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The More You Know Water Towers

Residents of the Plainview-Old Bethpage community are familiar with the Plainview Water District's water tower, but do they know what purpose it serves? Throughout Nassau County, there are dozens of elevated storage tanks designed to store and aide in the distribution of water throughout supply systems. Water towers are a vital and essential component of infrastructure and provide a service at a much lower cost than alternative systems.

"The Plainview Water District has and will continue to incorporate smart infrastructure to best position the district to efficiently provide quality water to residents," said Plainview Water District Chairman Marc Laykind. "Water towers are incredibly efficient at pressurizing water systems. Ensuring there is significant water reserves whenever needed in emergency situations such as a fire."

Water towers are a tried-and-true method for ensuring that pressure throughout a water distribution system is consistent. Using gravity, the weight of a million gallons of water stored more than 100 feet in the air helps to pressurize a significant portion of the districts nine-square-mile service territory. This system ensures

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homes continue to receive high-quality pressurized water even in the case of an emergency.

"Generally speaking, water towers typically cost half as much to operate as other systems such as ground storage tanks and booster pumping stations," said Commissioner Amanda Field. "In addition, the reliability of this infrastructure provides so much peace of mind for operators, especially in emergency weather events. There is a reason why elevated towers are still used today and are in abundance across Long Island. They work."

Water towers only require one pumping system to ensure system pressurization. In other words, once the water is pumped from the ground and into the tower, the system will maintain its pressure as long as there is sufficient water in the tank. Using other systems, such as a ground storage tank and booster pumping system, gravity is removed from the equation and therefore requires double pumping. Pumping water into the ground storage tank and then pumping it from there into the distribution system to achieve adequate pressure requires two pumping stations, making electric bills and overall operations of these systems more expensive than elevated tanks.

"Not only is Plainview's water tower providing a necessary function, but we believe it is a point of pride for our community," said Commissioner Andrew Bader. "It plants the flag that can be seen for miles, especially when traveling on the Long Island Expressway, and makes a statement that this is the Plainview community. Maybe I'm biased, but when traveling back from a weekend away, I immediately start to feel at home once I see our water tower in the distance."

The Plainview Water District has 6 well sites by means of 12 deep wells with a total approved capacity of 24.5 million gallons per day. The district area is approximately nine square miles comprised of Plainview, Old-Bethpage and a portion of Syosset. Typically the district pumps approximately 1.7 billion gallons per year from the groundwater aquifer. While the allowable capacity exceeds a typical max day seasonal pumpage of 10 MGD, the district must be prepared to meet fire demands, extreme weather and ability to supply water in case of equipment failures.

—Submitted by the Plainview Water District