

Baileyville Utilities District- A Brief History

In 1900, Sprague's Falls in Baileyville, Maine was noted as an excellent place for a dam and papermill. Thus, the Saint Croix Paper Company was formed by a group of investors. In 1905, Frank Gilbreth was hired to build both the mill and worker town. Frank had a reputation as a speedy contractor. He brought 1000 contractors, mostly Italian and Slavs, to the site and had one paper machine running in less than a year, the second paper machine in 1907.

The worker town (Woodland) was started during this time and its utilities formed the basis for what would become the Baileyville Utilities District or BUD. Woodland was administered by the Woodland Company, which also managed the utilities, both water, and electrical. Sewers discharged into the river. They also maintained the houses, collected rent, and etc.

St Croix Paper Company divested itself of the Woodland Company around 1960, and the houses were sold to their occupants. The water and electrical utilities were sold to a private company owned by Richard Barry. Richard hired Ralph Dorr as his superintendent. The mill continued to supply Woodland with water and electricity.

Prior to his purchase, the source of the drinking water was the St Croix river. It was simply screened and chlorinated. Occasionally, the screen would fail and baby eels would appear in your drinking glass.

Barry installed a new well in 1962. The source of the water was a huge underground reservoir formed in the last Ice Age. It is shaped like an esker and extends from the Aroostook County line to Meddybemps Lake. The well has supplied millions of gallons of some of the best drinking water in the state. The pump is only down 60 feet in a 36 inch casing.

Around 1975, Barry decided to sell the utility company. The town approached the State of Maine legislature requesting to form a utilities district. In 1977, the transfer took place. A board of directors was appointed by the Town Council. The 1st Trustees were Gerry Cox, Gary Martell, Pat McClusky, Clarence Murphy, and Al Wormel. Ralph Dorr was hired as the superintendent.

The electrical portion of the utility was transferred to Eastern Maine Electrical CoOp. GP, the owner of the mill, wasn't interested in providing the town with power and the BUD had no other sources. The town electrical load averaged about 1 megawatt at this point.

In 1978, BUD proceeded to build a million gallon underground tank and replace older water mains, some of which dated to 1906. This was done on a 40- year

bond. The original tank (stand pipe) was also built in 1906 and was very small and tended to overflow. This new tank also allowed the town fire hydrants to meet really excellent fire flows, reducing homeowners insurance.

Numerous projects have been completed since the initial \$1 million tank and lines. In 1989, the water was extended to the town line at Route 9 corner. In 1990, the water main was extended out the South Princeton Road to the junction of the Robb Hill Road. In 1992, a second well was installed along with a backup gasoline engine drive. In 2018-2019, the old lines on Main, Hillside and Summit Streets were replaced. These may be the last of the old Woodland company installations, and they were 112 years old.

The BUD approached Calais in the late 1990s to supply them with water. The Town of Saint Stephen, NB said its water source was not large enough to continue to provide water for both communities. Negotiations between Calais and BUD were unsuccessful and Calais proceeded with its own well.

The BUD was originally formed as a standalone utility. In 2005, the town approached the legislature to have the district employees be part of the town structure. The current superintendent is Andrew Snowman. The current trustees are: Ronald Wallace, John Gallant, Dale Croman, Dwane Andrews and James Bohanon.

In conclusion, the BUD is an excellent small public utility and a great asset for the Town of Baileyville. The quality of its drinking water is unsurpassed, its hydrant fire flows are better than most and it's being constantly improved and updated.

Submitted C. Gerry Cox on 24 September 2020