

Heart Mountain Irrigation rates raised for Buck Springs project

Written by Gib Mathers

Tuesday, 13 January 2009



To assist in construction costs at the Buck Springs siphon inlet, Heart Mountain Irrigation District landowners will see a rate increase of \$1.50 beginning this year. Tribune photo by Gib Mathers

Heart Mountain Irrigation District users will pay an average rate increase of \$1.50 per acre beginning this spring to pay for replacing the Buck Springs Siphon inlet.

The average assessment was \$21.50 per acre, and will increase to \$23 per acre, said Dan Laursen, Heart Mountain District manager.

So, if 100 acres of land were irrigated, the landowner would pay an annual \$2,300 assessment fee, Laursen said.

Landowners were informed of the rate increase effective the spring of 2009 during a February 2008 meeting, he said.

The siphon is nestled in the steep foothills below Heart Mountain.

It is a 104-inch steel siphon that connects to 108-inch concrete pipe, which runs 166 feet overland to tie into the Heart Mountain Canal.

Laursen said the siphon was leaking.

"It was wearing out," he said.

The siphon starts at the top of a hill, then connects to its water conduit to run across the prairie like a giant, gray mole hill burrowing to the Heart Mountain Canal.

At the construction site, chunks of old pipe, bigger than pickups, sit like huge, disintegrating concrete beasts with twisted reinforcement bars resembling grasping tentacles waiting to be hauled away.

The good news is that the price of the concrete work is lower than the engineers anticipated. The estimated cost was \$703,000, but the bid came in at \$604,578, Laursen said.

The district secured a loan for one third and a grant for the other two-thirds of the project's cost from the Wyoming Water

Development Commission, Laursen said.

So Heart Mountain will receive a loan for \$201,526, which the district will repay in the next 10 years. The remaining \$403,052 will be a grant.

Work on the project is underway.

Engineering Associates, Cody, designed the replacement and Reiman Corporation, Cheyenne, is completing the construction, Laursen said.