



City of Ketchum

News Release
May 8, 2015

Ketchum Residents to Vote May 19 on Water Bonds *Lower Maintenance Costs Would Offset Cost of Bond Payments*

KETCHUM, IDAHO – Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, at Hemingway School for Ketchum voters to decide whether to enable the city to discontinue use of aging portions of the water system in the community core.

A simple majority of voters would need to approve revenue bonds for the project, which is designed to reduce maintenance costs, increase reliability and encourage conservation.

Estimates are that passage of the bond issue would actually save money in the long run by reducing maintenance costs on the aging pipes, Ketchum Public Works Director/City Engineer Robyn Mattison said. The savings are expected to be enough to make the bond payments, she explained.

The water revenue bond is essentially a loan, she added, and the city cannot legally take out a loan without approval of the voters. By law, the bond payments would come from water rates. There will be no increase in property taxes.

Portions of the community core and the Lewis Street industrial area use pipes installed by Ketchum Springs Water, a private water system that the city acquired in the 1980s.

The Ketchum Springs Water pipes, many of which are more than half a century old, are mostly constructed of steel. They are buried less than six feet deep in some places, meaning that water must be pumped through them to prevent freezing in the winter. This wastes both water and the electricity needed for pumping. Frequent breakages disrupt water service and increase maintenance costs.

In addition, no water meters were installed on services from the Ketchum Springs Water system. Property owners served by this system currently pay a flat rate no matter how much water they use. As part of this project, a water meter would be installed for each property and the rate would be based on usage, as it is in the rest of the city. The new water lines already are in place.

The city is eligible to apply for a loan of up to \$449,000 from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to install stubs from newer water lines to all properties where stubs are needed and to install water meters. The 20-year bonds would have a fixed interest rate of 2.75 percent.

While the city would pay for installation of new meters and service lines to the property line, property owners would pay the cost of new or relocated water service lines on private property. Plans are to offer them the option of paying at completion of construction or over time through assessments.

Additional information is available at ketchumidaho.org/waterbond.

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About the City of Ketchum

The city of Ketchum is located in the Wood River Valley in south central Idaho. Founded in 1880 during the mining boom, Ketchum is now regarded as one of the most popular destinations for winter and summer visitors due to its world-class skiing, mountain biking, fishing, hiking, restaurants, art galleries and shopping. The city of Ketchum hosts the famous annual Wagon Days Parade, held on Labor Day weekend, and numerous other year-round attractions. Ketchum is home to more than 10,000 full- and part-time residents. For more information about the city of Ketchum, visit www.ketchumidaho.org.

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