



BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

CITY OF HANNIBAL

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ELECTRIC, WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS

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CLEAN WATER CHALLENGES COMING TO HANNIBAL

I would like to address the citizens of Hannibal on a topic that is complicated and difficult, but one that must be dealt with as a whole community. The Hannibal Board of Public Works has been given the responsibility to take the lead, but we must all work together to find acceptable solutions. The topic I refer to is the responsibility of the City of Hannibal to comply with the myriad of Federal regulations concerning clean water.

Decades ago, the citizens of Hannibal through its City Council chose to establish the Board of Public Works to manage the business of building and operating the Water and Sewer systems. Over the years that business has become much more complicated. Today the HBPW has to treat both fresh and waste water to levels of cleanliness that were unimaginable when we began. Soon those levels will be raised again. The HBPW has to juggle competing demands of construction costs, chemical and labor costs, debt loads, rates, and expectations both of citizens and regulators.

For me personally, this is a very challenging work environment. There is never a dull moment because our environment continuously changes with new regulation and standards for us to meet. We are always pushing the envelope to find new ways to meet these challenges and still keep our costs in check. We have a highly trained staff of engineers and equipment operators using a lot of very sophisticated equipment to get the work done. I would put our staff up against anybody's anywhere for dedication and skill to get our job done.

The challenges I mention strain our ability to keep up, but our staff is determined to give it our best. Our mission is to provide safe and reliable utilities and services to all the citizens of Hannibal and we take that very seriously.

More new challenges are yet to come. The EPA will mandate further improvements and regulations as time goes by. Compliance to those rules will be expensive and there will be no money from Washington to help. These will be classic Unfunded Mandates that we hear so much about. Some people will disagree with the need, but the HBPW is obliged to obey the rules. I would like to start a discussion in these pages over the next few weeks to debate the issues and hear from other opinionated folks as we figure out our future together. I plan to outline our problems for you over the next few weeks. In August we should be ready to decide together how our city will respond to the water cleanliness challenges brought to us by our friendly regulators at the EPA. Stay tuned.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Stevenson, P.E.
General Manager

"The mission of the Hannibal Board of Public Works is to provide safe, reliable utility products with excellent customer service at reasonable prices."