



## McLean County Regional Water Commission honored with 2015 Spirit of Kentucky Award

**T**he Spirit of Kentucky Award is given each year to “sponsors of a public project that demonstrate cost-effective coordination of government resources among multiple government groups.”

The award recognizes cooperation, communication and cost-effectiveness among

government, public service, private non-profit or quasi-governmental groups or agencies.

Gov. Steve Beshear and Department for Local Government Commissioner Tony Wilder recently presented the 2015 Spirit of Kentucky Award to the McLean County Regional Water Commission, a partnership consisting of city and county groups that joined together to centralize the region’s water system.

The award was presented Aug. 27 as part of the 40th Annual Governor’s Local Issues Conference.

*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision.  
The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives.  
It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

— ANDREW CARNEGIE

“The McLean County Regional Water Commission was honored to be the recipient of the 2015 Spirit of Kentucky Award,” said Judge/Executive Kelly Thurman. “This achievement marked a monumental effort of all of the leaders of the cities of Livermore, Calhoun, Island and Sacramento, along with the North McLean County Water District and Beech Grove Water District to unite together to develop plans to form a new county-wide water distribution plant and infrastructure system.

“I am very honored to serve as their judge/executive and help steer the progress forward,” Thurman added.

The governor noted, “Our Kentucky counties need reliable and quality infrastructure in order to grow and thrive.... I commend the members of the McLean County Regional Water Commission for recognizing the value of regional collaboration and joining together to solve its county’s water infrastructure needs by developing a plan to deliver safe and cost-effective drinking water from a centralized system.”

The McLean County Regional Water Commission was formed in 2009 to address the region’s drinking water needs and aging water supply systems. Currently, the 9,500 McLean County residents are served by five independent water systems – each of which is approaching its functional life expectancy and struggling to meet the safe operating standards of federal regulations. Some of the water plants are even being forced to rely on water sources outside of the county, putting residents at risk for price fluctuations that are out of their control.

Instead of tackling the needs of each individual water system, the Commission generated a comprehensive plan to consolidate the county’s water functions into one centralized system. This concerted plan will help the county to effectively control the area’s water production, capacity and cost by combining resources and avoiding repetitive expenses.

Through the power of regional collaboration, the Commission secured nearly \$11 million in federal and state funding to construct the new 2 million-gallon capacity centralized water tank and its supplementary infrastructure needs. The modern, state-of-the-art water system will provide a safe, reliable and cost-effective water supply that will allow residents’ water rates to remain low.

“In this day of limited government resources, partnerships among agencies are imperative in order to develop and complete broad community infrastructure projects,” said Commissioner Wilder. “Members of the McLean County Regional Water Commission understood the challenges facing its independent water systems and smartly partnered to pool resources and secure the funding necessary to provide a quality, county-wide water system that will serve residents for many future generations.”

Thurman said, “As I told the audience in Louisville at the presentation, the Commission and its leadership have learned a lot about the other set of P3’s! Not the ones being discussed on the state level, but the P’s for Local Government and local projects: **P**erseverance to develop a plan; **P**ersistence to see the plan through; and **P**atience to await a positive outcome. The assistance we received from Bell Engineering, Joanna Shake of the Green River Area Development District, the Department of Local Government, USDA Rural Development and Kentucky Infrastructure Authority was tremendous.”

Proudly, the county judge/executive added, “Although I was very surprised when I received word of the award, I must say that I wasn’t shocked. The dedication of the working group on this project has been beyond description! Everyone remained focused and committed to seeing this project through to completion.

“By working together, McLean County has truly exhibited a Winning Spirit!” ■