

## AUGUST 2019

Rainbow Water District is 70 years old this month! Some highlights of our first decade follow.

### **Incorporation Proclamation: August 22, 1949**

*WHEREAS, at a special election duly and regularly held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 1949... there was submitted to the legal voters thereof, the question whether all that portion of Lane County, State of Oregon, as above described, should be incorporated as a community for the purpose of supplying its residents with water for domestic purposes... WHEREAS, the incorporation of such district, to be known as the Rainbow Water District, received the affirmative vote of the majority of votes cast at said election.*



JAY HICKS, JR., superintendent of the new Rainbow Water District north of Springfield, turns on a meter for the new system which is going into service this week. Watching him are Paul A. Braun, foreman for Inter-City Sand and Gravel, which did the job; Albert A. Brown, secretary of the board, and Adrian Vaaler, engineer. The new system, which will serve 300 users when it is hooked up, will depend on more than 40,000 feet of pipe. Water will be purchased from the Eugene Water and Electric Board.

These names were submitted as candidates for the volunteer position of Commissioner: *John Adams, Wendell Bartholomew, Otto Benda, Delbert Brown, Russel Ebbert, Ray Keen, J. H. Klipfel, George E. Paisley, George W. Perkins, Darrel Rossiter, Warren M. Smith, Selmar Wicks, Irvin Goude, and Jim Primrose.*

These five were elected as the first Board of Commissioners:

*Wendell Bartholomew, Russel Ebbert, Selmar Wicks, Delbert Brown, and Ray Keen.*

Rainbow came into being 70 years ago to serve water to customers in north and west Springfield. Construction began in 1950 under the direction of the first Superintendent, Jay Hicks. Water was originally supplied through a metered connection with EWEB. During

those first few years, there was a flurry of construction and planning for the new water system. Since water was purchased from EWEB, and the district had no sources, storage or treatment facilities, the focus was on installing water mains and services to connect new customers.

### **Lane County Special Election Ballot Question: June 9, 1952**

*Shall the Rainbow Water District be empowered to provide protection for its inhabitants from fire, and for that purpose to either purchase fire apparatus and equipment and to maintain, service, and operate the same, or to contract with any city, town or rural fire protection district, or other municipal corporation for fire protection...*

Board meetings were held in Superintendent Hick's home. As homes quickly sprung up and subdivisions took shape in the growing district, residents became more concerned about fire protection. Voters in 1952 gave Rainbow this added authority in accordance with Oregon law. (The district has since contracted with the City of Springfield for fire protection.)

**Water Supply Development: 1956**

Jay Hicks served as the Superintendent of both the Rainbow Water District, in north and west Springfield, and the McKenzie Highway Water District, which included parts of current-day Thurston in east Springfield. The two districts jointly hired a consultant to study the feasibility of developing their own water supply. Potential well sites were scouted along the McKenzie River and three Weyerhaeuser Wellfield wells were drilled over the summer of 1956. These wells were connected to the system, with the two water utilities sharing the water and ending the contract to purchase water from EWEB.



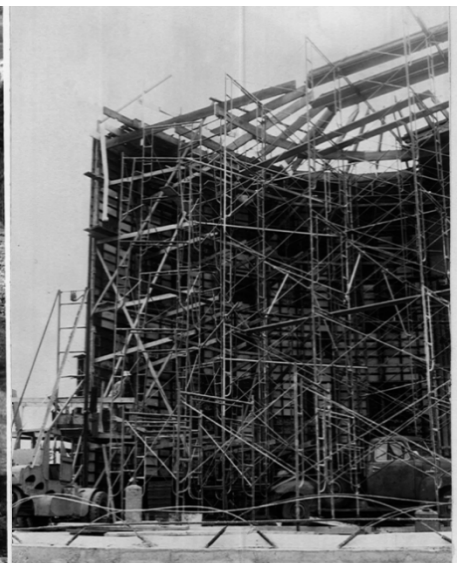
**Office and Control House: 1957**

With the new wells, a 24" water main and control house were built along 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. By 1957, The districts had a small building, providing office space and the ability to remotely operate wells. Board meetings were moved out of the superintendent's home. (We have since added on but are at the same location today, and we still have that original desk!)



**Kelly Butte Storage Reservoir: 1959**

Pacific Power & Light owned an elevated water tank on the top of Kelly Butte that was installed around 1944. Superintendent Hicks led a controversial effort to install a new one million gallon concrete storage reservoir on top of the butte. Neighbors were concerned about the view and the city desired to build a park on the property, but in the end the City of Springfield sold a small portion of land to Rainbow Water District for tank construction. The reservoir was filled for the first time and placed in operation in 1959.





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### **Rainbow Water District Today: 2019**

Since our humble beginnings in 1949, Rainbow Water District has played an important role in helping Springfield grow and develop. When the Springfield Utility Board bought out the McKenzie Highway Water District in 1960, we became joint owners and operators of that very first wellfield. That partnership continues today, with Rainbow and SUB collaborating to serve the city and county customers that call Springfield home.



We are grateful for all the staff and the volunteers that have served on our Budget Committee or Board of Commissioners over the last seven decades. These people governed and guided the district through the rapid growth of the system in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, and adjusting and adapting in the decades following as the city grew, regulations increased, and the district shifted into more of a maintenance mode. **Your staff** today strives to continue our tradition of **servicing our own customers with distinction in customer service and value**, while also giving support to the broader Eugene-Springfield community and assisting the smaller neighboring water systems in Marcola, Deerhorn and Shangri-La.



**We consider it an honor to still serve you today. We appreciate our customers!**  
Find us online at [www.RWDonline.net](http://www.RWDonline.net) or use the [Facebook](#) link for Rainbow-Water-District.