UTILITIES ELEMENT CHAPTER 10

AND SPECIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

INTRODUCTION
Utility systems in Benton County include lines and facilities used to distribute or transmit electric power, natural gas, petroleum products, information (telecommunications), and water and sewage. All utilities in Benton County are operated by public utility districts and private companies, or by cities. In this chapter, existing conditions, current trends, and future considerations are noted where the county has current or future service obligations, i.e., solid waste and public water systems.

Purpose
The GMA has given local jurisdictions the obligation and requirement to plan for utilities including identification of utility corridors. The intent of this Element is to support utility providers in meeting their public service obligations to provide service on demand to existing and future customers. It is also the intent to minimize negative impacts resulting from the provision of services on the residents, infrastructure and environment of the county. The county’s responsibilities for utilities ranges from regulating their land use, to permitting their activities in public rights-of-way.

Special Districts
Information on other special service providers such as fire, port, and school districts, is included in this chapter.

State Planning Law Requirements
State Planning Law mandates that GMA counties adopt as part of their comprehensive plan, a “Utilities Element describing the general location and capacities of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines”.

State planning law also requires that the Comprehensive Plan should be internally consistent. This means that the Utility Element must be fully coordinated with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the Land Use Element.

Planning for utilities should be recognized as the primary responsibility of the utility providers. The county should rely on plans prepared by the utility providers. However, the land use map, plan policies and capital facilities plan of the Comprehensive Plan offer opportunities for providers to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of service to county residents. The Utility Element will help assure that provision of utilities is properly coordinated with land use.
Agency Jurisdiction
Several independent federal government agencies, such as the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), were set up to implement policy, encourage competition, and protect public interest. The agencies and their authorities often subordinate local interests in utility matters. For example, the county cannot prohibit the placement of communications towers, though it may adopt standards relating to their siting and impacts.

The Federal Communication Commission is a five-member board appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for 5-year terms. Their mission is to encourage competition in all communications markets and to protect the public interest. In response to direction from the Congress, the FCC develops and implements policies concerning interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable.

The Common Carrier Bureau, an operating bureau of the FCC, is responsible for administering the FCC’s policies concerning telephone companies that provide long distance and local service to consumers. It is their charge to ensure that all customers have rapid, efficient, nationwide and worldwide access to these services at reasonable rates.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is an independent five-member commission within the US Department of Energy. FERC sets rates and charges for the interstate transportation and sale of natural gas, for the sale of electricity, and the licensing of hydroelectric power projects. In addition, the Commission establishes rates or charges for the interstate transportation of oil by pipeline.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) is an agency of Washington state government that has a three member board and associated staff who regulate the rates, services and practices of privately owned utilities and transportation companies. Regulated utilities include electric, telecommunications, bus companies, natural gas, rail, water, and solid waste collection. The WUTC utilizes state law to define the costs that the utility can recover, and consequently has oversight to ensure that the utility acts prudently and responsibly. WUTC jurisdiction does not extend to public utility districts, municipal utilities, or cooperatives.

The Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC) focuses on the generation of electricity; however, its policies have implications for gas. The NWPPC, in its recently released Power Plan, has directed the region to develop co-generation as an energy resource, and hydro-firming as a
power back-up system.

“Co-generation” is the use of heat, as a by-product of power generation, for industrial processes or for space and water heating. Natural gas is often used as a fuel source for co-generation.

“Hydro-firming” is the backup of the region's intermittent excess spring hydro generation with gas-fired combustion turbines to provide backup if Hydroelectric power is insufficient.

NWPPC policies could have a major impact on natural gas consumption in the Northwest. The most efficient use of natural gas is its direct application for space and water heating, this can contribute to a balanced regional energy policy.

ELECTRICITY

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)
The Bonneville Power Agency is an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy. It wholesales electric power produced at 29 federal dams located in the Columbia-Snake River Basin, as well as one non-federal nuclear plant.

BPA does not own or operate any federal dams, however it does sell the power produced by these dams as well as power produced by Washington Nuclear Plan 2, at Richland, Washington. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers owns and operates Bonneville Dam, and Grand Coulee Dam is owned and operated by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. Between them, these two agencies run all of the dams whose power is sold by BPA.

