



SALINE COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY JUDGE

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JEFF AREY, COUNTY JUDGE  
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## Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Saline County Quorum Court Approves \$10M American Rescue Plan Water Infrastructure Project**

February 25, 2022 Saline County, AR – The Saline County Quorum Court approved appropriating \$10,000,000 (\$10M) of Saline County’s American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to the Saline Regional Public Water Authority (Water Authority), for a transformative water infrastructure project.

The Quorum Court recognized that securing a dependable, economical, reliable water source is integral for the long-term success of Saline County. The Water Authority’s water infrastructure project does that, and will act as a strategic economic development tool, improving the quality of life of almost the entire population of Saline County, by directly lowering water rates over the next 30 years.

“From my years as Mayor of the City of Haskell and Saline County Judge, I know how critical the need is for the Water Authority project,” said Saline County Judge Jeff Arey. “This project will significantly benefit the citizens of Saline County, further making Saline County a world-class destination.”

The project, over the next several years, will build an intake structure on the Ouachita River, transport that raw water to Saline County, construct a water treatment plant, and then transport the treated waters to members of the Water Authority. The ARP funds will be used for project costs, including land and easement acquisitions, engineering costs, and construction costs.

“I am excited that my colleagues on the Quorum Court recognize the importance of how this partnership will benefit a vast majority of water users, including current businesses and future businesses that will plant roots in our community,” said Saline County Justice of the Peace Josh Curtis. “This project further builds Saline County’s ecosystem of opportunity.”

The Water Authority, made up of eight (8) Saline County water purveyors, is pursuing a roughly \$150,000,000 (\$150M) water infrastructure project. Beyond Saline County’s ARP funds, the

Water Authority is applying for loans, grants, State ARP funds, and loan forgiveness opportunities to fund the project.

“We are so thankful for the vision and leadership of the Saline County Quorum Court and Judge Arey,” said Dickie Kentner, Water Authority Board Member. “The Water Authority will be good stewards of the ARP funds, delivering on the Water Authority’s promise to provide a dependable and affordable water supply for future generations of Saline County residents,” said Bobby Westbrook, Water Authority Board Member.

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### **About Saline County**

Saline County, Arkansas is home to nationally recognized schools, championship sports, first class parks and libraries in a suburban/rural setting. Saline County is experiencing dynamic growth, growing its population 15.2% in the 2020 Census. The cities and county government have kept pace, investing in solid infrastructure and public facilities that are second to none. Saline County’s economic base is strong and broad, with large and medium manufacturing and processing facilities and the infrastructure to transport goods and materials affordably. In addition to substantial rail and interstate highway access, our Saline County Regional Airport boasts a 5,000-foot runway and is primed for expansion.

The Saline County Judge is Jeff Arey and the Saline County Quorum Court Justices of the Peace are Pat Bisbee, Everette Hatcher, Carlton Billingsley, Barbara Howell, Mark Grimmett, Tammy Schmidt, Josh Curtis, Ed Albares, David “Davie” Gibson, Jim Whitley, Clint Chism, J.R. Walters, and Keith Keck.

### **About Saline Regional Public Water Authority**

The Saline Regional Public Water Authority (Water Authority) was incorporated in November 2014. The Water Authority was formed to work in concert with the water utilities operating in Saline County to develop long-term plans to secure a new source of water for the water utilities. The Water Authority is made of eight (8) existing water purveyors: City of Benton, City of Bryant, East End Water Improvement District No. 1, City of Haskell, City of Shannon Hills, Salem Water Users PWA, Saline County Waterworks and Sanitary Sewer Public Facilities Board, and Southwest Water Users Public Water Authority. These purveyors own and maintain water treatment and/or distribution systems in Saline County. The water purveyors in Saline County have been seeking a water source for decades and have finally found a dependable, economical, reliable water source to implement as the long-term drinking water source for Saline County.