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City's east side gets new water pipes

ALLISON PETTY H&R Staff Writer    Oct 1, 2016

DECATUR – Some residents on the city's east side should enjoy better water quality and fewer water main breaks thanks to a $1.3 million project.
Crews from Burdick Plumbing & Heating Co. have been replacing water mains in the Lake Ridge Addition, just west of Decatur Airport, where the pipes date back to the 1960s.

The city chooses water mains to replace every year, an annual effort that has gained more resources since the Decatur City Council approved a series of water rate increases in 2013.

“Before the water rate increase took effect, we were spending about $200,000 to $250,000 annually on water main replacements,” said Keith Alexander, the city's director of water management. “In the last two years, we've spent $1.2 to $1.3 million.”

The water main projects are given priority based on the number of breaks that an area experiences and issues with water quality, which can be caused by corrosion of old pipes.

“It's very important that the city is able to properly maintain our extensive water system infrastructure,” Alexander said.

This year's project will replace a segment of 6-inch water main from East Cantrell Street and Lake Ridge Drive to east of the intersection of Cantrell and 44th Streets. In addition, the water main will be replaced with 12-inch pipe, which should provide greater fire protection east of 44th Street.

“We have some bigger mains that increase the flow, lower the friction loss, those types of things that get the water out there,” said Jerry Stevens, engineering services coordinator for water management. “The firemen would have a higher quantity of water to use.”

The cast-iron pipe has experienced pitting and erosion, Stevens said. It will be replaced with ductile iron pipe and will be wrapped in a thick plastic sleeve.

“There's improvement in the material itself and the method of installation, so they're going to be not as susceptible to corrosion and (will have) a longer service life,” he said.
The work is scheduled for completion later this fall.

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