Today the Bonneville Power Administration sells about 46% of the electric power consumed in the Northwestern United States. To deliver that power, BPA owns and operates one of the largest high-voltage electrical transmission systems in the world. BPA transmission lines in Benton County are shown on Map Figure 10-1.

BPA’s principle service territory covers approximately 300,000 square miles and includes the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and the portion of Montana west of the Continental Divide. BPA also directly serve small portions of California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. In addition, it sells surplus power to California and Southwestern United States.

Electricity is purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and supplied to areas in Benton County via two local public utilities: the Benton County Public Utility District and Benton Rural Electric Association.

Benton Public Utility District (BPUD)
The Benton PUD was established by vote of the residents and began electric distribution operations in October 1946.

BPUD is empowered to: (1) purchase energy, (2) sell energy at wholesale and retail, (3) acquire, construct and operate generating plants and
transmission and distribution facilities, and (4) issue revenue obligations for financing the acquisition and construction of electric properties and other corporate purposes.

Benton PUD has the exclusive authority to set rates and charges for electric energy and services and is free from the rate-making jurisdiction and control of the WUTC and any other federal, state, or local agency having the authority to set rates and charges for electric energy and services.

The Benton PUD service area is entirely within Benton County and includes the cities of Kennewick, Benton City, Prosser, and portions of West Richland. BPUD serves Benton County except for the City of Richland, the Department of Energy’s operations on the Hanford Reservation, and those rural areas of the county which are served by Benton Rural Electric Association. Its general office is located in Kennewick. Service boundaries and substation locations are shown on Map Figure 10-2 at the end of this chapter.

In 2005, BPUD served 37,236 residential customers in Benton County. Table 10.0 provides a profile of BPUD customers.

### TABLE 10.0 BPUD CUSTOMER PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Class</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>AKWH*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>37,236</td>
<td>622,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small/Med General</td>
<td>4,755</td>
<td>278,752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* AKWH is the annual kilowatt-hours utilized by the customer class.

**Benton Rural Electric Association (BREA)**

Incorporated in 1937, the BREA is a consumer owned rural cooperative, which serves 13,873 accounts in portions of Benton, Lewis, and Yakima Counties. BREA’s 1,300 square mile territory extends from the Columbia River at Paterson north to the Hanford Reservation and west to White Pass in the Cascade Mountains. Its service district and substation locations in Benton County are shown on Map Figure 10-2.

BREA serves the rural areas of the county and some urban areas. While BREA was originally set up to serve the rural customers of Benton and Yakima Counties, the cooperative is becoming more of an urban player as the cities expand into rural areas. BREA also serves the community of West Richland and many parts of the urban growth area around Richland, Benton City, Prosser and parts of the Hanford Reservation.

BREA has worked with Benton PUD, and the City of Richland to minimize duplication of service areas, although some parts of the systems are intermixed with the neighboring
utilities. The three utilities continue to negotiate to determine territorial agreements to ensure the best possible service with the least redundancy of electrical facilities.

The BREA maintains a “20 year Long Range System Planning Report”. This report reflects the expected electrical facility additions, based upon projected load growth and system operating requirements. This report is submitted and approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service. BREA serves a huge geographical area with very low densities. However, availability of affordable and reliable electric service from BREA has allowed productivity and development to occur throughout the entire county.

BREA has concerns about future electrical services to the lower density areas of the county. To protect system reliability and the cost effectiveness of electric service to the remote areas of the county, it is necessary to protect the integrity of the BREA system.

WIND ENERGY
Deregulation of the electric industry and subsequent energy supply issues have emphasized the need for new and diverse energy sources in the Bonneville Power Administrations’s service area. Renewable resources such as wind provide an environmentally friendly, “green” source of energy and allow BPA’s to diversify its energy sources. Several wind “Farms” have located in the County on privately owned agricultural land pursuant to leases between landowners and the project developer. Large turbines are strategically placed along the major ridges to capture wind and generate power which is fed back to BPA facilities through substations. Wind farms in Benton County are shown on Map Figure 10-1.

NATURAL GAS
Williams-West operates and maintains its natural gas pipeline that runs through Benton County as shown on Map Figure 10-3.

Virtually all natural gas is now transported through pipelines. “Gathering” lines collect and carry the natural gas from wells to transmission lines or plants for processing. A series of compressor stations propel the fuel long distances overland through major transmission pipelines to local distribution and service lines or storage facilities. A network of small-diameter distribution mains and service lines transport the gas to end-users. Related facilities include, but are not limited to; cathodic protection stations, test posts, mile markers, meter stations, valves, etc.

