

# ILRW FACT SHEET



## ILRW SERVICE AREA

### In Iowa

Buena Vista County  
Cherokee County  
Clay County  
Dickinson County  
Emmet County  
O'Brien County  
Palo Alto County

### In Minnesota

Jackson County

## IOWA LAKES REGIONAL WATER'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Iowa Lakes Regional Water is a public utility organized and operated under the authority granted by the County Board of Supervisors.

An elected board of directors governs the Water District. The District is managed by a general manager who directs the activities of all other personnel by the policies adopted by the Board of Directors.

An annual meeting is held each year for the election of directors, annual report, and presentation of the budget.

## HISTORY OF IOWA LAKES REGIONAL WATER

From the time Clay County was settled, residents of the area generally had problems locating a source of dependable, high quality water. As livestock and human populations increased along with the implementation of modern farming methods, the water problems reached a level of concern among the rural residents.

Hauling water became a way of life for some who were unfortunate enough to have poor quality wells. In many instances, the well water was contaminated with nitrates, bacteria, and other substances that were dangerous to human and livestock health. In an effort to remedy the water situation, residents began to organize for the development of a safe, dependable water supply system that would be available to everyone in the rural areas and the small communities in the county.

A preliminary steering committee was formed in March 1976 with the intention of holding public informational meetings concerning the merits of having a rural water system in the area. With assistance and information from the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) and the County Extension Service, the committee began soliciting preliminary water use information and a \$25 good intention fee from any interested party.

As a result of the interest expressed by people, the steering committee became formally incorporated as the Clay County Rural Water District and a Board of Directors was chosen. The Board then selected Cornwall, Avery, Bjornstad, and Scott for its law firm and the engineering firm of DeWild Grant Reckert and Associates Company (DGR) to prepare a preliminary feasibility study.

After the study was presented to the Board of Directors and gained approval in October 1977, it was forwarded to FmHA with a request for funding the construction of the district. A final sign-up campaign began in November

## OUR GOAL

Iowa Lakes Regional Water is a regional utility organization whose purpose is to provide a safe, reliable source of water to homes and farms in Northwest Iowa and Southwest Minnesota



## HISTORY OF ILRW CONTINUED...

1977, soliciting an additional \$385 from each member. Three months later, FmHA approved a \$6.9 million loan to build the Clay District.

Following the final sign-up campaign, DGR conducted a water exploration program, concluded the design of the system, and prepared final plans and specifications. After the plans and specifications were completed and approved by the Board of Directors and various governmental agencies, December 6, 1979, was set as the date for the project bid opening. Construction then commenced in April 1980 and the district's first phase became operational eleven months later. Of the total project cost of \$9.5 million, FmHA, supplied a \$1 million grant and increased its loan to \$8.2 million. Subscribers paid \$310,000 in membership and connection fees.

When the first steering committee was formed in 1976, the District began with nearly 500 miles of pipeline and 925 members. Since that time, the District has grown to nearly 1,000 miles of pipeline and over 4,100 members in seven counties in Iowa including Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien, Palo Alto, and Jackson County in Minnesota.

In 2006, the Board of Directors determined it was important to change the name of the organization to Iowa Lakes Regional Water to reflect the broader membership base. The Board spent a considerable amount of time developing the name, which is already highly recognized in the region.

The District has also expanded its horizons past just the water industry and started building wastewater systems for small communities. To date, there are 11 small towns that ILRW has constructed sewer systems for and operate.