

**Kemper County Utility District
Annual Meeting— January 8, 2025
Chairman's Report**

Welcome

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, welcome to the annual meeting of the Kemper County Utility District. It is my pleasure to work alongside the current appointed commissioners.

We were glad to welcome two new Commissioners this past year. They are:

Jonathon Coleman and Tony Luke

As commissioners, we accepted the appointment to this Board with the initial goal of expanding natural gas from the Tennessee Valley Authority Combustion Turbine plant north of De Kalb to Highway 45. The anticipated gas line will run along Highway 16 following the pathway of existing EMEPA lines. Completion of this project will provide natural gas to additional citizens of the county, the campus of East Mississippi Community college, the Town of Scooba and south along Highway 45 to the Kemper County Industrial Park.

Senate Bill 3141 was passed during the 2023 Regular Legislative Session, authorizing the Kemper County Board of Supervisors to expand the scope of authority of the Kemper County Natural Gas District to become a public utility district with the authority to administer additional public utility services, including, but not limited to, the provision of drinking water.

With this expanded scope, the Kemper County Board of Supervisors requested that the Utility District work toward the installation of water service to the east side of the County along with the installation of the natural gas line. This request is due to the poor water quality in the area.

The initial gas line project and the additional water line project require numerous and varied funding sources to complete and support projects of this magnitude.

Summary of Highlights

In January of 2024, the first Annual Meeting of the Kemper County Utility District was held.

After months of negotiations, an agreement between Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Kemper County Board of Supervisors was reached. On March 13, 2024, an Interconnect Agreement between TN Gas Pipeline company, LLC and the Kemper County Board of Supervisors was signed. These actions satisfied the prerequisites to initiate construction of the interconnection at the TVA Kemper County Combustion Turbine plant. The Kemper County Board of Supervisors submitted a payment of \$1,485,742 to TN Gas Pipeline Company, LLC. This payment covers all equipment and materials needed for construction of the interconnection point. This was funded by previously awarded grants and appropriations. Kinder Morgan will oversee construction.

Efforts continued to seek and secure additional funding. As Chairman, I accompanied the Board of Supervisors and other County representatives to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Mississippi Congressional Delegation and discuss support and funding for the project. We visited with Senators Wicker and Hyde-Smith and representatives of Congressman Guest.

In April, Kemper County received a grant award from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality in the amount of \$1.306 million. This award was limited to water and wastewater usage. Once plans were submitted to MDEQ, additional funding was awarded totaling \$2.37 million. The project funds were mandated to be committed by August 31, 2024. Bids were taken and a contract was awarded to McKee Construction Company for the construction of 4.43 miles of water line.

Prepared by: Susan C Morgan, Chair

On May 3, the Utility District learned that the Mississippi legislature appropriated \$1 million to Kemper County for the natural gas line project running from DeKalb to Scooba.

Over the next few months of 2024, the following grants* were submitted:

- ARC Power Grant
- ARPA Rural Water Association
- USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program via EMEPA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant**

*None of these grants were awarded.

**The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant application will be resubmitted to the USDA as requested.

Additional applications are being prepared and pursued for additional ARC funding and the MDA Ready Site program

Representatives of the Board of Commissioners continue to meet and work with other authorities, such as the Mississippi Development Authority, on the topics of economic development, jobs, and infrastructure and attend and participate in regional governmental meetings.

Achievements

McKee Construction Company will begin water line construction mid to late January 2025. The Board of Supervisors agreed to dedicate additional money to the project. Engineering Plus completed the design of a water line extension.

Engineering Plus has provided all necessary information for Kinder Morgan to move forward with the interconnect point construction. Kinder Morgan has received the meter station design for review. Critical equipment has been ordered and construction should begin in summer 2025.

Most personal property easements have been secured for the gas and water lines running along Highway 16 East.

The Utility District webpage is live. The page is located on the Kemper County website under the Departments tab.

Recognition

The Utility Board of Commissioner extends thanks to the Kemper County Board of Supervisors for entrusting this Board with this large and important task.

Special recognition goes to members of the Mississippi Legislature for their support.

We are also fortunate to have the support services of Terrell Temple of Engineering Plus, Kacey Bailey of Glover, Young, Hammock, Walton & Simmons, PLLC, and Todd "Ike" Kiefer of Empirical Energy.

Future Initiatives

The Board will continue to pursue grant and legislative funding opportunities.

Representatives of the Utility District Board of Commissioners will accompany the Board of Supervisors to Washington D.C. this spring.