

DeBerry Water Supply Corporation

Important Notice for All Water Customers

Next week, watch your mailbox for a letter from De Berry WSC — it will include a short Income Survey and a postage-paid return envelope.

You ONLY need to fill in 3 ITEMS

- 1. Your address**
- 2. Combined Annual Household Income**
- 3. Number of people living in your home (also include children in the count)**

Do NOT put your name on the survey, the Non-Profit Communities Unlimited will put their name in that spot for the Texas Water Development Board.

Please take a few minutes to fill it out and mail it back in the envelope provided.

One important reminder: the enclosed return envelope is for your completed survey **only**. Please **do not** place your water bill payment in this envelope. Continue paying your water bill the way you always have by mail or online at deberry.myruralwater.com. Payments placed in the survey envelope may be delayed, as that envelope will be handed directly to our third-party survey partner, Communities Unlimited.

Your privacy is protected: No DeBerry WSC member, board member, or employee will open or see your completed survey. Sealed envelopes are handed over unopened to Communities Unlimited, an independent non-profit, whose staff will tally the responses and compile the report they will submit to the Texas Water Development Board.

Who should respond: You do not need to own your home or land to participate. If your household uses DeBerry Water, you are a DeBerry Water customer, and we need to hear from you.

If we don't hear from you: Communities Unlimited will follow up first by phone, and if needed, go door-to-door to collect the information we still need. Responding by mail helps Communities Unlimited focus their resources on submitting the reports instead of knocking on doors. If you don't receive a survey or throw yours away, please call us at DeBerry Water and we will mail you another one.

Why this matters: DeBerry WSC has already invested a great deal of time, effort, and money into this project. We first fought — and won — a dispute with the Water Development Board over an incomplete income figure that we did not feel nor did the data show to accurately reflect our community. Now we are covering the cost of printing, mailing, and prepaid return postage for every household in our service area so that there is absolutely no barrier to responding. Without current, accurate data directly from our own members, our applications are not truly indicative of this community's needs. This survey is the only way to establish an accurate income figure for our service area with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), so that our system is scored and rated fairly, based on real data. An accurate figure gives us the best possible opportunity to compete for grant funding to improve our water system, it does not guarantee funding on its own but without accurate data our applications are fully complete.

An update on our funding score: The most recent project scoring from TWDB has come back. DeBerry WSC's score improved over last year's application — but we still did not score high enough to fully qualify for this round of grant funding. Only 31 systems out of more than 400 that applied statewide were selected. This TWDB funding is separate from the USDA grant funding we were approved for in February, which is moving forward on its own track. We have secured land for up to three test well sites with the USDA and Sabine River Authority funds and are working through the required paperwork with USDA, with hopes to begin drilling in October. As that project gets closer, we will keep everyone updated.

That makes accurate, complete data more important than ever. Additional funding opportunities have application deadlines in January, and a strong, verified response rate is what allows TWDB to calculate an accurate score for our system. The more households that respond, the better positioned we are to be scored and rated fairly and to have the best possible opportunity when we compete for the next round of funding. We need to be in the strongest position we can when we apply again, and that starts with hearing from as many households as possible.

Thank you for helping us work toward a better, more reliable water system for our whole community. Your response truly matters. Questions? Contact the De Berry WSC office at 903-766-3973 — deberrywsc@gmail.com, or Kayley Poston at Communities Unlimited, 497-595-5077 — Kayley.poston@communitiesu.org.

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