

## SEPTEMBER 2020

### Passing The Torch

This is your team, getting it done! Like the rest of you, we have all had to adjust to **COVID-19** over the last six months. Turning valves and taking water samples cannot be done remotely, but we adjusted where needed and split shifts, did some work from home, and learned to sanitize and wear masks. During this time **Dean Hill**, our Assistant Superintendent for 30 years, has “mostly” retired but is still helping coordinate projects for us part-time from home. **Eric Carlson** has stepped up to take on the duties of the Assistant Superintendent, including serving as the Direct Responsible Charge, or DRC, the state-licensed water operator responsible for Rainbow and the small systems we manage.

## 2020 Rainbow Staff



<b>Brian</b>	<b>Jill</b>	<b>Eric</b>	<b>Jodi</b>	<b>Charles</b>	<b>Dean</b>	<b>Jamie</b>
Water	Receptionist	DRC & Assistant	Office	Water	Project	Engineer &
Operator	& Billing Clerk	Superintendent	Manager	Operator	Manager	Superintendent

**We consider it an honor to still serve you today. We appreciate our customers!**

Find us online at [www.RWDonline.net](http://www.RWDonline.net) or use the [Facebook](#) link for Rainbow-Water-District.

***During a disaster, Facebook is updated more frequently and provides helpful information!***



**RWDonline.net**

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### **Network of Water Utilities**

While serving our customers in north and west Springfield is our core mission, Rainbow has enjoyed success in serving the larger community around us. This work began in 1994 when the community of **Marcola** sought assistance with the operation and management of their water system. What started as some “on call” support turned into a broader partnership, and today Rainbow performs the accounting function and processes water bills, shares our 24/7 answering service for after hours emergencies, and helps Marcola with engineering and planning for growth. A Rainbow water operator is responsible to oversee water treatment and meet all applicable regulations, but a Marcola resident and employee takes care of daily business by checking on wells, assisting customers, and taking samples.

Over time, this partnership expanded with Rainbow staff providing various services to other small water systems near Springfield. Rainbow now oversees the water systems of **Shangri-La** Water District and **Deerhorn** Community Water Association on Deerhorn Road, and **Shenandoah** Loop (Upper Camp Creek area). Starting in January 2018, Rainbow invited the part-time water operators of these small systems to join Rainbow’s full-time operators for monthly donuts, safety training, and information sharing. Even with COVID, we continue to conduct some video trainings and stay in contact.

Along the way we invited the operator from **Blue River** Water District to attend our meetings. Rainbow staff toured Blue River just one month ago, and we were starting to provide some consulting advice on system operations and maintenance when fire broke out and our world changed again.

### **Holiday Farm Fire, September 2020**

About 6 pm on Monday evening, September 7, weather forecasters warned we would experience strong easterly winds and elevated fire danger due to the hot and dry conditions. Within hours damage from the wind knocked out power in some areas, or utilities turned the power off to protect against sparking power lines triggering fires. It was too late. The fire started in the area of the Holiday Farm RV Park and rapidly spread west passing through the community of Blue River, destroying homes and both of Blue River’s well buildings. By 8 pm on Tuesday evening, September 8, power was off to community supply wells in the Mohawk and McKenzie valleys. With wells off but people still using water to try and protect their homes, water stored in tanks quickly depleted and pressure dropped, triggering the need for multiple simultaneous boil water notices. Because power was still available for Rainbow wells and the systems in Springfield were operating normally, we were fortunate we could help others.

Those who lost people, animals or structures during this horrible tragedy have our sympathy. Three of Rainbow’s employees were impacted. One was on a Level 1 evacuation in Thurston and two were living in Level 3 areas and had to evacuate their homes while continuing to show up, work through the weekend, and take care of our friends and customers. We are grateful to the community we live in, and for all stepping up to meet different needs. Those few caught looting or taking advantage of the situation do not represent the majority. We are thankful for our spouses and family members who managed stress and kids and animals so we could focus on work. It is not over and recovery continues.

**Marcola** is larger and fared the best. EPUD promptly restored power so the wells could fill the tanks and make water in hydrants available for fire department use. Two of Marcola's wells are able to run from a generator, but this was not needed once power was restored.

**Deerhorn** has two wells, one of which is able to run from a generator. Deerhorn was closest to the fire, and it was a challenge to get to the generator and keep it running, but once EWEB was able to restore power to both wells the two storage tanks filled quickly and allowed a return to normal operation.

MARCOLA WELL



DEERHORN WELL



**Shenandoah** was more accessible to us and we were able to get in and connect a generator to run the well and fill the tank to make some water available from hydrants for McKenzie Fire if needed.

**Shangri-La** has a generator that runs booster pumps to serve homes higher on the hill, but we helped connect a second generator to run the wells and refill the tank. This system worked very well over all.

SHENANDOAH WELL



SHANGRI-LA WELLS



**Blue River Water District** suffered huge losses. In addition to the loss of many buildings, homes and businesses for the community, water system facilities were directly impacted. Blue River has two wells, both located close together on the same property. A tree fell on top of one well building and the backup generator, exposing the interior of the building to the fire that also destroyed the wood building and the second well. Rebuilding will take time, but Rainbow is helping the initial recovery.

#### BLUE RIVER WELLS AND BACKUP GENERATOR



Rainbow obtained and installed a new motor to run one well from a backup generator until Lane Electric restores power to the area. We helped find and close valves and flush water from hydrants to begin the process of refilling one of the two tanks, a first step to restoring water to the area. Additional work is needed since the heat baked rubber gaskets and caused pipe joints to leak, but our crew is happy we can help with the healing process. We are encouraged to see so many working together to help displaced people, restore critical infrastructure, and begin to build again.

