

Nibley's water future: City discusses how new well will impact water conservation

By Katie Peikes Staff writer Oct 17, 2015 [Comments](#)



NIBLEY — A study conducted by a collaboration of researchers from universities in Utah has Nibley officials and residents contemplating their water use as well as their future use in conjunction with the construction of a new drinking water well on 640 West.

Presented by USU professor Doug Jackson-Smith on Thursday night to the Nibley City Council, a 2014 iUtah household survey on Utah's water future pursued findings in 12 cities within Wasatch County, Salt Lake County and Cache County.

The study collected data from over 2,400 households in 23 neighborhoods to distinguish how different communities perceive water and water issues, how they use water and the issues they focus on.

"Nibley was of particular interest to us because it represents a really nice category of a city that's a rapidly growing city and an agricultural area that's come of age and is building infrastructure," Jackson-Smith said.

Jackson-Smith reported in Nibley, residents are more aware of the amount they spend on water over how much water they use in their daily lives.

"We (found) that people have gotten the message about their water use," Jackson-Smith said. "They try to water to the needs of their lawn and try to follow cues."

Further, he reported only about 14 percent of households in Nibley decreased any of their water use over the last five years.

"Most people think they have a capacity to use less water, but interestingly they're much more confident on water use indoors than water use outdoors," he added.

Council members praised the findings and inquired about secondary water users, strategies in reducing indoor and outdoor use and how people can take control over reduction.

"Most people have a lot of water use outdoors, and it's generally not as efficient as it could be," Jackson-Smith said. "We already have seen indoor gains over the last 20 years."

He also mentioned the study found people understand the impacts of outdoor water use and have tried to water their lawns based on need. Jackson-Smith will present Logan city's results to the Logan Municipal Council on Tuesday, Oct. 20. He will also present findings to North Logan and Providence in the near future.

Jackson-Smith's presentation had Nibley council members and city officials thinking about the city's water use in conjunction with a well being constructed on 640 West.

"I really liked what they presented to us," Councilwoman Kathryn Beus told The Herald Journal. "The big thing is perception. People think conservation happens with shorter showers. We've got to change perception and awareness. Nobody looks at how much water they're actually consuming."

Beus said Nibley is still growing, justifying the need for the well, a project that has been on the table for years.

City Manager David Zook reported Thursday that the well is nearing completion, and with the council's vote, they will enter into an

agreement on water irrigation and how shares will be used.

Construction of the well was previously protested by the company PacifiCorp and Bear River water users, who filed formal documents with the state on concerns of assuring there is mitigation for the water that is pulled out of the ground.

“When irrigating fields, they want it to be certain that water is no longer being used to water the field and being used as a mitigation for water being drawn up out of ground water,” Zook told The Herald Journal.

The city hired Wendy Bowden Crowther, an attorney who specializes in water right laws to mitigate an agreement with the state saying Nibley City will install, operate, maintain and regularly monitor the well.

Council members drafted an agreement with College Irrigation Company to assure the well water would not be used for irrigating for agricultural purposes. The agreement was signed Thursday.

“It will equalize pressure throughout the system,” Mayor Shaun Dustin told The Herald Journal. “It will buy us at least 10 years before we have to worry about well water again.”

The well, which will cost \$1.4 to \$1.5 million to build, was initially brainstormed as part of a city water master plan in 2012.

According to Zook, the master plan laid out a list of projects for the city to complete within the next decade, placing the well as the top priority. The plan also intends to build distribution lines and to connect the lines from different locations within the city.

Council members determined 640 West as the best location to drill the well after considering multiple locations from an engineering standpoint.

When Nibley experienced [contamination](#) in the water system in April, city officials began to consider the possibility of quickly finishing the well, as the spring used to provide 20 percent of the water the city uses on a daily basis but is no longer accessible.

“We have not repaired it and have not determined what to do going forward,” Zook said.

Zook added the focus on constructing the well takes precedent over repairing the spring, as the well will provide more water than the spring.



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