

Water Tower-compilation:

Be thinking about WHEN we are going to have the Centennial of this ol' gal. Completion date is a bit hard to determine, but the bowl was filled in 1920. This means we need to gar up for a birthday party SOON! Let's hope it's still with us by then.



c. 1973 button

WE WANT TO THANK all of those persons who tenaciously persevered since 1964 to save the water tower. Some of those names are listed here...

Lucille Shaw	Mrs. Wm. McCollough	Mrs. Geo. Marcum
Tom Loudon	Glen Gustafson	Charles Schmid
John Laurian	Mildred Michaelis	Lee Krautkremer
John Struthers	John Kienitz	Jack Echternacht
Chester Snyder	Richard Breen	L. J. Arhart
Marvin Campbell	Marvin Rau	Bill Van Essen
Merle Storm	Pete Humphrey	Geo. Peterson
George Bedard	Ray Madison	Ted Schaefer
Lawrence Lopp	Everett Cripe	Willard Faust
Bill McCollough	Roy Pike	John Nelson
Richard Dean	Douglas Splady	Everett Lassig
Carl Erickson	James Alderman	Marvin Bollig
Gene Steiger	John Thelen	John Sullivan
W. W. Thompson	John Riedl	Verner Anderson
R. A. Winkler	Thomas Kientzl	Kenneth Wolleat--dec.
Einer Anderson	D. B. Neff	Arden Scofield
Irene Johnson	William Graham	Herman Molin
Boni Roberts	Mrs. Gene Hurtig	Nordahl Johnson

WATER TOWER:

1920/3/2, 80 years ago (1920), Mar. 2, 2000:

-- Construction of the courthouse will be resumed as soon as the weather is favorable.

-- As soon as spring opens the concrete bowl at the Water Tower is to be poured in one operation.

1920/8/19: It is expected to complete the water tower near the depot within three weeks. Stucco will be applied by a machine driven by electricity. (*Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, 19 August 1920, p. 2, c. 1)

1920/8/26: The little crew of two engaged in stuccoing the water tower cement tank 150 feet above ground has nerves of steel. Gunion and his partner climb up and down the ropes to their swaying staging with as much unconcern as though they were working down on the sidewalk. (*Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, 26 August 1920, p. 5, c. 2)

1920/9/8: Two weeks more will be required to finish the water tower near the depot. (*Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, 08 September 1920, p. 2, c. 1)

1920/9/30: 80 years ago (1920), Sept. 30, 2000:

Water is being pumped into the new water tower today. The 300,000 gallon concrete water tower of the new waterworks system near the Depot is being filled. A full tank means an added weight of over 2,000,000 pounds.

1920/9/10: The new water tower is to be finished within two weeks. **Stucco is being applied to the tower walls,** the bowl stuccoing having been finished last week. (*Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, 10 September 1920, p. 2, c. 1)

1964/6/23: 40 years ago (1964)

An air of uncertainty surrounds Brainerd's best known landmark, the concrete water tower. The Brainerd landmark was built 42 years ago.

1970/8/4: 40 years ago (1970), Aug. 4, 2010

Tom Loudon, Brainerd Beauty College operator, presented a plan to the city council for turning the old water tower into a restaurant high above the streets. It would extend 12 feet beyond the current bowl and would accommodate 80 to 100 people.

1975/8/27: 40 years ago (1975)

(Photo) Workmen are shown **sandblasting paint from the historic water tower before repainting part of the structure.** The first paint job failed to adhere and peeled off. The painting firm went bankrupt so the insurance company has hired another company to finish the work.

2011/8/1: Same as 7/22/2014! ????

Pieces FALLING from historic **water tower**, CITY TO INVESTIGATE OPTIONS

By JESSIE PERRINE Staff Writer

Large chunks of grout falling from the north side historic **water tower** have city leaders looking into the idea of a

\$1 user fee per utility billing in effort to raise funds to fix the ailing structure.

At the Brainerd City Council meeting Monday, the group unanimously approved looking into the idea of charging a \$1 usage fee on each monthly Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) bill.

