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## Frederick Water breaks ground on new water treatment plant

By JOSH JANNEY The Winchester Star

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Frederick Water Executive Director Eric Lawrence explains the timeline for building the new Henry F. Sliwinski Water Treatment Plant in Stephenson during a groundbreaking for the facility Tuesday.

Jeff Taylor/The Winchest

**STEPHENSON** — A groundbreaking ceremony for Frederick Water’s new Henry F. Sliwinski Water Treatment Plant was held Tuesday on Hot Run Drive, just north of the new Stonewall Park ball fields.

About 30 people attended the event.

“We are excited about the next 12-13 months, and we are excited to be able to provide for this community,” Frederick Water Executive Director Eric Lawrence said.

The plant and its associated pipelines will cost nearly \$32 million to construct.

Part of the Opequon Water Supply Plan (OWSP), the plant will have the ability to draw water from the Opequon Creek to help Frederick Water meet growing water needs. By 2035, Frederick Water customers may require up to 12 million gallons of drinking water per day — about twice the current average usage of 6 million gallons per day.

Frederick Water provides water and sewer service to more than 17,000 local homes and businesses. It is overseen by a five-member board of directors appointed by the Frederick County Board of Supervisors. Aside from appointing the directors, the Board of Supervisors has no oversight of the authority.

Once completed, the facility will replace the existing James T. Anderson plant, which currently treats about 1.8 million gallons of water per day.

The new plant will provide up to 8 million gallons per day of treated water, which will be drawn from two quarries owned by Carmeuse Lime and Stone on adjacent land. As the need for water grows, Frederick Water will have the ability to draw water from Opequon Creek.

Originally, the plan was for the plant to begin operations by drawing water from Opequon Creek. But last summer Frederick Water and Carmeuse reached a permanent agreement allowing Frederick Water to draw as much water as it needs from the two quarries. As a result, the plant will have infrastructure to pull water from the quarries. If the need for more water arises, Frederick Water has secured easements to draw water from Opequon Creek.

Planning for the facility began in the fall of 2015, when Frederick Water began examining its water supply and water sources as it looked to the future.

Lawrence told the crowd that the new plant will be technologically advanced and “ready for the 21st century.” It will have a membrane water treatment method that is effective for virus and bacteria removal.

“It has the ability to run 24 hours a day if needed and it doesn’t have to be manned 24 hours a day, which is a nice change,” Lawrence said. “Our operators want to work these plants, but nobody wants to work them in the middle of the night. So this new plant is designed so that if it needs to, it can run 24 hours a day and be operated remotely if necessary. It’s something we like as an organization because it makes life easier for our operators.”

The new plant's namesake worked 43 years for Frederick Water as a treatment plant supervisor, serving from Dec. 1, 1976, to April 30, 2019. He was named to the Frederick Water board last year.

Sliwinski said he was "humbled and honored beyond words" to have the plant named for him. He said when Lawrence became executive director five years ago, there was a need in the county for more water but the prospects for more water sources was bleak.

"I was very surprised that Eric even took the job, because it was a monumental task," Sliwinski said. "This plant is probably going to be here the next 50 years, at least. And between Eric and [Frederick Water Board Chairman] Gary Oates I am stunned and amazed by what they have accomplished in five years. It's an unbelievable piece of work."

Orders Construction from Saint Albans, West Virginia, is building the plant and its associated pipelines.

Frederick Water Supervisor of Construction Charlie Miller expects the bulk of construction to be completed within 10 months, although the project is not required to be substantially complete until April 2022.

"The destination is going to be that we deliver a project safely, on time and on budget," Miller said. "We will deliver a project that honors the service and dedication to its namesake, Hank, and deliver a project that will service this community for decades to come."

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