

## CU: 2020 CU Wrap Up/2021 Way Ahead

As 2020 comes to close, (thank goodness), I wanted to provide an update on what CU has done this year and is looking ahead to in 2021.

After weather delays, COVID, and engineering delays, the new plant went online at the end of September. To date, we have pumped over 14 million gallons of water. Everything is working great. Despite numerous challenges, we kept “steady as we go,” and successfully brought the plant online.

Bringing the plant online took considerable engagement on CU’s part, and I’d like to thank the board, along with special thank you to Scott Kutzley, Jim Moran, and Marti Schmidt. This plant did not build itself, nor did it account for itself, or operate itself. Without their work, we would not have the newest water plant in the surrounding area.

Looking into 2021, there are still challenges and problems to solve.

- Our long serving operator, Jim Moran, has expressed a desire to spend time with his family and not continue in his role as operator of record for our plant. Choctaw Utilities will be searching for a new primary operator in 2021. This will be a significant transition as Jim has been the operator here for decades, and was vital in the construction of the new plant.
- GIS mapping the distribution system is a priority. It’s time to bring our distribution up to the same modern standard as our plant. We’ve taken the first steps in understanding this challenge. ORWA provides the equipment to perform GIS mapping free of charge, and their annual license to maintain the information is \$700. This is a low cost, high return effort. One of the biggest items GIS mapping will resolve is mapping the location of the curb shutoff valve to your house. We need better visibility on the location and disposition of these curb shutoffs, and GIS will solve this issue. Expect to see more on this in 2021. If you’re interested about GIS mapping, check out this link: <https://www.ohioruralwater.org/gis-mapping.html>
- Taxes. The property tax bill CU has paid this year has increased from \$46,000 in 2017 to over \$76,000 in 2020. Your share of this tax is \$7.23/month or \$86.76 annually. The result of this increase is out of CU’s control. If these taxes cannot be resolved, at some point a rate increase may be required. Again, these are taxes that are beyond CU’s ability to control.
- Please see the CU website: <https://choctawwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/December-2020-Plant-Final-Costs.pptx>, for information on the cost of the new plant. We’ve been operational with the new plant since the end of September, and everything is working great. Breakdown of plant construction costs are available at the linked address.

I’d like to thank the community for the forbearance and patience as the challenges of 2020 were worked through. It is a very big relief to know the plant is complete, and all the work paid off (and also 2020 is nearly over!) 2021 presents an entirely new set of work, and CU looks forward to continuing to serve the Choctaw Lake community.

Dave