



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

To: News Media

From: Bamberg County Administration

Date: October 2, 2023

Re: Bamberg County Council, Bamberg Board of Public Works, and Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities Celebrate Water Grants

Bamberg, South Carolina (September 2023) – Once again, persistence and perseverance pay off for Bamberg County—this time with clean water to drink, cook, and bathe, something many South Carolinians take for granted.

On September 27, 2023, Bamberg Board of Public Works (BPW) welcomed members of Bamberg County Council and Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities (DPU) at the BPW Complex to celebrate their collective victory in obtaining three South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program grants. Bamberg City Councilman Corey Ramsey opened the ceremony with a prayer, and after BPW General Manager Gregg Griffin, BPW Board Member Buzzy Bunch, and City of Bamberg Mayor Nancy Foster welcomed everyone, remarks were given by DPU Water Division Director Eric Odom and BPW Compliance Director Camden Kittrell. Additional remarks were given by Al Jenkins, Regional Director for Senator Tim Scott, Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston, and Bamberg County Councilman Larry Haynes. Bamberg County Council Vice Chairman Evert Comer and Councilwoman Sharon Hammond were also present. The ceremony was followed by a reception in Commission Chambers.

According to the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, “The South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (SCRIA) awarded 216 South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP) grants for over \$1.3 billion in one-time water, wastewater, and storm water system competitive grants.” As a result, the Bamberg Board of Public Works was awarded a Community Impact Grant for nearly \$8.5 million, a Regional Impact Grant for almost \$3.7 million, and a separate SCRIA grant for \$500,000. According to the Bamberg Board of Public Works, the Community Impact Grant will fund three separate projects:

- **Bridge Street Sewer Rehabilitation:** Rehabilitate and replace area sewer mains, reducing the infiltration of ground and rainwater in the sewers

- **Wastewater Treatment Plant Project:** Upgrade equipment and implement more efficient plant techniques to reduce maintenance and improve environmental impact
- **Water Line Expansion to Family Circle Community:** Provide clean drinking water and fire protection capabilities, thereby positively impacting 75 Bamberg County residences in County Council District 3

For over a decade, county residents complained of multiple negative effects from their well water, including smelly, brown water which stained their clothing and damaged appliances. Many residents took it upon themselves to test their well water and discovered high levels of iron. Eleven years ago, in September of 2012, the Bamberg Board of Public Works actually applied for this same grant, and although they did not get it then, they refused to give up on their pursuit of clean water for Bamberg County citizens.

In addition to the Community Impact Grant, BPW was awarded a Regional Impact Grant for nearly \$3.7 million and a separate SC Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) Grant for \$500,000. "The Regional Impact Grant is a Bamberg Board of Public Works Interconnection with Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities and will improve Bamberg County's sustainability for decades to come," according to the Bamberg Board of Public Works website. "A goal of RIA's SCIIP grants was to create regional partnerships to provide a more viable future for the state's rural community...the Interconnection will provide Bamberg with a viable emergency water supply and long term sustainability to our customers should our deep water wells become obsolete," BPW General Manager Gregg Griffin said.

BPW Compliance Director Camden Kittrell thanked Lower Savannah Council of Governments and Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston for doing "the legwork on the water line extension grant."

Senator Tim Scott's Regional Director, Al Jenkins, described BPW General Manager Gregg Griffin as a "go-getter and intentionally persistent" and on behalf of Senator Scott's office thanked Bamberg County for including them in the celebration. Jenkins reflected on how the quality of life for Bamberg citizens will significantly improve, proclaiming, "It's a great day in Bamberg!"

Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston thanked the Bamberg Board of Public Works for being great to work with and for not saying "no" to the partnership with Bamberg County and other local entities. Preston said, "The local public utility boards are the engine to economic, industrial, infrastructural, and business growth...and paramount to growing Bamberg's tax base, which will inadvertently lower taxes for Bamberg County citizens." Additionally, Preston thanked Senator Scott's office, the City of Bamberg, the Southern Carolina Alliance, and Lower Savannah Council of Governments's Director Dr. William Molnar and Planner Emory Langston for helping to make this dream of clean water a reality.

District 3 Councilman Larry Haynes expressed his appreciation to the Bamberg Board of Public Works for assisting with this project in his district, which he began working on back in 2010. Haynes said he walked from home to home to meet with constituents and was saddened when he witnessed firsthand what residents described as their "black" showers that were a result of

the contaminated water. Haynes said both he and his constituents are “very appreciative to have clean water...and now they won’t have to go all the way into town to the laundromat to clean their clothes.”

These water improvement grants, along with the federal broadband grant, will propel Bamberg County toward a brighter future, one that will include a strong infrastructure, which is literally the foundation of all thriving communities.

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For more information on this press release, email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.