Future pipeline safety concerns are related to the adverse impact and encroachment of development near transmission lines. With more people living and working near transmission lines the severity of pipeline failures
from all causes are likely to increase. Currently, only 16% of natural gas transmission pipelines and 13% of liquid pipelines are located in areas of high building densities. Opportunities available to local governments to reduce the potential for accidents are limited vis-à-vis quality control and safety maintenance of the pipeline structure itself and enforcement of pipeline easement agreements between landowners and the pipeline owners, but opportunities are available as part of the permitting and planning procedures such as the following:

- include pipeline operators in the review process for subdivisions, short plats, Comp. Plan reviews, amendments, sub area planning, etc.;
- avoid siting development on pipeline right-of-ways;
- require setbacks from pipeline easements for developments that are sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, hospitals);
- include within the permit review process a “consultation zone” extending outward from pipeline easements, wherein certain categories of land use action (e.g., blasting, grading, filling, drilling, stock-piling, or water diversion) and proposed permits would have to be reviewed and commented upon by the pipeline operator prior to commencing the action or receiving a permit;
- influence the selection of the pipeline route itself.

CASCADE NATURAL GAS
Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (CNG) builds operates and maintains natural gas facilities serving Benton County. CNG is an investor owned utility serving customers in sixteen counties in Washington State.

The Pacific Northwest receives its natural gas from the Southwest United States, and from neighboring Canada. Natural Gas is supplied to the entire region via two interstate pipeline systems. The Northwest Pipeline Corporation owns and operates the network that supplies natural gas to Benton County.

Natural gas is stored in a facility in Plymouth by cooling it to -258 degrees Fahrenheit. At this temperature it becomes a very dense liquid and can be placed in storage tanks.

Other components of the CNG system include gate stations which are the delivery point from the interstate pipeline to the CNG system. They include metering station, odorizing stations and pressure reduction stations. High-pressure lines transport gas to district regulators throughout the CNG service area. Pressure reduction stations are installed at the point of delivery of natural gas from the high-pressure lines to the lower pressure distribution systems.

The location, capacity and timing of system improvements depend greatly
on opportunities for expansion, and on how quickly the county grows. The possible routes to connect different parts of the system will depend on right-of-way permitting, environmental impact, and opportunities to install gas mains along with new development, or other utilities.

CNG has an active policy of expanding its supply system to serve additional natural gas customers. CNG’s engineering department continually performs load studies to determine CNG’s capacity to serve its customers. If CNG receives a feasible project request outside our service area, the boundary can be easily increased. The service boundaries for CNG are shown on Map Figure 10-3.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS
The Telecommunications Act of 1996 enacted into law the first comprehensive rewrite of the Communications Act of 1934. The Act establishes national guidelines for enabling equitable competition in all telecommunication markets, including the local telephone market, and identifies respective roles of the FCC and the states to accomplish the transition.

The Act deals with five major areas: telephone, telecommunications equipment manufacturing, video services, radio and television broadcasting, and online computer services. Generally, the Act reduces cross-market entry barriers, relaxes merger and acquisition rules and provides guidelines to the FCC and state regulators on decisions necessary to increase competition in telecommunications. These changes in the 1934 statute allow customers the ability to choose their local and long distance service providers and to retain their telephone numbers when they change local telephone providers. It also gives rural consumers access to services similar to those that are available to urban consumers at comparable rates.

Included in this section is a list of wire and cellular phone service operators, and a map, Figure 10-4, depicting communication towers and fiber optic cable locations within Benton County.

Standard Telephone
The following companies supply local and long distance service in Benton County:

AT&T, Century Tel, Sprint, Tel West Verizon, MCI, Q West, & Unicom

Cellular Telephone
Cellular telecommunications is a rapidly expanding technology that allows people to have high quality telephone communications capability without the constraint of wires. Mobile telephone communication via radios which send and receive signals from a network of receivers placed at several cellular communication ("cell") sites.

Cell sites are placed on tall poles, lattice-type towers, or on existing buildings. Each cell site has a
coverage area of several miles depending on topography and number of customers.

