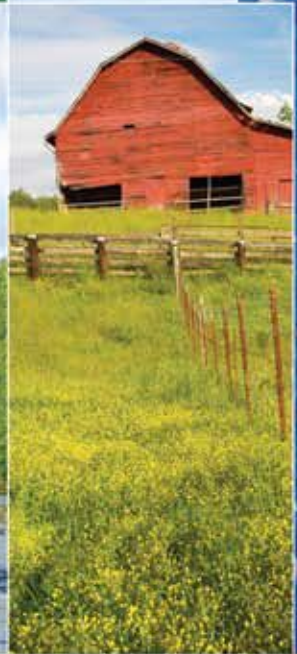


25
Years of
SERVICE



 *Stowah*
WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY
"Excellence in every drop"







Mission Statement

EWSA's mission is the responsible and ethical stewardship of the resources we manage through providing the highest quality water, customer service, and treatment of wastewater. We resolve to seek better and more efficient ways to improve service and the quality of life in Dawson County.





Core Values



EXCELLENCE

The quality of our water and customer service

INTEGRITY

The adherence to moral and ethical principles

STEWARDSHIP

The responsibility to manage financial, environmental, and human resources in a sustainable manner

COMMITMENT

The dedication to provide the necessary resources for our customers, community, and employees

EFFICIENCY

The competency of our performance

VISION

The ability to plan ahead with wisdom





Vision

Etowah Water & Sewer Authority's vision is to improve customer service, provide reliable and dependable water and wastewater services and support the infrastructure needs required for economic development and growth while protecting the environment.



A Letter from the General Manager

Dear Valued Customers and Partners,

I recently had the privilege of leading tours of our water treatment and water reclamation facilities for a group of local Girl Scouts. As I listened to their questions and watched their reactions, I realized how far we've come in the 25 years since the Etowah Water & Sewer Authority began providing service. These kids live in a vastly different Dawson County today because of the benefits that water and wastewater service have brought to the community.

In July 2011, Etowah Water & Sewer Authority will celebrate 25 years of providing high-quality service to Dawson County. Our slogan is "Excellence in every drop." It defines every part of our efforts from water treatment and distribution, to wastewater collection and treatment, to customer service, to conservation and education. The Authority has also served its customers and community with a set of core values as our guiding principles. Excellence, integrity, stewardship, commitment, efficiency, and vision are values which reflect the essence of the Authority - its staff, general manager, and Board of Directors. We have worked continuously to protect water quality, and to enhance and sustain the quality of life we enjoy in Dawson County. Along the way, we have won numerous state and national awards for treatment, operations, customer service, conservation, and public education. This could not have been accomplished without the dedication and commitment of the staff and Board.

The original five Board members not only recognized the need for public water service, but more importantly, they worked tirelessly to get the first customers signed up, organized the financing, and got the construction of the Hightower Water Treatment Facility underway. Later on, the Board and staff developed and implemented a wastewater collection system, and the Dawson Forest

Water Reclamation Facility. Without these services, Dawson County as we know it today would not exist. Shopping at the North Georgia Premium Outlets, restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail businesses would not have come to Dawson County. The community has also benefited from the sales taxes from these businesses which have allowed Dawson County Government to help balance the residential and commercial tax base.

From the hiring of the original three employees, to today's employees, one thing has remained true - family. The Board and the employees have always benefited from a close-knit family environment. God has richly blessed the Authority with the right staff and the right Board members at the right time. Each phase of the Authority's history is full of intelligent, capable individuals who have moved the organization along its path. The first Board members and first general manager brought the skill sets needed at that time. The current Board members and staff bring different skill sets appropriate for today's environment.

We have great customers and a very supportive community. I want to express our appreciation for your confidence and support. Now more than ever, our collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, the Development Authority, Dawson County Government, and the City of Dawsonville are essential to success of the community. As general manager, I take pride in the rich, full history of the Authority while recognizing the challenges the future will bring. As always, the commitment of the Board of Directors and staff will allow the Authority to rise to any occasion.

The Authority's Board and staff are currently looking over the horizon and planning to ensure adequate water supply and wastewater collection, and enhancements to our customer services. This will require the construction of

the Russell Creek Reservoir; treatment plant expansions; water main extensions and replacements; sanitary sewers installation; improvements to our customer services and changes to our water meter system.

I realized something else as I was enjoying the wonder of those kids on the tour - with citizens like these coming along, our future is in good hands. This experience, along with many others like it, reinforces our commitment to protect the environment, contribute to the community, and provide safe clean drinking water to Dawson County. We look forward to serving you during the next 25 years and the promises the future will bring.

Sincerely,

Brooke Anderson, P.E.
General Manager



GENERAL MANAGER BROOKE ANDERSON brought a passion for the water profession to EWSA in 2006. He believes in responsible practices that serve customers, communities, economic development and the environment. A professional registered engineer, Brooke earned his Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering Technology from Southern Polytechnic State University. For nine years, he held several top positions with the City of Gainesville Public Utilities Department where his leadership guided master planning, capital improvement program development, detailed project management and comprehensive financial planning. Brooke's devotion to the water and wastewater industries reaches far beyond the Dawson County line. He is an active participant in the development of Georgia's Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan. Brooke is a member of the American Water Works Association and the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP). He is chairman of GAWP's Small and Medium Systems committees, co-chair of the Master Planning Committee, and a member of the Legislative Committee. Brooke commits time to leadership training, including the Leadership Dawson County Program. Brooke is a Gainesville native with six generations of family from Dawson County. He and his wife, Carrie, have two children, Grace and Samuel.



Best wishes on your Silver Anniversary!

We've been watching you, like a big brother, from next door in Lumpkin County. Pleased to see you grow and mature over the past 25 years. The Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority was established two years before the Etowah Water & Sewerage Authority, and while the leadership and the names and faces have changed for both organizations over the years, it seems there has always been a kind of a kinship between us.

So it is with the pride of a big brother that I recognize the amazing progress you have made over the past 25 years for the citizens and customers you serve.

Operating a water and sewer utility today is, of course, nothing like it was 25 years ago. There's more of everything: more state and federal regulation, more training needed, more testing, more customers, more communication. More of just about everything—except water. As water has come to be better understood as the precious resource it is, Etowah Water & Sewer Authority has taken a leadership role in protecting and preserving it. You have been instrumental in the development and ongoing efforts of the Lake Allatoona/Upper Etowah River Comprehensive Watershed Project, working with local, state and federal entities to assess and document the health and challenges of the Etowah River watershed, whose headwaters are in Lumpkin County. We are grateful for your role in this project and pleased to participate and do our part to support it.