The vote does not implement the fee. It only directs city staff to investigate the concept and bring it back to council for possible approval. With 7,500 accounts billed each month, it could generate an annual \$85,000, said City Administrator Patrick Wussow. "When the repair is done, we're done (putting a \$1 user fee on bills)," said council member Kelly Bevans. The council was first alerted to the **water tower** problem at its previous meeting. As Brainerd Public Utilities and SEH officials worked to evaluate the problem, a plastic orange fence was erected to barricade off the north lawn under the **tower**. The city will also drape a massive net over the face of the **tower** this week to prevent any fragments from flying off the **tower** during heavy wind and rain. But funding the investigation and possible repairs is proving costly. "This is a good idea," Bevans said of the proposed \$1 fee. "It's a user fee. It is not a tax increase."

He added, "I just think it's an excellent idea on how to pay for it and to move forward quickly with plan before ... it becomes financially unfeasible and a liability."

Council member Chip Borkenhagen said he liked the idea but pointed out repairing the structure will be expensive and could mean several years of user fees for residents.

Mayor James Wallin said the user fee was "an excellent idea."

In the mean time, the council approved spending about \$46,000 in investigating just how serious the deterioration of the **tower** is. The money will come from the city's capital projects fund.

The investigative work will come in two steps and will be completed by a contractor. The first step is to check the entire exterior of structure for unstable material, remove it and then to set up rigging off top to do more detailed investigation. Crews will need to bring in a specialized, out-of-state 135-foot self-propelled work platform that has articulated arms to do the work. The second step is to evaluate the exterior and the core structure itself. That will determine how sound the concrete structure is. Finally, a report will be prepared with option to fix the structure.

"We won't know the extent of the work needed until we evaluate the condition of concrete," said

See **WATER TOWER** Page A9

2011/10/4:

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BRAINERD CITY COUNCIL

Tie a ribbon on the old water tower?

By MATT ERICKSON Staff Writer

The city has on occasion allowed groups promoting a cause to place giant ribbons on the city's historic water tower.

But should the city allow the ribbon practice for any group that seeks it?

That's the question tackled Monday by the Brainerd City Council.

City Administrator Dan Vogt noted a purple banner placed on top of the tower recently took three hours of city staff time to put up and would take three hours of staff time to bring down.

The question, Vogt said, is whether the practice would open the floodgates to such requests.

Mayor James Wallin said for as few times as the city has received requests from groups to put a banner on the water tower he did-n't see a problem. The city could decide on each request on a case-by-case basis, Wallin said.

Council President Mary Koep responded by saying that in allowing the practice the potential is there for repetitious requests. She also said that having ribbon after ribbon placed on the water tower could result in the message losing its impact.

Council member Bonnie Cumberland said it would be hard for the city to pick one cause and not another. She said the city could look at the possibility of a fee for groups hoping to place a ribbon on the tower.

Parks Director Tony Sailer said his concern was the danger for city crews putting up the ribbon. Sailer noted that for 90 percent of the tower there's a ledge to walk on but for 10-15 feet there is nowhere to stand.

"It's a very dangerous situation for someone tying the ribbon on," Sailer said.

At Koep's suggestion, city department heads will discuss the issue and whether it is feasible for staffers to be putting up the ribbons. "You know how busy you are," Koep said.

2013/10/17:

What an idea, a roof to keep the rain off! What'll they think of next? I would crown it a bit though, so it doesn't become another high school needing patching twice/decade.



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To: Mayor and City Council

From: Tim Caughey, City Building Official

Date: October 17, 2013

Re: Historical Water Tower

T.C.

As directed by Council, staff has been working on finding a solution to remedy the continuous leaking inside the historical water tower.

First, a little background: Approximately 20 years ago a rubber membrane was installed on the floor of the bowl (EPDM). Two years ago the scaling brick and debris was removed and patched what appeared to be wear holes in the rubber membrane. This did reduce the amount of leaking.

Currently, water is penetrating the inner brick structure and leaking beneath the bottom of the bowl. Our first plan was to find a product to seal the inner brick. Attached is a copy of a report provided by a regional supplier for a local masonry company that I had contacted to research options for sealing the brick. The report indicated that the masonry units need to be repaired prior to any application of sealant. I contacted a local firm that deals with brick repair (Hy-Tec Construction – the same contractor repairing the north wall). After a thorough inspection, it was mutually agreed that there needs to be extensive repair done before a sealant can be applied.

Staff feels there may be a more cost effective and permanent method to resolve this issue. I suggest erecting a flat roof near the crown of the water tower, not visible from the ground, displacing the rain water before it enters the bowl. I have asked the contractor to give us some rough numbers, a cost for such a roof to be installed. I am hoping to receive those numbers before the October 21 Council meeting.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or comments prior to the meeting.