Unlike other utilities, the cellular telephone industry does not plan facilities far into the future. Rather it periodically analyzes market demand to determine whether expansions into new service areas can be profitable. Benton County is served by the following companies: Verizon, Cingular, US Cellular, Sprint, T Mobile, Nextel, Q West & AT&T Wireless.

**WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS**

Benton County does not currently own, operate, or maintain a water or sewage treatment facility with the exception of occasional temporary responsibility for water systems under “receivership” per RCW 70.119A. Source of water and sewer disposal for housing units countywide is shown in the following Table 10.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>HOW SERVED</th>
<th># OF HOUSING UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>PUBLIC/PRIVATE SYSTEM</td>
<td>42,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRIVATE WELL/OTHER</td>
<td>7,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEWER DISPOSAL</td>
<td>PUBLIC SYSTEM</td>
<td>50,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEPTIC TANK/</td>
<td>15,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Existing Conditions**

According to the State of Washington Department of Health (DOH) there are currently (2/97) 602 public and private water supply systems located in Benton County providing domestic water. A public supply is generally defined as any system, excluding systems serving only one single-family residence that provides piped water for human consumption. DOH keeps an inventory of water systems in the County that includes classification of systems according to type of system and number of customers served. The criteria used in establishing the classifications are described in Table 10.2.

DOH defines a “community” water system as a public water system that serves a permanent or seasonal population (subdivisions, mobile home parks, etc.), and a “non-community” water system as a public water system that serves a transitory population (restaurant, motel, etc.). According to

---

1. State Department of Health 2006
DOH figures, as of June 19, 2006, there were a total of 78 Group A water systems in Benton County. Thirty nine were “Community” systems, 24 “Non-Transient Non-Community”, and 15 “Transient Non-Community” systems (rest areas, campgrounds, etc.). In addition, there are 524 group B water systems located in Benton County.

The source of water supply is ground water for all these systems with the exception of the Cities of Kennewick and Richland, which in addition to ground water receive water from the Columbia River. Information for each city’s water system, the population served, and the average daily amount of water used, can be found in each entities comprehensive plan.

**TABLE 10.2 DOH SYSTEM CRITERIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>SYSTEM CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>15+systems/ or serves 25+ people for over 60 days a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>a system with 4+ service connections but &lt;15, serving &lt;25 people a day for over 60 days a year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most rural residents rely on on-site septic tanks and drain fields for their wastewater system needs. While adequately designed and installed on-site septic systems can be appropriate for rural level development, maintenance of such systems varies from excellent to none at all. Poorly maintained septic systems are a source of ground and surface water pollution, and have been identified both at the state and local level as significant contributors to high nitrate levels in soil and coliform bacteria in surface water. All on-site systems in the County are permitted and regulated by the Benton-Franklin Health District.

**Current Trends**

Living in rural areas has become a lifestyle preference in today’s society. The influx of people moving into newly-developed areas of Benton County means more individual or community wells which depend on groundwater, and an increased demand on the groundwater supply.

Under state law, all new public water systems must be owned or operated by a satellite system management agency (SMA). This ensures that the new system has sufficient management and the financial resources to provide safe and reliable service to the system users.

If a SMA is not available to receive ownership/or operation of the system and DOH determines that the new system has met sufficient management and financial resource criteria to provide safe and reliable service, then the new system may be conditionally approved. The conditions may include future inclusion into a SMA, or findings that the system meets the DOH criteria for management, and include an ongoing review of its operational history and status.
Currently the City of Richland and an entity named Water System Management operate SMA’s in Benton County. If a system loses its owner/operator due to non-compliance the system goes into “receivership”. During receivership actions, DOH meets with water systems owners and users to discuss restructuring options. If no other SMA or person is willing to be named as a receiver the court appoints the county as receiver. At present the county is in receivership of one such water system, with the City of Richland Satellite Management Agency operating the system.

New state regulations were enacted in 1995 for on-site septic systems. Many of the changes were in response to pollution problems on the west side of the state caused by inadequate treatment performance capability of very gravely, or coarse sand soils. The criteria for sewage treatment of these soils may include minimum land area requirements, or special engineered systems, i.e., mound, sand line trench systems, etc. There are several areas in the County where these soils exist. The Benton-Franklin Health District oversees the placement and permitting of onsite sewer systems. Those systems over 3,500 gallons per day are permitted through the Department of Ecology.