We have always enjoyed an excellent day-to-day working relationship with the staff and management at Etowah Water & Sewer Authority. Your Dawson County population and customer base has grown much faster than ours, and you have faced some unique challenges as a result. But we've always found common ground to share information, best practices and tricks of the trade. Again, like family, we have sincerely valued this mutually beneficial relationship and look forward to its continuation for years to come.

Finally, we are also satisfied customers of Etowah Water & Sewer Authority, purchasing quality water for a small neighborhood in southern Lumpkin County.

Professionally run water and sewer services are critical to attracting and retaining residents and businesses of all sizes, protecting and increasing property values and maintaining quality of life—even supporting life itself. Your board of directors, management and staff have run a professional operation for 25 years, and I wish you the best as you embark on the next 25.

Sincerely,
Dudley Owens, Executive Director
Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority

P.S. (I still think Mom likes you best!)



Congratulations!

To Etowah Water & Sewer Authority on your 25th anniversary. There is nothing more important to a community than clean water for its citizens and a strong system of sanitation. You should be rightfully proud of the progress made through those formative years to the vibrant utility you have today. Strong day-to-day leaders like Sandy Adams, Doris Cook and Brooke Anderson certainly have had a profound influence on your utility's success. EWSA leadership recognized early that no utility is an island. Success depends on dealing effectively with the challenges within one's service area, and effective cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions for solutions to broader cross-jurisdictional challenges.

The Upper Etowah River watershed is blessed with unique species of fish and relatively small streams that present special challenges to sufficient water and wastewater capacities. EWSA was proactive in drawing water providers in the Upper Etowah together to discuss common challenges and to begin the search for possible ways to work cooperatively to accomplish together what would have been impossible individually. Those meetings led to the development of the Lake Allatoona/Upper Etowah River Comprehensive Watershed Project, a six-year long comprehensive assessment of water quality, water quantity and biological health of the Etowah River watershed from Lake Allatoona Dam to the river headwaters in Lumpkin County. The effort included as partners seven counties and three water authorities. Other integral participants include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. EWSA continues to play a key role as the keeper of finances for the project.

Successful water utilities demonstrate an ability to address short-term demands as well as provide visionary leadership to address the demands of the future. EWSA staff and board members have demonstrated by the success of the Authority that necessary visionary leadership. Again, congratulations on your first 25 years and best wishes for continued success in the future.

David Kubala, Environmental Affairs Manager
Cherokee County Water & Sewerage Authority



Board of Directors



CHAIRMAN JIM KING is a seasoned land planner and landscape architect with a passion for preserving water resources and cultivating carefully planned development and growth. Jim is a city and regional planner serving almost a dozen planning organizations including the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Council, the Upper Etowah Basin Water Resource Planning Committee, the Dawson County Grassroots Economic Planning Committee and advisory councils for Georgia's Regional Transportation Authority and the state's departments of Community Affairs and Industry, Trade and Tourism. Jim also served two terms as the District 3 Commissioner and vice-chairman of the Dawson County Board of Commissioners. He owns a multi-disciplinary firm of landscape architects, land planners, civil engineers and surveyors in Dawsonville, Ga. Jim lives in Dawson County with his wife, Debbie, and they have three children. He has been part of EWSA's board since 2006.



VICE CHAIRMAN LINDA TOWNLEY has a rich history in Dawson County. The native is serving her second term as Dawson County Tax Commissioner and was the Mayor of Dawsonville. She served as a member of the Dawson County School Board for nine years, and led the board as chairman for three years. Linda was selected to represent smaller counties in Georgia for the Tax Commissioners' Technology Council of Georgia. She uses her business and accounting prowess, which includes an accounting degree from North Georgia State College & University, to guide EWSA's phenomenal growth. She is also a member of the Dawson County Kiwanis Club. Linda was a budget and control analyst for Lockheed Martin in Marietta, Ga. for 35 years and she has three children and five grandchildren. She has been an EWSA board member since 1991.



SECRETARY LAKE GIBSON is an integral part of growth planning in Dawson County and the surrounding area. He is a member and past chairman of The Development Authority of Dawson County's board, chairman of the county's Industrial Building Authority and treasurer for the Joint Development Authority of Dawson, Lumpkin and White counties. He has also served the Dawson County Chamber of Commerce in several offices, including president. Lake is committed to education and was the vice president of administrative services for Lanier Technical College for 22 years. He is a treasurer and board member for the American Technical Education Association. Lake was a charter member of the local Rotary International chapter, and has served in several positions including past president. He has lived in Dawson County since 1979 and is married to Ann. They have two children and three grandchildren. Lake has been an EWSA board member since 2008.



BOARD MEMBER TONY KELLAR continues a distinguished 20-plus year career with Chick-fil-A, Inc., where he worked his way from the corporate offices into ownership and operation of Chick-fil-A restaurants. Tony owns and operates the locations in Dawsonville and Dahlonega, and did the same in Charlotte, N.C. for 10 years. Tony graduated with a Bachelors of Business degree from Kennesaw State College. He is an avid baseball coach, and a member of the advisory board for Dawson County Parks and Recreation. Tony has been married to Gwen (Adams) for 21 years. The couple's three children, ranging in age from 12 to 18, attend Dawson County schools with his oldest son attending the Georgia Institute of Technology starting in the fall of 2011. Tony serves on the Dawson County High School Advisory Council and is a member of the Dawson County Chamber of Commerce and the Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce. Tony has been part of the EWSA board since 2009.



BOARD MEMBER DEBORAH C. STOWERS was born and raised in Dawson County and has spent most of her life here. A successful and respected businesswoman, Deborah owned Lanier Employment Services for 20 years and sold it to Spherion, a leading recruiting and staffing provider, in 2006. She continues her work as the director of professional recruiting at Spherion, and demonstrates great devotion to the community through civic involvement. She served as a board member for nine years with No One Alone, which provides safe haven and support for victims of family violence. Deborah also served as a board member for RING for nine years, has been a member of the Dawson County Chamber of Commerce for 15 years and a member of Rotary International for 20 years. She raised both of her sons in Dawson County, and is a grandmother to four children. Deborah has been a member of EWSA's board since 2009.





