



Utility insurance to be offered

By Tina Alvey Register-Herald Reporter September 14, 2011

RONCEVERTE — Within the next few weeks, Ronceverte water customers will receive letters on city letterhead extending an offer for water and sewer line insurance.

The warranty program — which is endorsed by the National League of Cities — is administered by Utility Service Partners, Inc., and is already offered in several West Virginia municipalities, including Oak Hill, Beckley and Lewisburg.

Ronceverte Administrator Pamela Stevens told City Council Tuesday evening she had been approached by the company with a proposal to offer the warranty program in the River City.

Under the terms of the agreement, offers to join the warranty program, for a monthly fee, will go out to water customers on city letterhead, over the mayor's signature.

Stevens emphasized that customers are not required to sign up for the warranty, which provides repairs of broken or leaking water and sewer lines from the owner's home to the property line. Those repairs are performed by licensed, local plumbers, typically within 24 hours of a claim being filed, according to the company's website.

As a fee for the city's endorsement of the warranty, Utility Service Partners will pay Ronceverte 10 percent of the subscriptions collected each year.

"There's no risk for the city, and there's no obligation for the customers," Stevens noted.

An August report to the Lewisburg City Council showed the company continuing to increase its reach, with 526 enrollments in Lewisburg, up by 174 from 2010. Utility Service Partners paid Lewisburg \$2,244.40 in fees for 2010, a company representative said.

The Ronceverte Council voted unanimously to accept the contract.

In other business:

Council accepted contracts for Local Economic Development Assistance grants totaling \$4,000 for repairs at the Clifford Community Center and \$26,000 for asbestos abatement for the Lions Club gym, located in the former Greenbrier Junior High School.

Council authorized an electronic payment plan for the city's sewer bond through the West Virginia Municipal Bond Commission. Councilwoman Crystal Byer pointed out the city stands to save up to a month's worth of interest in a year's time by transferring the funds electronically rather than cutting a check, mailing it and waiting for it to be processed in Charleston.