

Boucher and Goode Announce Federal Funding for Chestnut Knob-Ridgeway Water Project (August 1, 2006)

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER

Federal Funding for the Chestnut Knob-Ridgeway Water Project

Ridgeway, Virginia

August 1, 2006

I am pleased to join with my friend and colleague Congressman Virgil Goode in Henry County this morning to announce a \$4.2 million provision of federal funding for a major expansion of the public water system in Henry County, which will provide new public water service to 100 homes and make water service more reliable for an additional 200 homes in the Ridgeway and Chestnut Knob communities.

Today's announcement represents another significant success in our ongoing work to provide safe and reliable public water service to the residents of Southwest and Southside Virginia. Virgil and I have both worked to obtain funding for this project, and I am pleased that we could both be here this morning to share the good news with the residents of Henry County.

At our request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, is providing a total of \$4,222,000 to the Henry County Public Service Authority for the construction of the new public water system serving the Chestnut Knob and Ridgeway communities. The funds will also be used to remove two aging and failing storage tanks and five well systems that the Public Service Authority currently maintains. Of that total amount, the Rural Development Agency is providing \$848,600 as a federal grant and \$3,374,000 as a low-interest federal loan.

The total cost for construction of this project is \$4,559,000. In addition to the \$4.2 million which we are announcing today, the Henry County Public Service Authority is providing a local match in the amount of \$336,400.

When completed, the project will make water service more reliable for 200 homes in the Ridgeway and Chestnut Knob communities and bring new water service to more than 100 homes and the Magna Vista High School in Ridgeway. Magna Vista High School is now the only public school in Henry County without access to publicly provided drinking water. I am pleased to say that when this project is completed, every public school in Henry County will have access to reliable and safe drinking water.

Many of the residents of the Chestnut Knob and Ridgeway communities currently rely on outdated well systems maintained by the Public Service Authority for their drinking water. Other community residents rely on private wells or springs to provide drinking water, which are often unreliable. With these funds, the Public Service Authority will close the five well systems it currently maintains and remove two aging water storage tanks, which are difficult for the Public Service Authority to maintain.

As part of the project, the Henry County Public Service Authority will install more than 13 miles of water lines in the Chestnut Knob and Ridgeway communities including the areas along Chestnut Knob Road, Soapstone Road, and Magna Vista High School Road. Additionally, one pump station will be constructed, which will replace an aging pump station currently in use.

One of my primary goals in representing Southwest Virginia is to work with our local governments to obtain federal funding to expand and improve our region's public water service. The provision of a safe and adequate supply of drinking water is an essential step in our efforts to attract new employers and to improve the quality of life for Southwest Virginians. The new public water system in the Chestnut Knob and Ridgeway communities of Henry County will further this goal by providing public water service to 100 homes and providing more reliable water service to an additional 200 homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a number of individuals who have been instrumental in the success of this project.

I want to thank Congressman Goode for his work on behalf of Henry County residents and for the partnership we have on a bi-partisan basis to improve the quality of life for the residents of the county. This is one of several projects we have underway, including the rails to trails project on the old Dick and Willy Railroad.

I also want to thank Jim McInerny, Chairman of the Henry County Public Service Authority, and the other members of the PSA for their leadership and foresight in this project.

H.G. Vaughn, Chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, and Debra Buchanan who represents this area on the Board, deserve our recognition this morning along with the other members of the Board for their support of this effort.

I would also like to recognize Benny Summerlin, Henry County Administrator, and Tim Hall, Deputy County Administrator, for their efforts to obtain funding for this project.

I also want to thank Ellen Davis, the State Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency, and Travis Jackson, Area Director for the Rural Development Agency, for their successful efforts to secure the federal funding for this project.

The expansion of the Henry County public water system in the Ridgeway and Chestnut Knob communities of Henry County is an excellent use of federal funds. These residents will benefit from the enhanced opportunity for residential and economic development which will be provided by the new water service.

