

NORTH END WATER USERS ALSO GET STATE MONEY

Written by CJ Baker, Powell Tribune

Cody dialysis center approved; Meeteetse transfer station denied

Wyoming's statewide elected officials have given a nearly half-million dollar boost to efforts to bring North End Water Users onto the Northwest Rural Water District system.

Though their water is currently safe, a couple spikes in nitrate levels in recent years have forced North End's roughly 200 users to find another source of water; research has shown hooking on to Northwest's system to be the best option for the north-of-Powell residents.

The Northwest district initially asked for \$2.7 million from the state board to help rebuild the North End system and merge it with theirs. But with limited funds available, officials decided it would be best to split the job into phases. The \$496,600 awarded by the State Loan and Investment Board last week — and another \$281,400 tentatively earmarked for the in the 2012 Wyoming Water Development Commission budget — are intended to cover just the project's design.

Breaking the project into phases also will give users and the district another year to finalize their plans for paying for construction, said Water Development Commission Director Mike Purcell in a letter to board staff. Future financing likely will include other state funds, he said.

The preliminary estimate for the entire project is \$7.5 million to \$8 million. North End users have been told it will be at least 2014 before they receive Northwest water.

Meeteetse

Building a transfer station for the town of Meeteetse may prove necessary, but it's too early to call it an emergency. Agreeing with the recommendation of Department of Environmental Quality staff, the State Loan and Investment Board denied Meeteetse's \$165,928 request of emergency funding to help it build a transfer station.

The DEQ had called the application "premature" in a letter to state lands and investments staff.

The DEQ's Craig McOmie wrote that while he thinks the station will ultimately be OK'd, "too many questions remain that need to be addressed from the sizing of the facility to the frequency of the waste being hauled, etc."

The town has been hauling its trash directly to the Cody landfill since the Meeteetse site's closure in July 2010. The town's garbage truck wore out earlier this year and the town had to buy a new one with state money shared among Park County's governments. A transfer station, which temporarily stores garbage for hauling in fewer, larger loads, would cut down on the town's trips to Cody, reduce wear on its truck and minimize the time employees spend on garbage.

Meeteetse officials have been asked to refine their design and plan for the transfer station with the DEQ. They also are seeking federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.