

Pipe fix ends water woes

Glenn Addition water usage drops by more than 75 percent

By Bridget Manley

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Water usage at the Glenn Addition has dropped by more than 75 percent, thanks to a water line fix earlier this month, city administrators said.

The question now is how will residents be charged for the amount of water they use?

"We haven't figured that out yet," City Manager Steve Golnar said.

The Glenn Addition, located in south Rawlins, contains corrals and pens in which residents can keep livestock. In February, Rawlins city councilors tabled a proposed commodity fee increase after Glenn Addition users voiced concerns about being charged for water some residents thought was lost to leakage.

The commodity charge is based on how much water each user consumes. A main meter on the Glenn Addition site showed that, before the leak was fixed, the site used 513,000 gallons a month on average. To determine how much water is used, the city subtracted 25 percent of that amount, which accounts for leakage, to come up with 384,750 gallons, or 7,695 gallons per tap.

Tap meters on the site were removed years ago because they were difficult to maintain, city officials said.

City officials proposed to round up the per-tap figure to 8,000 gallons and charge \$2 per 1,000 gallons used, or \$16 per tap.

Add a recently increased \$14 flat rate, and Glenn Addition users were looking at paying \$30 per month for water, as opposed to the \$10 monthly fee they paid before.

After the City Council heard residents' concerns about the proposed commodity fee and the amount of water used at the site, city staff began looking for leaks on and around the addition.

City workers later located the leak in a 12-inch abandoned water line west of the area, said Adolf Bernal, city utilities division superintendent.

He estimated that about 7 gallons was seeping out from the defunct pipe every minute.

Crews repaired the leak on April 8. Total cost of the repair added up to \$3,768, including equipment, labor and materials, Bernal said.

Readings on a central water meter at the Glenn Addition have "gone down considerably" since the leak was repaired, he added.

If meter readings taken during the last three weeks hold true, he estimates that the Glenn Addition will use an average of about 120,000 gallons per month, or about 24 percent of the previous monthly usage.

"I think it's good news that the amount of treated water going through the meter has been reduced, which means ... less water is being wasted," Golnar said.

But, as of Tuesday, city staff and officials hadn't come up with a plan for setting the commodity fee.

Some Glenn Addition users suggested the city reinstalling tap meters — a measure that Bernal estimated could cost \$127,540. City staff are weighing the expense of replacing the meters against their potential benefits, Golnar said.

Regardless of what recommendation he takes to city councilors for approval, Golnar said he plans to involve Glenn Addition users in the process, using public hearings, mass mailings or other means.

"We'll involve the folks in the Glenn Addition before we adopt anything," he said, adding that a date for a hearing or mailing have not been set yet.

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