Etowah Water & Sewer Authority's Board of Directors

These men and women have served EWSA faithfully as members of our board:

Don Gordon	1980-2004	Herb Burnsed	2003-2008
Ben Overstreet	1980-2002	Kim Cornelison	2004-2006
George David	1980-1995	Mike Bailey	2004-2008
Frank Roberts	1980-1989	Greg Gordon	2004-2009
William Jessee	1980-1989	Jim King	2006-Present
Dr. R.E. Mallernee	1989-2004	Lake Gibson	2008-Present
Linda Townley	1989-Present	Tony Kellar	2009-Present
Glenn Harben	1995-2002	Deborah C. Stowars	2009-Present
Clint Hood	2002-2004		

State of Georgia



OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

I, David B. Poythress, Secretary of State of the State of Georgia, do hereby certify that the twenty-two pages of photographed matter hereto attached contain a true and correct copy of an Act approved by the Governor on March 18, 1980 numbered Act Number 809 (H.B. No. 1565) and entitled: "An Act To create the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority: to authorize the Authority to acquire, construct, operate and maintain self-liquidating projects embracing sources of water supply and the distribution and sale of water and related facilities to individuals, private concerns, and municipal corporations; and for other purposes"; all as the same appear of file and record in this office.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office, at the Capitol, in the City of Atlanta, this 6th day of May, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty and of the Independence of the United States of America the Two Hundred and Fourth.



David B. Poythress
SECRETARY OF STATE.

ENROLLMENT

March 14, 1980

The Committee of the House on [redacted] Journals has examined the within and finds the same properly enrolled.

Billy Wilford
Chairman

Thomas Murphy
Speaker of the House

Steve Weems
Clerk of the House

Jim Miller
President of the Senate

Hamilton McWhorter
Secretary of the Senate

Received *Tom Randle*
Secretary, Executive Department

This 14th day of March, 1980

Approved
George Busbee
Governor

This 18th day of March, 1980

H. B. No. 1565 Act No. 809
General Assembly



AN ACT

To create the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority; to authorize the Authority to acquire, construct, operate and maintain self-liquidating projects embracing sources of water supply and the distribution and sale of water and related facilities to individuals, private concerns, and municipal corporations; and for other purposes.

IN HOUSE

Read 1st time 2-1-80

Read 2nd time 2-4-80

Read 3rd time 2-5-80

Ayes 115 And Passed Nays 0

Steve Weems
Clerk of the House

IN SENATE

Read 1st time 2-6-80

Read 2nd time 2-11-80

Read 3rd time 2-12-80

Ayes 53 And Passed Nays 0

Hamilton McWhorter
Secretary of the Senate

Reps. Hasty, Harris, and By: Anderson of the 8th

Commitment



Original Board of Directors




Original Board Members:

Left to Right: Ben Overstreet, Frank Roberts, Don Gordon, William Jessee, George David

The five men who championed creation of the Etowah Water & Sewer Authority for Dawson County had high hopes. They wanted to change the economic landscape and to impact lives in a powerful way. Led by Don Gordon, who was president of the Dawson County Bank, the group secured legislation that created the Authority in 1980. The same five became EWSA's founding board of directors and included Ben Overstreet, a local farmer; George David, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel; Attorney William Jessee; and Frank Roberts, a retired medical photographer for the Veterans Administration. Their vision and commitment to excellence created a tradition that continues to earn local, state and national recognition for water service and wastewater treatment.

Commitment



Etowah Water & Sewer Authority:

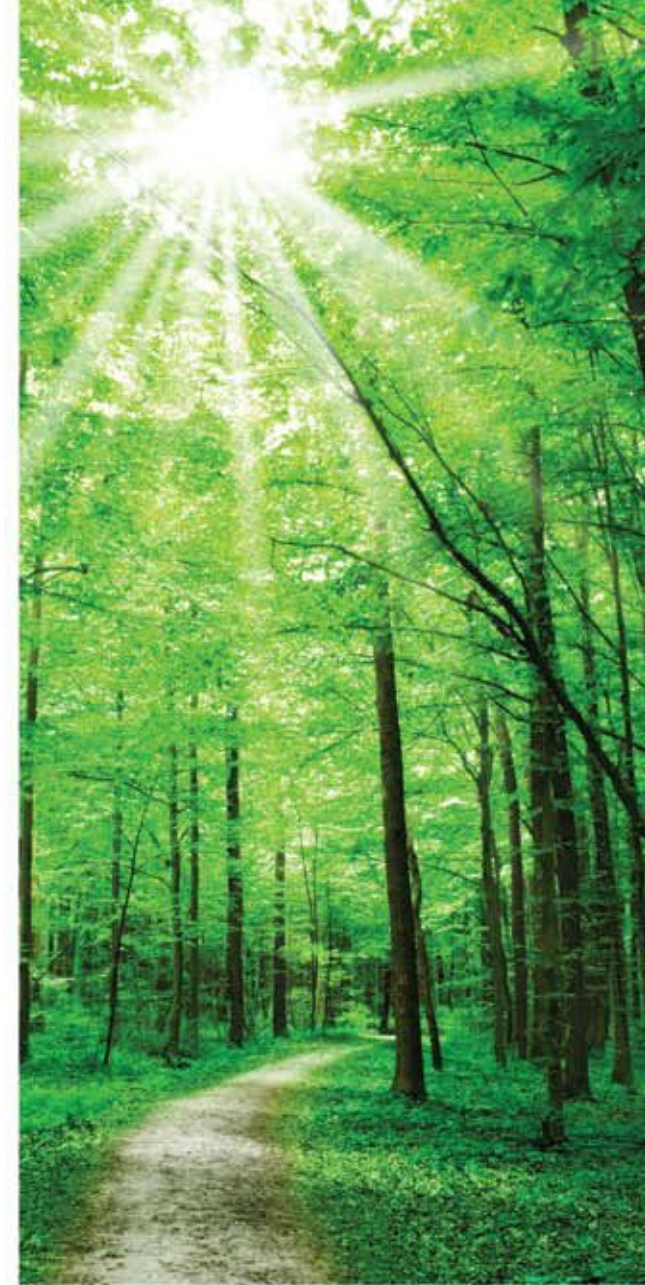
A chronicle of deep commitment to Dawson County

When the Etowah Water & Sewer Authority (EWSA) unleashed public water to Dawson County in 1986, it unlocked the potential for phenomenal economic growth.

