

**Water and Environmental Programs
Engineering Success Stories**

State: Vermont

Borrower Name: Town of Guildhall

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Keywords: Management

Interstate Water System

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE:

The problem was two communities that had shared a water supply were being forced to separate into two independent systems by a set of unfortunate circumstances.

The Town of Guildhall, Vermont purchased its water from the Town of Northumberland, New Hampshire. The two towns are separated by the Connecticut River. Northumberland's supply had insufficient capacity for its own needs and was not in compliance with the Surface Water Treatment Rule of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Because Northumberland's supply to Guildhall did not meet standards, the State of Vermont required Guildhall to come into compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Northumberland had been searching for years for a new source. Its mountain stream was too small. The residents objected to trying to treat the water from the two large rivers that flow through town. Numerous wells had been drilled over many years but came up dry.

Another problem is that this interstate sale of water would require an intermunicipal agreement and congressional approval.

Guildhall had despaired of ever receiving suitable water from Northumberland. Under pressure from the Vermont Water Supply Division, Guildhall decided to go it alone and find a source for itself.

Solution:

Guildhall drilled a well and found sufficient water for its needs and for those of Northumberland. At this point, Guildhall made a decision to go it alone. They began preparing plans and specifications for new pipes, a storage tank, and a pump house.

In the meantime, Northumberland, which refused to believe they couldn't find groundwater for themselves, had drilled another well, which turned out to have ample

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water for them and for Guildhall. (One needs to realize that in this area a gusher can be located only a few feet from a dry hole.)

At this point, Rural Development encouraged Guildhall to try and negotiate again a continuing water purchase from Northumberland. Both municipalities had an ample water supply. Guildhall could enter the negotiations with some strength because of its new source.

The end result, is that Guildhall continues to purchase water from the Northumberland. This reduces the cost of water to Guildhall, because they did not need to construct a separate tank or well house. They do not need to perform ongoing tests of their well.

Successful Elements.

The success story is that the final push from Rural Development to keep the two systems from separating was successful. After each system found that it could go it alone, they had little incentive to remain together. After Rural Development's recommendation to Guildhall to try negotiating again, Guildhall and Northumberland did obtain an intermunicipal agreement and congressional approval.

Persistence on the part of Northumberland to keep searching for that elusive well even after most others had given up on the possibility, also was necessary for this to be a success.

Guildhall and Northumberland are achieving benefits of having only one source with reduced operation and maintenance costs. Guildhall did not need to expand its responsibilities to include a source and a tank. Their system remains simply a distribution system.

Joint funding between Rural Development and the State of Vermont keeps user costs in Guildhall reasonable.

Unsuccessful Elements.

Northumberland did not want to install water meters and decided to forego financing from Rural Development.