



# THE TAOS NEWS

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## Town hires firm to set water records straight, prep for Abeyta

By Andy Dennison

*The Taos News, 10/22/2009*

The town of Taos has contracted with an Albuquerque water consulting firm to untangle its records on water rights and prepare for upcoming relocation of town wells. After a unanimous vote by the Taos Town Council, Oct. 13, Daniel B. Stephens and Associates will get \$79,000 for a variety of hydrological tasks that were left undone by the town's previous hydrologist Jay Lazarus, of Glorieta Geoscience. The contract runs to June 2010.

First among the firm's duties will be evaluation of the town's water-rights portfolio, which includes some 1,500 acre-feet of ground water.

Hydrologists also will review pending transfers of about 132 acre-feet from individuals to the town, as well as rights acquired through the San Juan-Chama water diversion project.

Information on how much water the town has the rights to is essential to planning for future growth, town officials say. A portion of Stephens' responsibility will be starting work on a 40-year water plan for the town. On the ground, D.B. Stephens will sort through records of existing wells that supply the municipal domestic water system and help the town apply for funds through the Water Trust Board.

Town officials hope an active hydrologist will have all records in place by the time that the Taos Pueblo Water Settlement is funded, because under that agreement, the town must move several wells.

D.B. Stephens and Associates also helped put together the Taos Regional Water Plan that outlines supply, demand and special considerations for surface and ground water use in the Taos area.

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