The local citizens who laid the groundwork for the service recognized the need to attract new business to the beautiful rural county and create local jobs. Otherwise, residents flocked to other thriving communities for employment.

Today, the county's unprecedented growth has created water needs that are more than 30 times the EWSA's original capacity. The journey produced a sewer system that allowed North Georgia Premium Outlets mall to locate here in 1996 – and many businesses since - igniting and sustaining the local economy.

But this success story didn't unfold without courage, determination and solid leadership – characteristics that continue to guide EWSA today.



Commitment

Humble beginnings

It all started in the 1970s when local citizens rallied the community, local elected officials, and state lawmakers to sell them on the idea of a county-wide public water system. Their efforts gained momentum, and in 1980 Georgia's General Assembly passed legislation creating the EWSA.



That year, the U.S. Federal Census reported that the county had a population of 4,774 compared with about 23,400 today. Residents relied on wells and springs for their water. The county was served by Looper's, a convenience store, and a few filling stations.

"We needed public water desperately," says Dawson County farmer Ben Overstreet, one of the original five board members. "We were getting passed up by Hall and Forsyth counties and I knew we needed it."

The Authority's first order of business was collecting 900 customer contracts to justify funding for the organization. Board members divided the county and hit the road. They included Chairman Don Gordon, president of Dawson County Bank; Ben Overstreet, farmer; retired Army Lieutenant Colonel George David; Attorney William Jessee; and Frank Roberts, a retired medical photographer for the Veterans Administration.

"We struggled to get the contracts," says Overstreet, who was also a recognized conservationist. "We mostly did this on Saturdays and we were selling water meters for \$50. Many people were hesitant and thought they didn't need the service because they had a well. I told them to make it like insurance in case the well system failed."

Traditional lore of these efforts is comical at times. Some of the board members met stiff competition when family pets saw them approaching.

"The worst experience I had was this big dog that came out and I didn't get out (of the car), but he was trying to get in," says Overstreet.

Churches, residential developers and banks proved to be great sources of contracts. Once the Authority reached its goal it secured a \$1.8 million loan and a

\$1 million grant from the FHA and Appalachian Regional Commission, respectively.

EWSA broke ground for a water plant and distribution system in 1985 and introduced water service in 1986 with a permit to withdraw 100,000 gallons of water per day from the swift-moving Etowah River. The Authority's first office was in a corner of the Dawson County Bank's conference room where Finance Manager Rosalind Chambers kept contracts in boxes.

Chambers was among the first of three employees who included Superintendent Sandy Adams and Water Treatment Plant Operator Billie Singleton. Office space was quickly upgraded to a single-wide trailer with no air conditioning.

"We didn't have much of a home life in the first years," says Adams who would become the Authority's general manager. "But this was not just a job. Everybody here took great pride in it."

Chambers says the board and staff were like family – a tight-knit cooperative that included the community – much like the EWSA family today. Dawson County Judge Leon Martin helped the board and Chambers with legal paperwork, and Warren Almand, a local CPA, taught Chambers the basics of accounting.

"It was overwhelming at first, but we all learned together and we did fine. You made mistakes and you learned," she adds.

Commitment

Growth spikes and sewer is introduced

EWSA's customer base grew steadily over the next seven years and the amount of permitted water withdrawal increased incrementally. Expanded access to Georgia State Route 400 and a housing boom in the early 1990s prompted the water system's expansion. People were moving to Dawson County, including many who were choosing to make Dawsonville a second home.

Water service customers almost doubled between 1993 and 1995, with the bulk of the growth in 1994 when 735 new customers were added. Infrastructure more than doubled when 60 miles of new water lines were installed bringing the total to approximately 107 miles. The Authority's water plant withdrawal permit was increased to 1.5 million gallons per day (mgd).

Then, even greater opportunity knocked. Developers wanted to build the North Georgia Premium Outlets mall on 400 in Dawsonville, but they would not come without a sewer system.

EWSA's staff of eight, now operating from the water plant and a single wide trailer, established a wastewater treatment plant and collection system to satisfy the need, and offered service in 1996 – nine months after the decision to introduce sewer was made.

"We worked day and night but we met our deadline," says Adams. "I had a lot of meals delivered there. Wastewater made everything start booming."

The Authority began to break even in 1998 with 3,071 water customers and 15 sewer customers. Sewer system use mushroomed in 2000 when 110 customers were added.

George David, a founding board member, is most proud of the introduction of sewer service.

"That's how we got the outlet mall and it's an excellent source of income," he says. "It helps everybody with taxes. I think Dawson County would be hurting without it. The Authority is doing a great job and I hope it continues."



Expanding to meet needs

The demand for water and wastewater service escalated as other businesses – restaurants, banks and grocery stores – moved in. New water tanks were built to handle increased permitted water withdrawals in 2000.

The following year, after a short time in rented office space, EWSA moved its administrative offices into a newly-renovated building that once served as a feed and seed barn. This created more space for new employees who would continue the tradition of excellent customer service – one of the Authority's greatest goals.

Adams used his operational knowledge of both systems to begin planning for alternative water sources in times of greater use or drought. He also began to plan for necessary physical plant expansion to keep the water flowing.

“For my last four or five years I became more of a pencil pusher, getting a reservoir project started and trying to do a lot of planning for projected growth,” he says. “We have really been pioneers, adding capacity ahead of our time. You’ve got to think ahead because some of the permits take years to get approval.”

At the time Adams left in 2006, EWSA was permitted to withdraw 3 mgd from the Etowah River.

“I’m proud of all the accomplishments we had. Anytime you can win state and national awards and have the staff I had, we can all be proud. A lot of it was just fun and I hope that it carries on.”

Brooke Anderson, who has been general manager for EWSA since that time, appreciates the foundation and Adams and his team built.

“As I sit here today looking forward and looking back, it’s very evident that God places people in the right place at the right time,” says Anderson. “If I look at my predecessor, there could not have been a man who would have been a better fit for the job. He has a skill set I don’t have that allowed EWSA to be what it needed to be.”

Considering the original board members’ fortitude and the talent and expertise that arrived with each new board member, Anderson says the Authority is fortunate.

“To me, that is a testament to God’s grace and blessing on the Authority.”