**Future Considerations**
On-site water and waste systems for multiple users may be a desirable alternative to the single user systems and the extension of municipal systems. The option to cluster development in rural areas opens the opportunities for the use of such systems.

In the rural communities of Whitstran, Paterson, Plymouth and Finley, there is a desire among residents for public water systems which are perceived to be more affordable than individual wells. If such systems were to become a reality the logical next step could be public waste disposal systems.

A water resource management program to conserve and maintain the County’s groundwater supply will be necessary to provide a long term dependable supply sufficient to sustain the future needs for potable water and water for agricultural purposes.

**SOLID WASTE**

**Existing Conditions**
The only public solid waste disposal site currently operating in Benton County is the Horn Rapids Sanitary Landfill, owned and operated by the City of Richland. The Richland Landfill provides free service to residents of the City of Richland and charges all others for the use of the facility.

Beginning in 1990, another landfill Columbia Ridge Landfill, located in Arlington, Oregon, began providing disposal service to the Cities of Kennewick and Prosser, and some areas of the unincorporated county.
The New Age Landfill operates a facility in Pasco which is in Franklin County. In Klickitat County, Rebanco operates a regional landfill which receives waste from Basin Disposal and Ed’s Disposal locally, and regionally from the Seattle and Portland metropolitan areas.

Currently the Cities of Kennewick and Prosser have transfer stations. The Prosser transfer station can be used by city residents only. Waste Management of Kennewick operates a transfer station on 27th Avenue in Kennewick.

The Hanford Reservation provides for its own disposal services at its Central Landfill located within the reservation. The majority of the solid waste generated within the Hanford Reservation is taken to the Central Landfill for disposal however the Washington Public Power Supply System hauls its waste to the Richland Landfill.

Garbage service in the unincorporated portions of Benton County is voluntary. The following are refuse haulers franchised by the WUTC for Benton County:

- Basin Disposal, Inc., Pasco, WA.
- Ed’s Disposal, Inc., Pasco, WA.
- Waste Management of Kennewick
- Waste Management of Seattle
- Sanitary Disposal, Inc. Hermiston, Ore.

Current Trends
Presently, Benton County has no landfill facility or transfer station program in place to facilitate waste transfer from areas of the unincorporated county to a landfill. Illegal dumping of large items, i.e., furniture, refrigerators, tires, etc., has become a serious problem for rural landowners and farmers in the rural area.

The number one response in the Rural Visioning Survey taken in 1992 by county residents when asked, “What detracts from your enjoyment of rural living”, was junk and garbage (i.e., residential junk, roadside trash, people dumping in rural areas, etc.). This sentiment was reiterated in every rural planning area of the county during the GMA comprehensive planning process.

According to the Benton County Sheriffs Department illegal dumping persists in Benton County with problem areas occurring in the south of Finley, all areas of Horseheaven and the Roza north of Prosser. Large articles: appliances, furniture, construction debris, automotive parts, tires, etc., are items typically dumped on rural residents.

Future Considerations
In concert with a heightened effort to enforce existing ordinances and educate the public to not dump illegally, transfer stations located to serve residents of unincorporated Benton County could reduce illegal dumping and junk accumulations on private property. Transfer stations
would also provide the necessary service and convenience to county residents, many who have landfill hauling distances of over 50 miles. Additionally, as a counterpart to locating transfer sites a solid waste site(s) may be appropriate for the long term.

The Benton and Franklin Counties Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan prepared by Parametrix Inc., at the direction of the Benton-Franklin Regional Council in 1994 provides figures indicating solid waste generation projections for Benton and Franklin Counties in Table 10.3.

**TABLE 10.3 Benton and Franklin Counties Solid Waste Generation Projections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Tons Disposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>173,400</td>
<td>164,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>185,100</td>
<td>176,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>197,800</td>
<td>188,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>205,800</td>
<td>195,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These projections were developed under the following assumptions:

- The waste generation rate will remain the same through the planning period.
- Existing recycled materials will continue to be marketed.
- There will not be a major reduction in the waste stream due to new composting or recycling facilities.

**SPECIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**School Districts**

The County is divided into seven school districts, the boundaries of which are shown on Map Figure 10-5. All districts are located entirely within the County, with the exception of the Grandview District, which is principally located in Yakima County but includes approximately six square miles of Benton County (stretching three miles north and south of Highway 12 at the Yakima County line).

