

Today, the Hellertown Borough Authority celebrates it's 80th birthday!

In 1940, the Borough of Hellertown granted a charter to establish the Hellertown Borough Authority to provide for the water and wastewater needs for the Borough. This created a separate entity from the Borough, to make decisions and govern over the developing water and wastewater systems for the growing community.

The Authority was to establish a Board, which would end up being spearheaded by Morris Dimmick, an essential leader in the Borough. He, along with his fellow Board members, began the daunting task of acquiring land and a continuous water supply for the community. This would lead to the purchasing of many parcels of land, located throughout the Borough and Lower Saucon, on which springs were sourced. These springs, a total of fourteen, would become the primary water supply for the Borough for these past 80 years. Dimmick recognized that they must protect those springs, and therefore, the Authority also purchased additional acres of land to ensure the springs would be protected from development and potential contamination. The Board also began acquiring assets from Bethlehem to expand the system and make it more robust. This amount of foresight is only done by people who care about their community and those with a vision for a sustainable future for the customers they are responsible for...and all with a small budget, a rate payer system that was just being established, and a community that was just getting used to the idea of having and maintaining a reliable water system.

Through the years, the various Boards and employees have made decisions to honor the vision of the founders of the Authority. They have made provisions for alternative supplies, both from wells, and interconnections with neighboring jurisdictions. Sewer pump stations have been built, as well as a water tank. The vision of what a utility is has evolved over the past twenty-five years. The focus has moved to emerging regulatory issues, safety needs of employees, and technological advances to help not only the customer, but create efficiencies for the employees and the frontline teams. All of these issues, must be weighed and balanced, while trying to keep a rate payer system that is in line with the community demographics. These decisions do not come easily and are not made lightly. Over the past 80 years, this Authority has thrived and has made tremendous decisions for the community.

I often speak from the point of the Authority, but I would like to point out some things I have found in my experiences in the utility industry for over twenty years. I have worked in large operations, mid-size operations, and small operations. It is hard for a smaller operation to continue to thrive. There are infrastructure needs that must be addressed, employee wages and pensions, costly regulatory operational changes that must be made, and customer expectations to be met. There are many things that the Hellertown Borough Authority has done, that I saw large operations having trouble doing. I attribute that to good decisions made by the previous and current Board members and employees. This is not a business for profit, we do not collect taxes, and we set rates that correlate to direct operational and capital costs...revenues are invested in the water and wastewater systems.

It may seem as if celebrating the 80th birthday of a water and wastewater authority is not a big deal. But I can say from experience, it is. Thank you to all of the past and present Board members and employees for caring for this place as if it were your home. We are looking forward to some interesting projects in the future and some needed infrastructure work to keep this Authority going for another eighty years. We are a part of this community and we thank you for entrusting us with the future of the Authority.

Happy Birthday Hellertown Borough Authority!!!!