Preparing for the future

Today, EWSA's administration office on Georgia State Route 53 is sleek and comforting. Newly renovated, its track lighting and vibrant artwork of local nature are a far cry from the trailers and rented office space of the past. There are now 28 employees who are committed to the company's core values: excellence, integrity, stewardship, commitment, efficiency and vision.

In 2011, the Authority boasts a customer base of 5,187 water customers and 518 wastewater users. EWSA is permitted to withdraw up to 5.5 mgd for water services and 1 mgd for wastewater treatment.

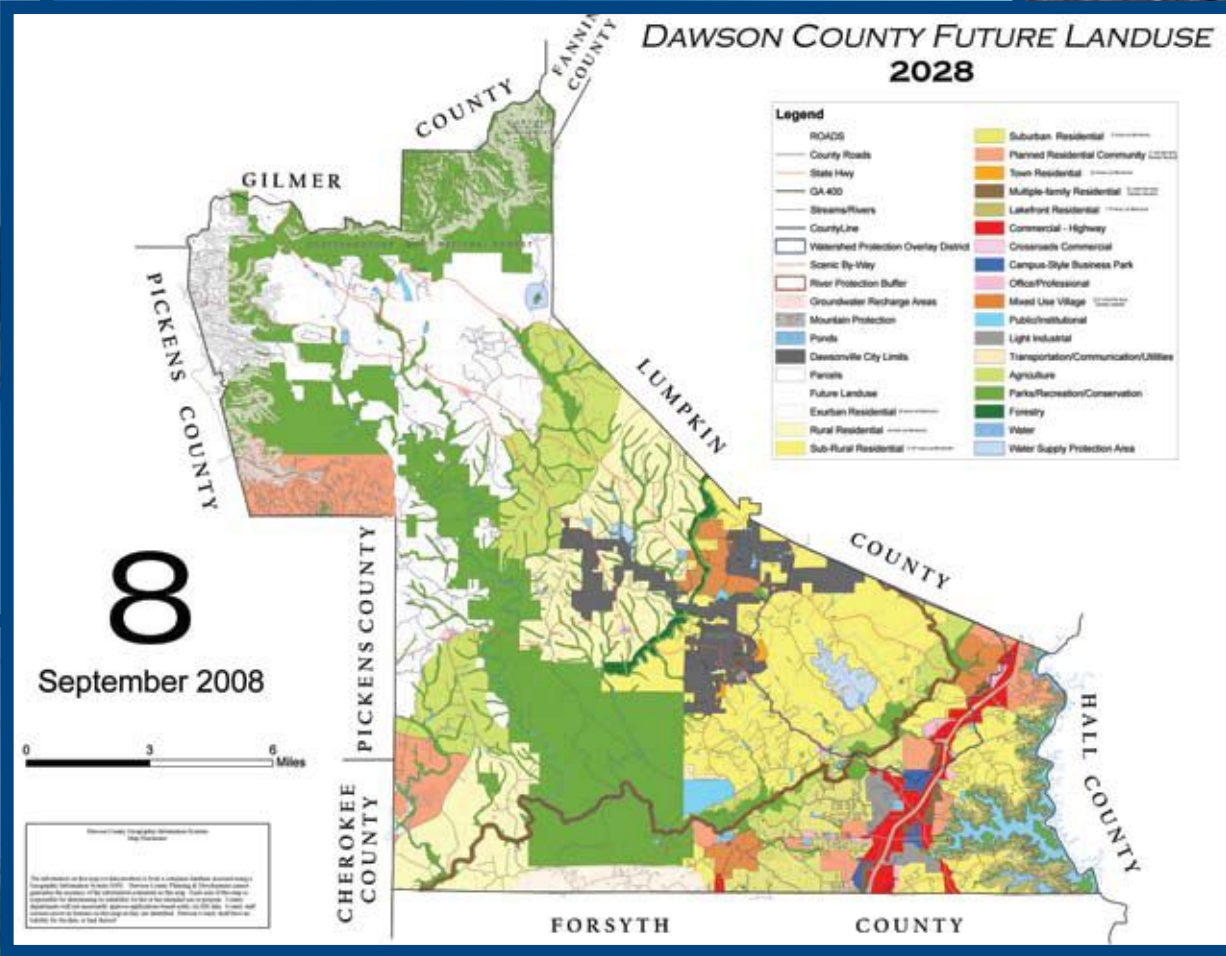
A Projection of Water Supply Needs study predicted EWSA's average water demand will exceed 17.5 mgd by 2050. Plants for water and wastewater were recently expanded to serve expected growth for the next 10 years, with a 10-year Capital Improvement Program providing the blue print for new expansion. The Authority continues to pursue the construction of the 138-acre Russell Creek Reservoir to give it an additional source of water.


More than 30 years after the Authority was created by an act of legislation, and 25 years after it began operating by serving customers with potable water, Overstreet continues to be impressed.

"I think they're keeping up with the times," he says of EWSA. "I'm proud I was a part of it."



Commitment





“We care deeply about our customers, our community and our environment and that makes it easy to serve Dawson County.”

EWSA Secretary and Board Member Lake Gibson

“We will have the infrastructure in place that is required to support the inevitable growth that we will see in the future.”

EWSA Chairman and Board Member Jim King



The customer comes first

From the beginning, providing top-notch customer service was Etowah Water & Sewer Authority's goal.

"EWSA does not have the ability to move forward without the foundation that was built over the past 25 years," says General Manager Brooke Anderson. "The foundation is strong and stable and it has allowed us to build something fantastic."

EWSA experienced dramatic growth over the past 25 years, creating unprecedented opportunities to serve the Dawson County community with a tradition of excellence.

The customer base for water services has grown from 900 in 1986 to approximately 5,200 today. Wastewater treatment services spurred tremendous commercial growth along the Georgia State Road 400 corridor in 1996. The North Georgia Premium Outlets was the first sewer customer, and the Authority is proud to now have more than 500.

