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Story last updated at 5:42 a.m. Sunday, May 1, 2005

Water Purchase Good Investment

LUBBOCK HAS taken a giant step forward toward securing a dependable, long-lasting supply of water for local and area residents by nearly doubling its groundwater holdings as part of the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority (CRMWA).

CRMWA, a water management district made up of representatives from Lubbock, Amarillo, Plainview and eight other member cities, recently issued \$50 million in bonds to retrieve water underneath 94,000 acres of Roberts and Carson counties northeast of Amarillo.

"To be able to secure the amount of water that CRMWA has secured is huge for Lubbock, and it's huge for all of the member cities," Lubbock Mayor Marc McDougal said.

To its credit, the board - with Lubbock's delegation leading the way - authorized CRMWA general manager Kent Satterwhite to pursue additional water rights, possibly leading to the issuance of up to another \$50 million in bonds for more acreage.

We second Mayor Pro Tem Tom Martin's assessment that any increase in Lubbock's water supply is a sound investment. "In the future, the cities that have water supplies assured will be the ones that grow and have prosperity," as Mr. Martin said. "If we don't get it now, it's not going to be there in 20 or 30 years."

Residents will not see any change in their water bills next fiscal year. Eventually, however, a modest 2 percent to 4 percent increase may be required to fund the project.

It would be difficult to overestimate the value of the newly acquired reserves, which are a major support to Lubbock's 100-year water plan.

Beyond easing the pressure to make quick decisions about other components of Lubbock's water resources - such as the Bailey County well fields and Lake Alan Henry - the new acquisition gives the entire region greater protection against the ravages of diminished rainfall or drought.

How significant are the new groundwater holdings? City Councilman Gary Boren characterizes the investment as "one of the most monumental foundation decisions ever made in the Panhandle-South Plains." Mr. Martin suggests the acquisition "could rival the decision to put Texas Tech in Lubbock."

One of the first questions prospective newcomers or company spokesmen ask when surveying Lubbock for possible relocation here is: "What about the (availability of) water?" Without a reliable supply, the entire process is moot.

Thanks to the vision of Mayor McDougal, Mayor Pro Tem Martin, Councilman Boren and their counterparts on the CRMWA board, the water needs of Lubbock, West Texas and the Panhandle are secured for years to come for a fraction of their true worth.