All school districts offer kindergarten through twelfth grade education except the Paterson School District, which contracts grades 6-12 (middle and high school levels) with the Prosser School District. Public school districts and pupil enrollments for each district for the 2004-05 school year are presented in Table 10.4.

**TABLE 10.4 SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>ENROLLMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROSSER #116</td>
<td>2,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATERSON #50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHLAND #400</td>
<td>9,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENNEWICK #17</td>
<td>14,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENTON CITY #52</td>
<td>1,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINLEY #53</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRANDVIEW #200</td>
<td>3,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Higher Learning**

Increasingly, education is the key to individual economic success.

---


3 2005 Washington State Yearbook
Frequently, this means a college degree. For counties a well-educated population is also an ingredient in economic success. Those in the Benton County area who wish to earn a four-year college or higher degree must commute to nearby counties or leave the area entirely to do so.

Columbia Basin College (CBC), located at Pasco in adjacent Franklin County, is the primary college in the area; they also have a branch campus in Richland. Columbia Basin College is a two-year community college offering a wide range of academic, vocational and night school programs. 2004-05 enrollment totaled 12,728.

Both Washington State University (Pullman) and City University (Bellevue) have branch campuses located in Richland. They offer both graduate and masters education programs.

**Library Districts**

The Mid-Columbia Library includes both Benton and Franklin Counties and is directed by a board of seven members appointed jointly by the Benton and Franklin County Commissioners. The district's main library is located in Kennewick, while branch libraries are located in towns in both counties. The rural areas are served by a bookmobile that maintains a scheduled route throughout the district. The Cities of Richland and Prosser have their own city libraries which are not part of the countywide district.

**Fire Districts**

The five incorporated communities and portions of the remaining unincorporated area of Benton County are served by a mixture of municipal and rural fire departments. Richland and Kennewick municipal fire departments are manned by full-time firemen. Prosser, Benton City, and West Richland operate with full and part-time positions along with volunteer staff. The rural districts are principally manned by volunteer personnel. A mutual aid cooperative-agreement exists between Richland, Kennewick, Pasco, and Benton City, Prosser and the rural districts. The Benton County rural fire district boundaries are shown on Map Figure 10-6.

Long-range fire protection needs will also require increases in equipment and manpower to maintain an effective level of protection. With increased urbanization of the County, increased full-time employment due to increased level of service required by residents as opposed to volunteer service can be expected to occur in some of the County's fire protection organizations.

An additional factor is the integration of fire protection needs with long-range water needs. The source, storage capacity, and distribution systems of water systems, as well as fire hydrant placement in urban density developments, must be
adequate to provide sufficient volume and pressure for fire fighting needs.

**Hospital Districts**
General hospitals are located in Richland, Kennewick and Prosser providing County residents with in-patient care. The Kennewick and Prosser hospitals are each operated by a public entity in the form of a hospital district directed by elected board members, while the Richland hospital is privately owned and operated. Benton County is also served by a variety of public and private medical clinics providing treatment for most medical concerns.

**Benton-Franklin District Health**
This regional health agency is responsible for a wide variety of health related programs in Benton and Franklin Counties. Some examples of its activities are in the environmental health division: solid waste, permitting community wells (2-4 hookups), approval of on-site sewage disposal systems, and restaurant inspections. The public health division serves the public with immunizations, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted disease clinics, and registration of birth and death certificates.

**Mosquito Control District**
The Benton County Mosquito Control District is established to eradicate mosquitoes, particularly the mosquito Culex tarsalis, which is a carrier of sleeping sickness. The district is administered by a manager, who is directed by a twelve-member board appointed by the Commissioners of Benton and Yakima Counties, and mayors from the respective city councils of the cities who are within the district (Kennewick, Benton City, Prosser, Richland, West Richland, Mabton, and Grandview). There are three board members representing the unincorporated area of Benton County. The district encompasses 354 square miles within the Yakima and Columbia River drainages, exclusive of the Horse Heaven and Rattlesnake Hills, and the Hanford Reservation.