EWSA is locally and nationally recognized for its commitment to excellence, for example:

- Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility has received numerous Gold Awards from GAWP
- Hightower Water Treatment Facility has received numerous Gold Awards from GAWP
- Resource Department has received numerous Public Education Awards from GAWP
- 2003 Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility received first place in EPA's National Clean Water Act Recognition
- Since 2007, the Finance Department has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
- 2008 GAWP's Wastewater Collection System of the Year
- 2008 GAWP's Top Operators Award was presented to Richard Ray, Operator at Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility
- 2009 GAWP's Customer Service Representative Award was presented to Jessica Mason, Billing Clerk Administration Office
- 2010 GAWP named Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility as the Plant of the Year

Excellence



Signing of 404 Permit for Russell Creek Reservoir

Excellent customer service is a legacy that began long before EWSA was created. In the 1970s a handful of local citizens determined to bring water service to Dawson County took action. Led by Don Gordon, then president of Dawson County Bank, the group asked the Dawson County Chamber of Commerce to appoint a committee to study the feasibility of a new water authority. Those appointed in 1979 included Gordon, Ben Overstreet, George David, William Jessee and Frank Roberts - the same five individuals who would become EWSA's founding board of directors when the 1980 General Assembly approved legislation creating the Authority.

Then the work of creating and servicing a new customer base began.

"Customer service was what we were all about," says former General Manager Sandy Adams, who read meters - in addition to his executive duties - for his first nine of 20 years at EWSA. "We all did things that were beyond the call of duty."

The company's caring culture developed with Adams and Rosalind Chambers at its heart. Chambers was one of the first three employees hired in 1986, and is now EWSA's financial manager overseeing finance, human resources and customer service.

Excellence



“For about the first 1,500 customers, all you had to do was give us the address or the color of the house and we could tell you who it was,” adds Adams, referring to the company’s pre-computer days. “And Rosalind could tell you their account number.”

Longevity has been crucial to maintaining the customer service tradition central to the organization of 28 employees: Approximately 25 percent have 10 or more years of service.

“We take great pride in our work,” says Chambers. “This has always been about helping our customers. We’ve always had the drive it takes to continuously strive for excellence.”

In 2003, the Authority offered a presale on sewer taps because rates were scheduled to increase. Developers camped out overnight in the business office parking lot, and EWSA employees served them coffee, orange juice and donuts and set up portable toilets. The company had more than \$1 million in deposits that day.

“It was amazing,” says Chambers.

Sonny Simmons believes EWSA’s water is the best deal in Dawson County for its quality and price. Always clad in overalls and an Etowah shirt and hat, he has worked for the water treatment plant for 22 years mainly as a superintendent and most recently as an operations technician.

He has designs on retirement, but his fellow employees – and his friends in the community - don’t want to let him go.

“They still rely on me for certain things they need to know about,” Simmons says. “I’m around and about and here for whatever they need.”

And “they” means everyone.

“A lot of people knew I worked for the water Authority and they’d call me at home with questions and I didn’t mind,” admits Simmons. “Our customers are what keeps us in business.”

Excellence



Reliability is the key to our success

Dawsonville native Jackie Townley is a perfect example of excellence in action at the Etowah Water & Sewer Authority.

Townley has been the sole contractor for the Authority's water and sewer systems maintenance for 25 years. He and his dedicated crew have been available around the clock since the beginning.

"When I talk about Etowah, I say 'we' because it is part of my life," says Townley, who started with the help of his nephew, Chuck, when the first water flowed in 1986. "I've learned a whole lot. We are like a family."

EWSA and Townley Construction Company, Inc. have been on parallel paths: both have grown and expanded services, both have many employees with long records of service and both are known for their community involvement in Dawson County.

Townley and his wife, Lynn, own the construction company which now has 24 employees. Many of those have 10 or more years of service. Townley works with municipalities across Georgia, and is also the general contractor for Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority – night and day.

Townley Construction's trademark plumbing expertise includes trenching, excavation, trenchless rehabilitation, water line installation, pipeline video inspection and testing and sanitary sewer installation.

"We have succeeded with hard work and by being honest," Townley says. "The Lord has blessed us, and that is how we are here today."

Townley still takes most emergency calls personally - especially at night - as part of his commitment to the reliability of EWSA's systems. A crew is devoted to the Authority at all times.

"I like the challenge," says Townley. "I enjoy working better than anything else."



Excellence



Honoring our community

Serving Dawson County with life-giving water was the beginning of Etowah Water & Sewer Authority's commitment to its community.

As the organization grew, its identity for philanthropy blossomed. Today, employees pick up trash along the Etowah River's banks, cook hamburgers to raise money for United Way of Dawson County and donate books about water conservation to educate children and adults.

"Brooke (Anderson) and Sandy (Adams) have always encouraged us to be involved," says Resource Manager Doris Cook, referring to EWSA's current and former general managers. "I volunteered for Kare for Kids for 10 years. I saw a lot of families struggling. Some were doing everything they could to survive and with one bad incident such as sickness or wrecking a car, they couldn't make ends meet. It is nice to be able to do those types of things for the sheer pleasure of doing it and knowing you've made a difference in the life of a child or family."

Historically employees throughout EWSA have provided leadership, fundraising, finances and, perhaps most importantly, time and manpower.

"It wasn't just that we wanted to be seen in the community," says former General Manager Sandy Adams, who worked for the company for 20 years. "We are the community."

Stewardship



The Authority's support of veterans made it possible for Veterans Affairs of Dawson County to have a Walk of Honor and Serenity Garden at Veterans Memorial Park. Finance Manager Rosalind Chambers has served the board of directors for seven years, helping to organize events that recognize veterans and active duty military members among other things.

"We have donated funds to support this, but equally or more so, we have contributed our hearts and our time to this non-profit organization," Chambers says. "I cannot really even put into words how this organization is in not just my heart, but in the hearts of the Authority's employees."

Veterans Affairs recognized EWSA with its first-ever American Spirit Award for the employees' can-do attitude and respect for their country.

"Community involvement is very important to the Authority and our employees," says General Manager Brooke Anderson. "It is our way of giving back to the community that sustains us."

The Authority supports Boy Scouts of America, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and local events such as Touch-A-Truck Family Fun Day.

EWSA's education program earned the Georgia Association of Water Professionals' Public Education Award consistently for the past 10 years. The Authority provides books for less fortunate families and lesson plans linking any subject to water education are donated for county educators.

Stewardship



Environmentally, EWSA employees serve several regional organizations endeavoring to protect North Georgia's watershed. Cook is the chair of the Coosa/Etowah Basin Advisory Councils. Anderson participates in the Georgia Statewide Water Management Plan.

Each year, the company joins forces with other local organizations for Rivers Alive, Georgia's volunteer waterway cleanup. EWSA partners with the Environmental Protection Agency in WaterSense, a program to protect future water supply by promoting water efficiency.



