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Grand Prairie Water Commission Moving Forward With \$1.5 Billion Project

Tina Morrison
Sep 11, 2026



Minooka Village Administrator Dan Duffy spoke with WCSJ about the Grand Prairie Water Commission moving forward with a \$1.5 billion project that will bring Lake Michigan water to seven communities by 2030.

He said the project was developed after studies found the deep aquifer serving the region was being depleted and was not recharging quickly enough to meet long-term needs. Several alternative water sources were studied before Lake Michigan was determined to be the most cost-effective option.

Duffy said construction has started on the system, which will include a 60-inch pipeline carrying water from Chicago.

“There was a water study done probably six, seven years ago where the aquifer in our area was being depleted and was not recharging. And this is the deep aquifer that goes several thousand feet down. And we're on the same aquifer as Joliet and their neighbors. Those just don't recharge. Those recharge over tens and thousands of years. It's not like our local ones that are one hundred feet down, they get recharged annually. So we all realized that we had to find a new source for water. Joliet led the charge, looked at several options, whether it be the Kankakee River, other river options, Lake Michigan, and found overall that was the most cost effective was to bring Lake Michigan down. They extended to their neighbors, ourselves, Channahon, Shorewood, Romeoville to see if we'd be interested to help burden that cost. Sixty inches pipe coming down from Chicago. We've already started this year working on that project. So, by 2030 is when the spigot is supposed to turn on.”

Officials said the project remains on schedule to begin delivering water in September 2030. Most of the project will be financed through federal water infrastructure financing, along with some federal funding and revenue generated through local water rates.

“Officials said the project remains on schedule to begin delivering water in September of 2030. Most of the project will be financed through federal water infrastructure financing along with some federal funding and revenue generated through local water rates. Overall, it's about a one point five-billion-dollar project. That's with a b. It'll be one of the biggest projects we ever worked on. We've been receiving some money from some of our reps in Washington for the last couple of years. But that one point five, the lion's share will be used with WIFIA, which is water financing bonds that, you know, we go out and have to actually pay back, but you get special financing rates on that. We work to make sure that our water weights are correct moving forward to help pay for that, that project. And it's nothing that really benefits us, in the short term. It's the long term.”

Officials said participating communities worked together to establish the Grand Prairie Water Commission and standardize engineering and construction requirements to help control costs. Some existing deep wells will remain available as backup sources in case Lake Michigan water service is interrupted.

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