



# BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

CITY OF HANNIBAL

OFFICE 573-221-8050  
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[www.hannibalbpw.org](http://www.hannibalbpw.org)

## ELECTRIC, WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS

3 INDUSTRIAL LOOP DRIVE • PO BOX 1589 • HANNIBAL, MISSOURI 63401-1589

June 12, 2013

### STUFF IN THE WATER MUST COME OUT

We have been discussing the fact that as a community we have some choices to make. And, just like we teach our kids, choices we make have consequences in our lives. Recently, we summarized some choices we have with our water and wastewater utilities. We can comply with the law, we can try to get the law changed, or we can ignore the law.

Compliance with the law is our only real choice and it is going to be expensive. The HBPW has been working with consultants and industry experts for several years to develop compliance plans. Together we have studied our situation, the condition of our plants and underground systems, and our financial condition. What we can say today is that our systems that were once adequate are no longer for two reasons. Our systems are deteriorating with age faster than we can repair or replace, and standards of compliance have become more stringent than our systems could ever meet. Costs of upgrades are going to cost millions of dollars over the next decade.

Let's talk about our water plant. Most know our source of water is the Mississippi River, virtually unlimited in quantity. This is a tremendous blessing to our community. But the quality of the incoming water is becoming more worrisome. True, upstream treatment plants are doing a good job of removing pollutants from their discharge streams. But, did you know that 85% of the pollution in the river today is from agricultural sources? And, did you know that most agricultural pollution is untreated? Agricultural polluters are not required to get permits from the DNR as Hannibal is required to do. Today there is stuff in the water we do not know how to remove. What should we do?

We are making plans right now to remove two pollutants from our drinking water. One is in the general category of Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs). The very act of disinfecting water with chlorine creates new chemical byproducts that are harmful to us over time. We must now disinfect without using chlorine. The other is the general category of micro-organisms, or things that normal disinfection cannot kill. A Cryptosporidium outbreak in Wisconsin killed several people and we learned the source of the outbreak was in the water supply. We want to keep that from happening here. In fact, we are already under a mandate from the EPA to remove this danger over the next two years. Price tag to remove just these two pollutants alone is about \$2 million.

There are yet other things in the water that we do not want. Does anyone want to ingest other peoples' medications? Pills of all sorts such as estrogen and Viagra flushed into the sewer are not removed from upstream treatment plants and end up in our drinking water. How about a nice helping of animal growth hormone from an unregulated agricultural site? You shudder, but that stuff is in your bottled water, too! How do those choices look, now?

Money for removing these two pollutants is not coming from the Federal Government. They are unfunded mandates that we often speak about. But, unfunded or not, we should get this stuff out of our water supply. The Board of Public Works has determined our lowest cost source of funds for these and



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other projects is to issue Revenue Bonds. In August voters will have a chance to approve a bond issue. Please vote wisely.

For more information and to see copies of previous guest columns please go to our website [www.hannibalbpw.org](http://www.hannibalbpw.org) or follow us on Facebook. Post your comments or send a letter to the editor of this paper.

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.”*