Stewardship





Raising the bar in our industry

Behind the scenes, Etowah Water & Sewer Authority produces its water and wastewater services with award-winning efficiency.

The Authority constantly seeks best practices for water treatment and wastewater collections, finances and customer service. Efficiency and competency are crucial when treating water and wastewater as well as managing the finances.

"The Authority has been very frugal in its growth of employees and that has allowed us to be very effective with the staff and resources we do have," Anderson says. "And, we've taken advantage of technology to improve our customer service."

The most powerful recognition of operational excellence at EWSA comes from the company's peers.

The Dawson Forest Reclamation Facility and the wastewater collection system received the first place award for Collections System of the Year in 2008 from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals. The association stringently evaluated systems with less than 10,000 customers, reviewing EWSA's maintenance and operations procedures with a fine-tooth comb.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Dolly Pendley was featured in *WATERstewards* magazine, a bi-annual publication of the Georgia Rural Water Association, in 2010. The magazine recognized her 27 years of experience and her management of EWSA's wastewater collections which include 13 lift stations and more than 150 acres of land application sprayfields. She holds state certifications as a Class I in wastewater treatment, a Class III in water treatment and she is a wastewater lab analyst.

Efficiency

Financial integrity and excellence have been a core value since the company began operations in 1986. EWSA has evolved from postcard invoices to sophisticated software programs that give employees opportunities to provide stellar customer service.

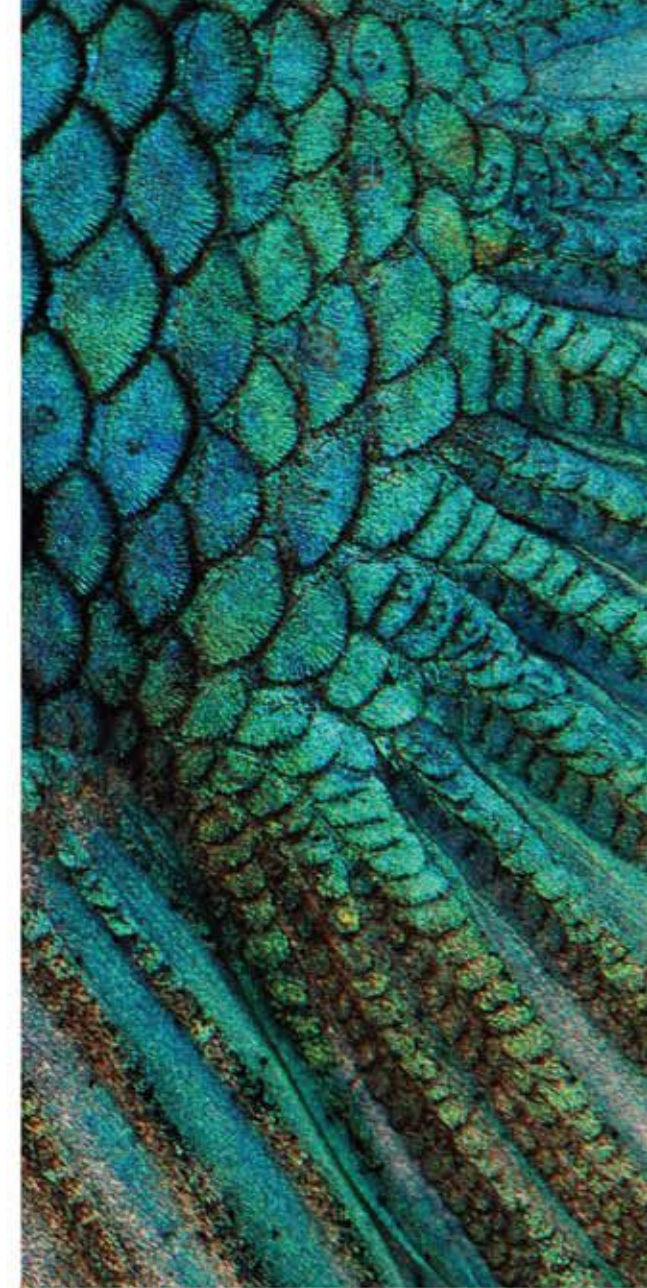
With Finance Manager Rosalind Chambers at the helm, EWSA has earned recognition from the Government Officers Association of the United States and Canada for excellence in financial reporting for four years in a row. The company received the award for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

“We’re really proud we received the CAFR award,” says Chambers, who has pioneered financial, customer service and human resource operations for EWSA. “We won the first time we applied.”

Producing a CAFR is no small feat, as the document is 71 pages long and tracks finances, statistics and compliance in incredible detail.

Chambers and others learned careful management of resources from the Authority’s founding board of directors. They have passed the wisdom along to newer employees.

“Really and truly they molded me and helped me grow professionally as I learned so much from them,” says Chambers.





Navigating new growth

The Etowah Water & Sewer Authority's vision for Dawson County is crystal clear.

New homes and businesses with immediate access to water and sewer services dot the landscape, and the horizon features new sources of water that are managed with great care.

"I think that historically we have grown with the community," says EWSA General Manager Brooke Anderson, who joined the Authority in 2006. "Currently, we are anticipating the growth of the next several decades."

EWSA was first developed to attract new industry to the area, and the system has become the backbone for current and future growth – a lifeline with planned improvements and capacity that will support Dawson Country through 2050.

Today there are approximately 23,400 residents in Dawson Country compared to the 4,774 recorded by the U.S. Federal Census in 1980. Charlie Auvermann, executive director of The Development Authority of Dawson County, says with moderate growth that number could fall between 25,000 and 45,000 over the next ten years depending on the economy's strength. A large window, the number is based on more than half-a-dozen studies of the potential for growth.

"The steps they have taken in the past five or six years have put them in a good position no matter what comes," says Auvermann. "Brooke brought with him the planning process and the understanding of the different steps you can go through, the modular plant ideas, so it's easy to grow."

The Authority recently completed expansions of both its water treatment and wastewater reclamation plants. Because of the upgrades, EWSA is permitted to withdraw up to 5.5 million gallons of water per day (mgd) from the Etowah River for water services, and 1 mgd for wastewater services.