Attachment

2013/10/22:

Brainerd City Council

City looking into leakage fix for **water tower**

By JESSICA LARSEN jessica.larsen@brainerddispatch.com

City officials will put a call out for bids in possibly building a flat roof on top of the historic **water tower** to fix a leaking problem.

The C Brainerd City Council unanimously approved the move at its meeting Monday.

There has been a long, on-going problem of leaking inside the **water tower. Water** is penetrating the inner brick structure and leaking beneath the bottom of the bowl.

Tim Caughey, city building official, recommended a cheaper fix of erecting a flat roof near the crown of the **tower**, not visible from the ground, to displace the rain **water** before it enters the bowl. The cost would probably be just under \$100,000.

That comes cheaper than alternate fixes like sealing the inner brick, which would first require the masonry units be prepared. That came at the cost of an estimated \$135,000.

Caughey said building a flat roof would be more of a permanent fix with less maintenance.

He added there is some urgency to making a decision, as the longer it is put off the more costs there are to address the fix.

The **water tower** is iconic for the area, said councilman Gary Scheeler, noting it's important to keep it in good shape.

Where the funds would come from is yet to be determined. The vote is to just seek bids to get a more firm cost for the possible project.

2014/7/22:

Brainerd City Council

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By JESSIE PERRINE Staff Writer

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The investigative work will come in two steps and will be completed by a contractor. The first step is to check the entire exterior of structure for unstable material, remove it and then to set up rigging off top to do more detailed investigation. Crews will need to bring in a specialized, out-of-state 135-foot self-propelled work platform that has articulated arms to do the work. The second step is to evaluate the exterior and the core structure itself. That will determine how sound the concrete structure is. Finally, a report will be prepared with option to fix the structure.

"We won't know the extent of the work needed until we evaluate the condition of concrete," said City Engineer Jeff Hulsether.

Hulsether said his concern is that the concrete covering the steel might be in poor condition, judging by the way the cracking is happening. The purpose of the investigation, he said, it to "determine how much of the **tower** is solid." Council member Gary

Scheeler said he struggled with the idea of spending \$46,000 to determine the **tower** “is shot.” “I visibly saw that myself this morning,” he said. Council member Mary Koep suggested asking the residents what they want to do with the **tower**. “Maybe it is time to go to people (through a referendum), give them an outline of what needs to be done, give them an estimate and see what they think,” she said. City Planner Mark Ostgarden suggested some community fundraising effort start to fund the project. “If ever there was an icon the community should come forward and rally and fundraise for, that would be it,” he said, pointing toward the **tower**. Council President Dale Parks added that something has to be done soon, and that the investigation was the first step. “It’s an icon,” he said of the **tower**. “It’s something that signifies the city of Brainerd.”

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	Byline By JESSIE PERRINE Staff Writer Monday, August 01, 2011 Page: 1

2014/12/18:

The historic **water tower**

It’s been called Paul Bunyan’s Knife Handle, it’s the iconic logo on police and city vehicles, and the city’s letterhead. I’m talking about the **water tower** on the corner of Sixth and Washington streets in downtown Brainerd.

It’s unsafe, chunks have been falling from it. BPU was going to force citizens to pay for reconstruction in their utility bills, but found out, they couldn’t. Last year the city upped our taxes 12.7 percent and are upping them another 10 percent this year. Now they want us to pay for salvage of this “historic icon.”

Government’s responsibility is to utilize tax dollars to provide services needed by citizens. This **water tower** is non-functioning and outside of being a landmark provides nothing to the populace of Brainerd. I love the old **water tower** as much as anyone, having grown up in this area; but I say, it’s time to say goodbye just like we did to the Park Opera House (Paramount Theater).

The cost of repairs approaches a million dollars; to tear it down, about \$150,000. I was and still am against the purchase of the hydroelectric dam, but at least we get something from it.

Yet people are all for saving this non-functioning **water tower** at just under half the cost to purchase the dam. If you're against the dam purchase, why aren't you also against wasteful spending to save a dilapidated **water tower** that when fixed we can expect about the same life expectancy we have left in the dam but will receive no practical use from?

I say, tear this safety hazard down, grind it up, and spend \$20,000 and have a scale replica built at the City Hall parking lot using material from the original **water tower**. Then you can have your cake and eat it too.

