



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Alabama - Rural Utilities Service

Community Building

Water Treatment Plant Provides Abundant Water Supply and Sparks Community Development

Outline Of Need:

The City of Thomasville purchased their entire water supply from a nearby town and did not have a back-up water source. City leaders were frequently forced to implement water usage restrictions on their citizens, even during winter months, and on two occasions the city endured week-long water outages. City leaders realized that without a dependable water source, the city’s growth would be greatly impeded and water use restrictions would continue to occur more frequently, placing hardships on their residents, schools, and businesses. Mayor Sheldon Day and city leaders developed a plan for a water treatment plant, using the Alabama River, 20+ miles away, as their water source. This aggressive plan would create an abundant source of water and remove the need to buy their water from another system; however, this was not a viable option without millions of dollars to fund this infrastructure project in a very rural area of southwest Alabama. With an estimated cost of nearly \$30 million, they realized partnership would be a key element in achieving their goal and worked closely



Photo: *Water tank at water treatment plant in Thomasville.*

with their Congressional delegation and government agencies to identify loan and grant opportunities.

How Rural Development Helped:

USDA Rural Development staff worked closely with Thomasville leaders over several years as partnerships developed with the goal of constructing a water treatment plant for the City of Thomasville. In 2009, a \$4,830,00 grant and \$10,369,000 loan was awarded to the City of Thomasville’s Water Works and Sewer Board. This was the first water project in Alabama to receive funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In 2011, Rural Development awarded an additional \$1,500,000 grant and \$3,500,000 loan to complete this multi-year construction project. To date, this \$20.2 million initial investment is the largest water project financed by USDA Rural Development in Alabama. Without a cooperative partnership effort, partnership involving local, regional and state entities and three Federal funding sources—RD, EPA, and EDA—this project would not have become a reality.

The Results:

This state-of-the-art water treatment plant provides a reliable, abundant water supply, alleviates the need to purchase water, and is a contributing factor for community and economic growth. In the last 5 years city leaders accelerated industry recruitment which has resulted in more than \$700 million in capital investments with 1,500 new jobs within a 5-mile radius of Thomasville and a projected 200+ housing units within the next 5-7 years.

3/2014

Fast Facts

Program: Water and Environmental Program

Date: 2009 and 2013

Investment: \$20,199,000

Congressional District: Terri Sewell, District 7

Partners: Environmental Protection Agency—\$ 4,696,000 grant; Economic Development Authority—\$2,000,000 grant

Demographics:

Thomasville is a rural, progressive small town in southwest Alabama, with approximately 4,200 population.

Impact:

- City of Thomasville no longer purchases water
- \$700 million in capital investments, creating 1,500 new jobs