

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Open Letter to City of Bruceville-Eddy residents from Mayor Linda Owens

Dear Bruceville-Eddy residents and water system customers,

The City of Bruceville-Eddy recognizes its responsibility to consistently provide essential services to its customers. We acknowledge that, as of late, we have fallen short in this commitment, particularly when it comes to delivering a continuous supply of water to our community.

As your Mayor, it is important to me to communicate that this challenge is not due to a lack of effort. The City of Bruceville-Eddy is financially sound and has qualified personnel available to perform the required work. Since the sewer system project commenced in late September 2024, we have all experienced an increase in water and gas line breaks due to the related excavation work, and I, too, share your frustrations with the inconvenience this has caused.

Our water system currently serves an estimated 6,027 people over 45 square miles. Its roots date back to the early part of the 20th century and are a collection of several privately owned water systems that have all gradually come under the banner of the city's municipal water system over the years. Unfortunately, a great deal of these strikes that have occurred are a result of improperly maintained maps. For the majority of the system's existence, hand-drawn maps have been the standard. Without the benefit of modern tools such as GIS software and GPS, these maps are proving to be less than reliable for the precision required with the installation of the new sanitary sewer system. What we have discovered while embarking on this expansive sewer project is only further proof that our mapping efforts in the past have been inadequate to carry us successfully into the future.

While the city has made significant strides in updating our maps over the last two years – we have upgraded to a new engineering firm and have transferred our maps to a shared GIS platform – it is evident we still have more work cut out for us to get these to a standard of accuracy! As new water lines are discovered, we are regularly working with our GIS consultant to update the maps for future users.

I understand all of this background information will in no way make up for the lack of consistent water delivery you should expect as a resident and customer of our system. And while we are unable to properly abate the root cause of this issue at this time, we understand and share your frustrations with these continual water line breaks. To show our support for the issues you are facing, I have directed our staff to make available two large pallets of bottled water for those in need. These are now ready for pick-up at City Hall and will be distributed on a first-come-first-serve basis, until supplies are exhausted. Residents/customers may take up to two cases per address. Arrangements for home delivery can be made for those unable to lift or pick up this offer.

Additionally, please know that your City Council has made it a priority to not only repair, but also to upgrade under-capacity and failing lines using a combination of grant funding and water revenue. A major \$1.1 million project was completed earlier this year in the Falls County area, and another significant upgrade and looping project is currently underway in the Old Bethany area. This current

project will add redundancy and allow for multiple paths of water flow in the event of future outages.

We estimate that the sewer collection system has now passed the 50% completion mark. While you can expect more water leaks to occur before the sewer system is completed, know that there is a 'light at the end of this tunnel.'

If you have not done so already, it would be wise to stock up on bottled water and potentially even fill your tub with water for sanitary purposes.

Our Public Works team has been putting in plenty of extra hours in the past eight months to ensure that our water lines are back in service as quickly as possible after an unexpected interruption in service occurs. I encourage you to take a minute and thank these dedicated individuals for their service to our community if you see them out in the field!

Lastly, to address the condition of our roadways, my staff and I drive down these same roads daily, and we are well aware of the lack of communication and roadway signage on behalf of our sewer contractor. Know that we are working behind the scenes daily to correct observed issues through negotiation.

Please know that your City Council understands the importance of committing resources towards this vital public infrastructure. As a part of the sewer project, Council elected to provide a full-width reclamation to all streets torn up from this construction. Unfortunately, we will not be able to perform this work until after the sewer system is complete and testing has been performed, as we do not want our residents to bear the additional cost associated with digging up roadways to reset lines and manholes.

On top of this significant investment, with your support, the city recently enacted a dedicated street maintenance tax in April of 2024 that has slowly been accumulating additional funding from a small sales tax addition. We have plans to utilize this funding to address long-overdue repairs in areas of our city that are not impacted by the sewer system project. A street committee was formed late last year that has been comprised of staff, council, and citizens alike to determine and recommend to City Council the best course of action to utilize our finite resources. To date, Council has signed an interlocal agreement with McLennan County for a reseal of two streets that will help extend their life, have begun design and preliminary engineering work for a full reclamation of a portion of Hungry Hill Road, and last year, made a major purchase of a street repair patching unit that puts us well above our peers in an ability to perform routine maintenance activities.

Lastly, I just want to say, if you are experiencing any issues and have yet to let your voice be heard, I highly encourage you to do so! My contact information and that of your City Council members can be found on our website. We would also like to invite you to join us at an upcoming City Council meeting. Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.

For operational matters, our City Administrator, Kent Manton, can be contacted using the following information:

Kent Manton, 254-859-5700 x100, or kmanton@bruceville-eddy.us

The City Council and I want to thank the residents who have been impacted by this ongoing project for your continued patience. We are committed to building Bruceville-Eddy into the place you and your families love to call home!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda O", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Sincerely, your Mayor,

Linda Owens