Steven Wolff

Brainerd

From the Brainerd History Walk, downtown Loop:

17) WATER TOWER (1920): The 1971 stone monument here is interestingly also a Minnesota Historical Site. This tower is probably the most photographed structure in the city! It has become Brainerd's most popular icon.



Testing New Fire Fighting Equipment ca. 1927

The contract for this elevated storage tank is let in 1918; it is located on the southeast corner of Washington (Main) and Sixth Streets. L. P. Wolff of St. Paul is the Consulting Engineer and the City Engineer, R. T. Campbell, does the local engineering. The City Water and Light Board handle all the construction work with its own work force headed by its Superintendent Henry Roberts. This storage tank is 134 feet tall with a capacity of 300,000 gallons and is the first all-concrete elevated water tank used for a municipal water supply ever built in the United States. The bowl that holds the water is made in a single continuous pouring.

A spiral stairway winds around the inside walls of the water tower. The stairs end at about the 90-foot mark on the inside of the tower. A window allows access to the outside set of stairs that lead to the ledge that encircles the

tower. The all-concrete landmark has been dry since 1960. The tower is 129 feet tall from its crown-like top to the ground level. The observation ledge is 90 feet above the ground. Inside the tower a 20-foot ladder leads to a hatch, which is at the bottom of the tower's bowl. The sky can be seen as the hatch is opened to access the inside of the bowl lined with red brick, which once held 300,000 gallons of water. Inside the bowl is a 40-foot freestanding ladder, which rises to the top of the bowl.” (Brainerd Daily Dispatch, 25 May 2003)

“Water is being pumped into the new water tower today. The 300,000-gallon concrete water tower of the new waterworks system near the Depot is being filled. A full tank means an added weight of over 2,000,000 pounds.” (Brainerd Daily Dispatch, October 1920) [Sept. 30? See above.]



Bookends, c. 1956

Date of completion, discussion:

I think that someone at the Dispatch once read Carl Zapffe’s 1946 book and misinterpreted it, and forever thereafter every article ever published on the subject is gleaned from previous files electronically, and that incorrect date is perpetuated. *They read the following and assumed the TOWER was completed in 1922.*

“Brainerd 75”, Carl Zapffe’s book, 1946, P. 125:

“It was October 21, 1922, when the last of the essential parts of the system was declared completed; and with that, Brainerd was launched into a new epoch of municipally operated utilities.” Preceding this sentence, several paragraphs on page 124 are dedicated to referencing the water system (“newly designed system, to build the plant, for the elevated storage tank and the surface storage reservoir”, etc), everything of the old plant was scrapped”, etc). Nowhere does Zapffe state when the water tower itself was completed.

*This may have been on the location of the PRESENT/2011 water tower. See the 1917 Sanborn map, page 10.

Now the Dispatch’s interpretation:

The birth of a city landmark:

By RENEE RICHARDSON

Senior Reporter, Web posted Saturday, March 27, 1999

Some people call it Paul Bunyan's flashlight.

Built with horse power and by hand during a four-year period from 1919 to **1922**, the landmark water tower slowly took shape in the Brainerd skyline.

Perching For Partners:

Construction began on the landmark water tower in 1919 and it was completed in **1922**. It stands 129 feet from its base to its crown. The last time it actually held water was 1960.-BDD, Saturday, July 3, 2004

In conclusion, I believe that the newspaper article of Oct. 1920 stating "water is being pumped in to the new water today" is correct, **as was Zapffe**. Starting date of the tower itself appears to be 1919, and completion 1920. The 1922 date does not hold water. Ha, ha.

How about 1921?

Water Tower Centennial:

National Register of Historic Places:

