

Creative Funding - 101

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NYRWA Circuit Rider I



As we all know, funding for all aspects of, "Water System Operations" is always an important part of the annual planning process. With the ever-expanding growth of the costs for running a system, we are forever looking at new avenues for obtaining the capital to meet these goals. With this in mind, I would like to share with

you one source of funding I happened to stumble upon while making a technical visit with a system in Sullivan County, in the Town of Rockland.

I had stopped off on my way through the area to give the operators a demonstration on a piece of equipment. After the demo, on my way into the office to use the restroom, I happened to see an unfamiliar piece of equipment on the operators' desk. When I asked him what it was, he told me that it was the hand held unit used to read meters remotely. The conversation led to the cost of the Remote Metering Program. This is when I found out how a relatively small system was able to afford this type of technology.

Shari Drollinger, the Community Development Coordinator/Grant Writer for the Village of Liberty, working with Mr. Andrew Raymond, Regional Advisory Officer, Region 3, of the New York State Archives and the help of key people from five neighboring Communities had obtained a Grant from the New York State Archives Department of Training and Grants Support Services. Mr. Raymond can be reached by: Phone - 518-485-6233 Fax - 518-485-6236 Website - www.archives.nysed.gov

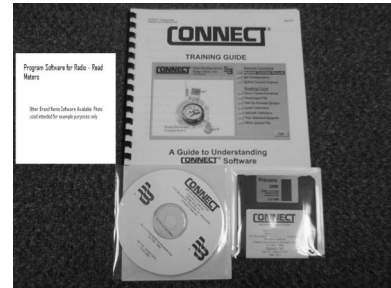
E-Mail: araymond@mail.nysed.gov. This was the first Grant of this nature given by the Archives group. Typical Grants would normally be given for clerical equipment and other office related materials.

Below is a list of the components acquired through the Grant:

1. Hand held data collector - This device is capable of reading meters in three different modes: manual, radio frequency and touch-head with optional wand attachment.



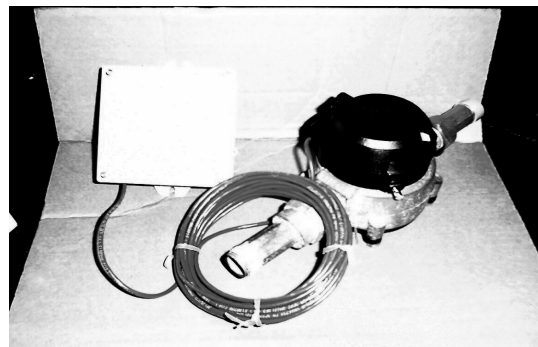
2. Route Management Software - Works with hand-held data collector to capture and store information without manual data input. Contains screens for every imaginable water department data, listing, compilation. Can access multiple screens at one time.



Sample Software Only - Many others available

3. Billing interface Software - to convert data and make usable with existing billing system.

The above used in conjunction with: Radio Read Meters - (poor photo quality used to avoid company identity endorsement).



The grant had to be geared toward Data: Collection, Management and Security. Obviously the collection would be much faster, but it would also be more accurate. It also gave the billing departments a database for many other uses. The software provides automatic flags for such things as abnormal usage. It centralized the entire customers' information into one database with many report options at the clerks' disposal.

I could go on and on about the benefits derived by the grant but this is supposed to be about creative funding. There are many things in a water system that contain the ingredients necessary for them to meet the type of criteria needed to qualify for possible funding through the Archive Grant Program. Also keep in mind that the more people helped by the proposed grant, the better chance of receiving it will be. Five separate Community Water Systems benefited from this particular grant. If you are interested in trying for one of these

grants, remember to keep these key points in mind:

1. Data collection and management -
2. Making operation more effective and efficient -
3. Having better security of information - (Records)
4. Cost Savings - (In this case collectively a savings of \$45,000 was obtained with the multiple community approach, giving the grant a lot better chance of passing the committee approval.)

Mr. Raymond informed me that his department is taking a proactive approach to this type of funding and would be happy to talk to anyone with a project in mind that might qualify. I want to mention that the funds available are grant only (no loans, not income based or any other strings attached). The grants are offered once a year, with application deadlines I believe in February and can be up to \$75,000.

If you have any questions or would like an application please call Mr. Raymond. To the best of my knowledge, the information I have given in this story is correct. Let's all keep our eyes and ears open for other innovative funding solutions and keep each other up to date. This concludes this class in Creative Funding 101. 💧
