



From left, Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del.; Smyrna Mayor Joanne Masten, **Aaron Enterprises president Vincent Rice**, USDA Rural Development acting state director Kathy Beisner and Smyrna town manager David Hugg celebrate the arrival of town water to the north side of Duck Creek during a ceremony along U.S. 13 in Smyrna Tuesday afternoon. The water and sewer infrastructure improvements will improve the quality of water for residents north of Duck Creek and will help boost the economy by providing a more builder friendly atmosphere for larger projects. (Delaware State News/Dave Chambers)

By Ashton Brown
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SMYRNA — “This is a great day,” said Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., on Tuesday just before turning on the spigot of the newly completed first phase of the North Duck Creek Improvements. The mission of the North Duck Creek Improvements is to bring better water and sewer infrastructure to businesses and residents of northern Smyrna.

The need for improvements was recognized almost 10 years ago, but a big push for the project only began about two years ago.

“A lot of things got put on hold because of the economy around 2007 and unfortunately this was one of those things,” said Smyrna Mayor Joanne Masten.

The project will be completed in seven phases, with the last expected to be finished in October 2017. In all, there will be 22,000 feet of new piping, a new pump station, water loop, two water towers and a well house.

The construction of phase one took about six months, with 5,000 feet of new pipes laid under Duck Creek and U.S. 13 to reach northern Smyrna.

The financial burden was not laid totally on Smyrna’s taxpayers. The USDA provided a \$3.5 million loan with a two percent interest rate, grant money was earned through DNREC and money was used from the 2009 stimulus package.

“This water improvement project which received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars, USDA Rural Development Loans, and state funding is a great example of the federal, state and local government working together,” Sen. Carper said. “I want to make sure to acknowledge (former Del. Gov. and Rep.) Mike Castle and (former Del. Sen.) Ted Kaufman, who were in office at the time and helped us get the funding from the stimulus package.”

Town of Smyrna Manager Dave Hugg III suggested that northern Smyrna missed economic opportunities in the past because quality water infrastructure was not in place.

“There is a 200-acre business park up here that we haven’t been able to fill or expand with our current water and sewer situation,” he said. “The Wawa and Valero haven’t even been able to have public bathrooms.”

“Now the community north of Duck Creek can have safe drinking water, making the area attractive to businesses, jobs and improving the economic vitality of Smyrna,” said Sen. Carper.