

SIRWA Board approves to proceed with SW Cass Rural Water Project

By Jennifer Nichols
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CASS COUNTY - Members of the Southern Iowa Rural Water Association (SIRWA) approved going ahead with the expansion into the southwest part of Cass County after getting a favorable response to surveys on the idea, according to SIRWA officials.

In June, SIRWA Manager Dan McIntosh told members of the Cass County Board of Supervisors that there may be stimulus package money available that would allow expansion into the southwest part of the county following the return of surveys mailed to residents.

"In order for the project to 'flow' financially, we need to know how many people would be interested in signing up for ru-

ral water," SIRWA wrote in a letter which went to residents with the survey. "It takes about 70 percent of those eligible to make the project feasible. We are not asking for any kind of firm commitment from you, but need to know of those who are definitely not interested."

The survey asked residents have adequate water supply, if they have ever had their water tested, if they would be interested in using water from SIRWA, and if they would want it for family use and/or livestock use. The letter states that a minimum water bill would be \$35 per month for the first 3,000 gallons. If the proposed expansion could go forward, SIRWA estimated water would be available in approximately three years.

McIntosh said he wanted to present the project to the supervisors so they would be

aware of it.

According to a letter to the Cass County Board of Supervisors from SIRWA, there was an "overall positive response" from the surveys about the expansion. Officials state in the letter there was "about 52 percent" return of the surveys and "of those, about 60 percent expressed an interest in having rural water."

Officials said in the letter, "Paper work will begin immediately and someone could be in the field, beginning the collection of easements and Water User's Agreements in the next 90 days or so. It could, however, still be as much as three years before those in the final designed plan area will see water in front of their property and as much as 18 months before the first heavy equipment work begins."