

Whitwell, Tennessee

Local leaders sought a sustainable solution as infrastructure demands outpaced available resources

Building a Modern Water System

The City of Whitwell, like many small communities across America, spent years managing a water system increasingly strained by aging pipes, outdated equipment and limited local resources. High water loss, challenges meeting evolving regulatory requirements and a growing need for capital investment put pressure on the City of Whitwell to find a sustainable long-term solution for delivering safe, clean and reliable water service to 3,000 customers. Rather than place the burden solely on residents through steep rate increases, city leaders sought a partnership with a regulated, private water provider capable of delivering the operational expertise and financial resources needed to modernize the system.

Why Whitwell Chose a Regulated Private Water Provider

In 2013, with approval from the Tennessee Regulatory Authority, Whitwell entered into a partnership with Tennessee American Water—the region’s regulated, private water provider. By transitioning the system to professional management, Whitwell eliminated its water-system debt, ensured regulatory compliance, preserved local jobs and opened the door to long-term infrastructure renewal. Tennessee American Water assumed full responsibility for operating, maintaining and upgrading the system as part of its broader, regionally connected network.

A Stronger, More Resilient Water Future for Whitwell

Access to capital and sustained infrastructure investment through partnership with a regulated, private water provider has transformed Whitwell’s water system, strengthened reliability, enhanced fire protection, improved water quality, and establishing a stable foundation for long-term growth.

A Decade of Progress and Infrastructure Renewal

Tennessee American Water has invested more than \$21 million to upgrade the Whitwell system, addressing decades of deferred maintenance and modernizing critical infrastructure. Since purchasing the Whitwell system, Tennessee American Water has implemented a series of improvements to water service by:

- Modernizing a system constrained by aging infrastructure and high water loss, beginning with targeted upgrades across Whitwell’s service area.
- Investing more than \$21 million in new mains, pump stations, storage tanks, system interconnections, and meter upgrades.
- Expanding system capacity and resilience through new above-ground tanks and improved pumping and storage facilities.
- Enhancing regional reliability by connecting Whitwell with the City of Dunlap’s system for additional redundancy.



Benefits to Whitwell

- Eliminated water system debt and reduced pressure for rate increases.
- Provided long-term access to capital for infrastructure investment.
- Improved system reliability and fire protection.
- Preserved local jobs by retaining Whitwell’s employees.