 2025 Editor: Pam Lottinville

MUCH ADO ABOUT WATER

It seems we have been discussing the water situation in the village of St. Anne for several years—if that statement found you nodding your head, it's because it is true. Dave O'Connell was elected our mayor in 2009 at which time, the biggest obstacle facing our community was the antiquated water system. Looking at the problem with a wide lens, the village board discovered that the water lines were approximately 100 years old, with little location mapping for reference. Gas lines and electrical lines were near in proximity. Typically, some old lines contained lead which also needed modernization. Challenges for the village board seemed insurmountable until they met with engineer Neil Piggush. With the leadership and guidance offered by Piggush, planning began in earnest in 2018-19. This local area has an aqua fur at a depth of 210 feet and loaded with excessive iron. Actually, water has a natural amount of iron, but when it reaches the excessive amount, the rust settles on clothing, on our hair and builds up in the water pipes.

As suggested, the project was to have four phases at a cost of \$5-6 million and funded through EPA Loans. By spreading the payments out over a 30-year payback period, at a 1 percent interest rate, the payments were minimized. In addition, Neil Piggush was able to assist the village by writing grants.

"Neil Piggush was indispensable in this project. We could not have accomplished all that we did without his knowledge and guidance. He was great to work with and his grant writing saved us millions of dollars," stated Mayor O'Connell.

Phase 1 of the St. Anne Water Project entailed the replacement of water mains along Guertin Street and Route 1 and resurfacing Guertin Street. New hookups for all residences and businesses along these streets was completed. The county will be resurfacing the streets soon.

Problems that arose from this part of the project included the dust from the roads that were torn up. Along with old gas lines and sewer lines that we did not know were under the streets, we found that iron accumulated in areas that are called "dead ends" and needed to be flushed. The new system has eliminated the dead ends and is now in a "looping" system which means the water continually moves.

Phase 2 was to have an Iron Filtration System installed, an extension of the pump house to accommodate the new system. This part of the plan has been completed. The water is being tested for bacteria at the time of this article. This also means that we should be able to use the new system within days. The biggest problem encountered with this phase is the process of taking samples and getting them tested in Peoria, Illinois in order to obtain approval.



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Phase 2 of Water—the Process

I was invited to have a guided tour of the new pump facility with a complete explanation in order to write this article. Mayor Dave O'Connell and ESDA Director Don Leveque describe the process to me. A few words that came to mind about what I witnessed—"impressive" and "pride." The system is a marvel and there is a sense of pride for the village board. O'Connell, Don Leveque and Neil Piggush were at the helm to make this happen. Don's job is a 24/7, 365 days a year to monitor the water, pressure, and chemicals.



Photo Top Left: New 150 K generator to accommodate the new pump system.

Top Right: Dave O'Connell and Don Leveque at the Intake valve. 1000 gallons of water per minute run through here.



Middle Left: Two of the eight filters that contain various media for each step for the filtering system. Each tank runs 400 gallons per minute for 70 minutes to condition the water.



Middle Right: O'Connell standing at the water Exiting segment. Pressure sends it to homes.



Bottom Left: Leveque demonstrating that the water residue comes out here after being filtered and runs to the three retention ponds on the south lawn which is the final photo, Bottom right.



Leveque is in charge of the water, sewer, streets, and buildings management and maintenance.

"The iron filtration system is the 'crowning jewel' of the entire project," says Mayor O'Connell.

Photos courtesy of Pam Lottinville
If you have an opportunity to see the filtration system in action, you will learn a lot and appreciate your new water system.