Vision

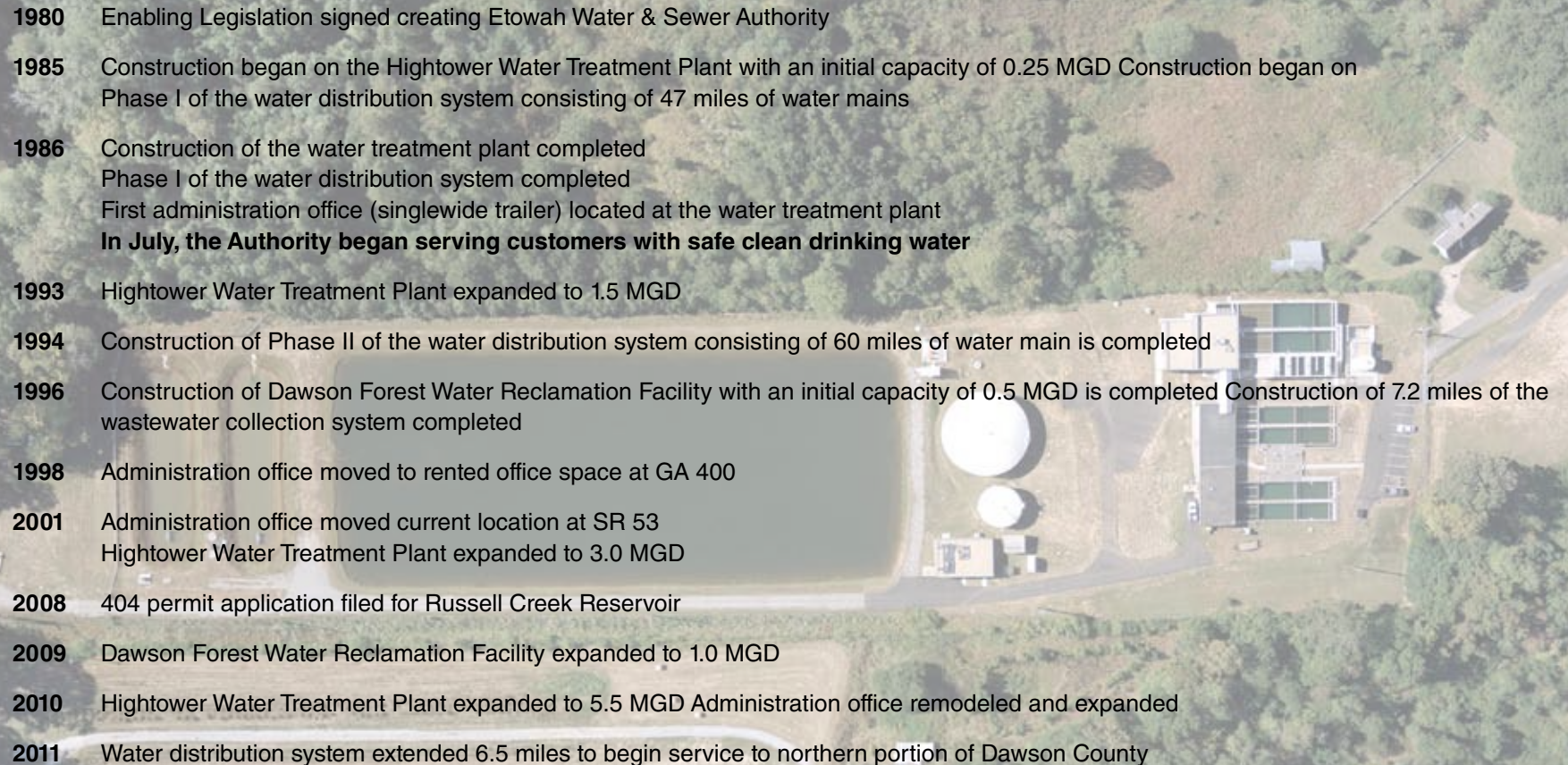
Current projects include the Water Main Extension on Georgia State Route 183 and the construction of the 250,000-gallon Amicalola Water Tank. Completion of the projects will expand service to an unserved portion of Dawson County. The Authority is also completing a 2050 water and wastewater master plan. The project will provide a road map to serve a population of 125,000 for the next 40 years. In addition to planning for expansion of service, EWSA is also preparing to improve existing service. The Authority will replace all water meters with a fixed based meter reading system. This will allow hourly reading of the meters, improving customer service and construction efforts.

The company is expecting to obtain a 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the 138-acre Russell Creek Reservoir in 2011. Construction would begin in about five years and the water yield would provide 11.5 mgd. Additionally, expanding both water resources and treatment facilities is part of a 10-year capital improvement program of \$63 million to meet the needs of Dawson County residents. Operating budgets and a comprehensive funding program are included.

“Brooke and the current board have done an excellent job planning for the future,” adds Auvermann. “When Brooke came in one of the things he chose to address first was the need to create a plan to accommodate growth, and if you have to slow down then fine.”



Etowah Time Line

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- 1980** Enabling Legislation signed creating Etowah Water & Sewer Authority
- 1985** Construction began on the Hightower Water Treatment Plant with an initial capacity of 0.25 MGD Construction began on Phase I of the water distribution system consisting of 47 miles of water mains
- 1986** Construction of the water treatment plant completed
Phase I of the water distribution system completed
First administration office (singlewide trailer) located at the water treatment plant
In July, the Authority began serving customers with safe clean drinking water
- 1993** Hightower Water Treatment Plant expanded to 1.5 MGD
- 1994** Construction of Phase II of the water distribution system consisting of 60 miles of water main is completed
- 1996** Construction of Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility with an initial capacity of 0.5 MGD is completed Construction of 7.2 miles of the wastewater collection system completed
- 1998** Administration office moved to rented office space at GA 400
- 2001** Administration office moved current location at SR 53
Hightower Water Treatment Plant expanded to 3.0 MGD
- 2008** 404 permit application filed for Russell Creek Reservoir
- 2009** Dawson Forest Water Reclamation Facility expanded to 1.0 MGD
- 2010** Hightower Water Treatment Plant expanded to 5.5 MGD Administration office remodeled and expanded
- 2011** Water distribution system extended 6.5 miles to begin service to northern portion of Dawson County





**Thank you to the
community, our great
customers, and our faithful
employees and board
members for making our
first 25 years a success.**

- Etowah Water & Sewer Authority





25
Years of
SERVICE



 **Stowah**
WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY
"Excellence in every drop"