**Benton Clean Air Authority**
The Benton Clean Air Authority (BCAA) carries out the requirements of the Washington State Clean Air Act, RCW 70.94, within boundaries of Benton County. The BCAA functions as a single county authority to control the emissions of air contaminants from all sources within the County. The agency is charged with implementation and oversight of agricultural and backyard burn programs; air quality monitoring; asbestos removal notifications and inspections; industrial and commercial air permitting; and enforcement of federal, state, and local air quality regulations.

**Irrigation Districts**
Agricultural production that takes place across the midsection of the county, from the Yakima County line to the Finley area, is made possible by the Yakima Project developed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The
Yakima Project was developed primarily for the purpose of providing irrigation water for the fertile Yakima River Valley and consists of over 200 miles of canals and laterals. This irrigation system provides the water that enable the Yakima Valley, which extends into Benton County, to continually be one of the nation's premier producers of such crops as apples, mint, hops, cherries, and grapes. The irrigation district locations in Benton County are shown on Map Figure 10-7, and are listed below:

Roza District
Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District
Benton Irrigation District
Grandview Irrigation District
Kennewick Irrigation District
Kiona Irrigation District*
Columbia Irrigation District*
Badger Mountain Irrigation District
* Early Districts, not a part of the Yakima Project

Noxious Weed Control District
The Benton County Noxious Weed Control District is directed by a board of five members appointed by the County Commissioners. The intent of the District is to promote weed control by instituting a program that emphasizes on education as a means to assist landowners in the identification and control of noxious weeds listed on the county's noxious weed list.

Port Districts
Ports can develop property for industrial use and can lease and sell land, buildings, and facilities to private industry in accordance with state laws. State laws specify that ports may acquire, construct, maintain, operate, develop and regulate within the district: harbor improvements; rail or motor vehicles transfer and terminal facilities; water transfer and terminal facilities; air transfer and terminal facilities; and other commercial transportation; transfer; handling storage and terminal facilities and industrial improvements.

Port districts are funded by revenues from the operation of terminals, the sale or lease of properties, and tax levies. A port district may incur debt including issuing general obligation bonds up to 0.25 percent of the assessed value of taxable property in the district without vote of the people. An additional 0.05 percent debt may be incurred if 60% of the electorate approves. They also have the power to issue revenue bonds for the acquisition, construction, reconstructions or extension of various improvements.

There are two port districts in Benton County, the Port of Benton and the Port of Kennewick. They are governed by a three member elected board of commissioners who appoint the Executive Director. The Port District boundaries are shown on Map Figure 10-8.

The Port of Benton District was formed in 1958 and covers approximately two-thirds of Benton County. Port of
Benton sites encompass 1,156 acres and are found in the Prosser, Richland, and the Benton City areas.

The Port of Kennewick has approximately 1,300 acres for development. There are four sites in the Finley industrial area, one in Kennewick, and a 270-acre site in Plymouth.

**Richland Urban Growth Area Expansion**

In 2006 the Board of County Commissioners approved the “Badger Mountain UGA Addition” expanding the City of Richland’s UGA by approximately 2100 acres on the south flank of Badger Mountain and northeast of the I-82 travel corridor. The addition of this area to the Richland UGA means that over the next 20 years, the area will develop to urban uses, most likely residential, general and highway commercial, and light industrial. Also approved as a part of the UGA expansion was a Capital Facilities Plan titled *The Badger Mountain Valley View Urban Growth Area Expansion Capability Analysis* that includes Chapters II, III, IV, V, VI, and VII, respectively, an inventory and analysis of the existing levels of utility service in the UGA expansion area (Chapters II and III); a projection of land use demands from build-out of the UGA expansion area to urban uses; identification of the improvements to the utilities service infrastructures that would be needed to service build-out at specific Levels of Service over time; and projections of the costs of making those improvements and an identification of the various funding sources that would be available for accomplishing the improvements.

The County is not a utility service provider. Within the unincorporated County, water, electric power, communications, irrigation and potable water, and waste disposal services are all provided by regional agencies, rural electric associations, local special purpose districts or municipalities other than the County. Utilities infrastructure is historically capitalized by rate-paying customers. *The Badger Mountain Valley View Urban Growth Area Expansion Capability Analysis* is not included in this document but is incorporated by reference and describes who are the providers of those services within the expanded UGA, what additional infrastructure will be necessary to provide the services at identified levels of service over time, the estimated costs of the new utilities infrastructure, and the sources of funding.