

Sheridan Press  
Sheridan, WY  
Circ. 6170  
From Page:  
1  
3/17/2004  
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<sup>104</sup>  
**Whitney  
offers 36M  
gals.' water**

Annual option  
for 'greening  
of community'

**By Robert Waggener**

*Staff reporter*



**Tom  
Kinnison**

Whitney board  
president

Whitney Benefits Inc. has offered 36 million gallons of water annually to the city of Sheridan and Sheridan Area Water Supply Joint Powers Board, according to Whitney's president, Tom Kinnison.

"Whitney is offering to extend a portion of their Park Reservoir

water for the 'greening' of the community, including Kendrick Park, Thorne-Rider Park and other community areas," Kinnison said.

Kinnison said the Whitney Benefits board has agreed to:

- Lease up to 19.5 million gallons of raw water to SAWS for 1.5 cents per 100 gallons. This will be offered under an annually renewable option for up to five years.

Please see **Whitney, Page 2**





Sheridan Press  
 Sheridan, WY  
 Circ. 6170  
 From Page:  
 2  
 3/17/2004  
 51015



# Whitney

(Continued from Page 1)

- Provide up to 16 million gallons of raw water annually to the city at no charge for the irrigation of parks and other "green" areas.

Kinnison and fellow Whitney board members Roy Garber and Kim Love made the offer to the Sheridan City Council at Monday night's Council meeting.

The Council took no action, but members said they initially support the proposal.

"This is quite a generous thing that is going on here ... to make this community better," said Mayor Jim Wilson.

Wilson said he hopes the Council considers the offer in "good faith."

Council member Kathy Kennedy added, "I think this is a very generous gift."

Kennedy said she believes the water will be especially important during drought years, when the city is forced to let park lawns go brown.

Kinnison noted: "Whitney is very pleased to provide water to assist in the greening of our community parks and public areas for the enjoyment and use of the community residents. We believe that Mr. Whitney would be pleased in his ability to continue to benefit his community."

Whitney Benefits was created under the last will of Edward Whitney, a Sheridan County resident who died in 1917.

Kinnison said that Whitney Benefits is asking the city to provide 40 million gallons of treated water annually in exchange for the offering.

He said Whitney will retain 4 million gallons for areas owned by the private foundation, including Whitney Commons and the soccer

Mayor

fields at the Sheridan County YMCA.

Treated water is to be used for recreational play areas as well as the fountain at Whitney Commons, Kinnison said.

After it is used for those purposes, he said, the water will go into a 24,000-gallon storage tank for lawn irrigation.

Sheridan County Associate Engineer Bruce Yates, who is the SAWS administrator, said this morning the Whitney offering generally sounds "very favorable," but that he couldn't specifically comment because he hadn't seen the proposal.

"We always have a need to expand our long-term water supply, so when there is an opportunity that is favorable, that is a good thing to do," Yates said.

In the past, he said, SAWS has only been forced to purchase extra water during drought periods.

Yates said that in 2002, SAWS paid \$17,500 for 100 acre-feet of raw water from Dome Lake and rancher Don Roberts Sr.

He said this figures to 5 cents per 100 gallons for raw water, which compares to 1.5 cents per 100 gallons of raw water offered by Whitney Benefits.

Sheridan Public Works Director Jackie Flowers said the Whitney Benefits offer could help "buy SAWS some time" during drought years until other water rights are added.

"It will also definitely help the city," said Flowers, who noted that the city's "pool" of water rights is larger than SAWS', so SAWS would likely benefit more.

If the Council approves the offering, Flowers said, "In general, the community will be able to rest assured the playing fields will stay green and safe for play. That was one thing we struggled with during the drought a couple of years ago. Some of the fields got like concrete."



**Jim Wilson**  
 Sheridan City