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CUD MARKS MILESTONE IN FIRE PROTECTION

The Number of Fire Hydrants Servicing Rutherford County Now Surpasses 5,000

MURFREESBORO - Consolidated Utility District recently surpassed 5,000 fire hydrants the water utility services within its distribution system. This number is significant in terms of water availability for the county's Fire Departments.

"Our 5,000th hydrant is located on the corner of Conhocken Court and Alta Lane," said CUD Water Quality Foreman Mark Lee. "It's a big number in terms of what it means for the county's growth and its needs. For each hydrant, our department runs flow tests, assigns a number, and paints the new hydrant after it has been released by the inspector or installed by our Maintenance Department."

"When we flow test a fire hydrant, we ensure the hydrant opens and closes properly, we inspect the caps and safety chains, and ensure the hydrant is painted the proper color. We also repaint older fire hydrants when our schedule permits."

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) approved by CUD's Board of Directors and implemented by the Management and Engineering staff further improves water availability with additional fire hydrants and further reduces the number of Class C (red top) fire hydrants in the system which offer the lowest output of gallons per minute.

The CIP will fund installation of fire hydrants on existing lines that can now or will be able to support hydrants due to infrastructure upgrades in areas such as Manchester Highway and Rocky Fork Road.

Over the past several years Consolidated Utility District has built a strong working relationship with Murfreesboro Fire Department, Smyrna Fire Department, and Rutherford County Fire and Rescue, which has paid dividends through more accurate water loss reporting, locating cross connections, and reporting water theft.

The number of hydrants placed within the county has grown dramatically dating back to the mid-1990s when each year saw more than 100 new hydrants installed. 2005 and 2006 represent the pinnacle for hydrant placement with 473 and 414 units, respectively. Since then, most years have seen between 102 and 304 hydrants installed.

Most fire hydrants within the District are installed by developers as part of new subdivision construction. The District only installs fire hydrants except as part of a main line construction project, where they are used in testing and flushing of the new line, or when purchased by customers for installation at a specific location.

The District must review each application and determine whether the required fire flows can be satisfied. If the District determines the water distribution system can support installation at the proposed location, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation must also approve the proposed installation. Once State approval is obtained, the new fire hydrant is installed by the District in approximately 4-6 weeks or as scheduling allows.