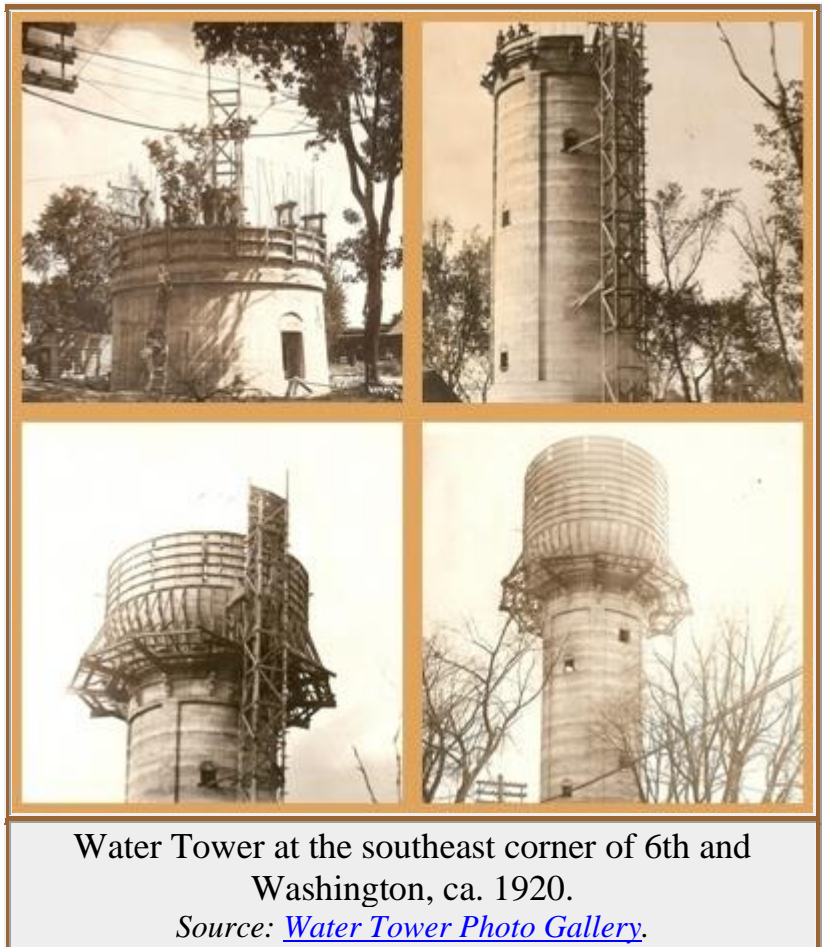
Brainerd's concrete water tower, believed the first of its kind in the United States for municipal water storage use, was built according to a design by St. Paul Engineer L.P. Wolff in **1918-1921**. It is illustrative of an innovative use of concrete for the purposes of municipal water storage and fire protection. At the time of its completion, Brainerd was said to have one of the most modern and efficient municipal water systems in the state.



Just a skeleton version of the finished project, the water tower bowl begins to take shape. A worker appears precariously poised on the far right and a wooden open air elevator brings building supplies to the tower's final stages on Oct. 3, 1919.

WATER TOWER (MAP #69) -AMN

The contract for this elevated storage tank is let in 1918; it is located on the southeast corner of Washington [Main] and Sixth Streets. L. P. Wolff of St. Paul is the Consulting Engineer and the City Engineer, R. T. Campbell, does the local engineering. The City Water and Light Board handles all the construction work with its own work force headed by its Superintendent Henry Roberts. This storage tank is 134 feet tall with a capacity of 300,000 gallons and is the first all-concrete elevated water tank used for a municipal water supply ever built in the United States. The bowl that holds the water is made in a single continuous pouring. The essential parts of the water system are complete on 01 October 1922. (*Brainerd 1871-1946*, Carl Zapffe, Colwell Press, Incorporated, Minneapolis, Minnesota: 1946; pp. 124 & 125)



A spiral stairway winds around the inside walls of the water tower. The stairs end at about the 90-foot mark on the inside of the tower. A window allows access to the outside set of stairs that lead to the ledge that encircles the tower. The all-concrete landmark has been dry since 1960. The tower is 129 feet tall from its crown-like top to the ground level. The observation ledge is 90 feet above the ground. Inside the tower a 20-foot ladder leads to a hatch, which is at the bottom of the tower's bowl. The sky can be seen as the hatch is opened to access the inside of the bowl lined with red brick, which once held 300,000 gallons of water. Inside the bowl is a 40-foot freestanding ladder, which rises to the top of the bowl. (*Brainerd Dispatch*, 25 May 2003)

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23 June 1964. An air of uncertainty surrounds Brainerd's best known landmark, the concrete water tower. The Brainerd landmark was built 42 years ago. (This Was Brainerd, *Brainerd Dispatch*, 23 June 2004)

11 August 1968. Brainerd's Water and Light Board now is ready to turn the old water tower over to the city council along with the funds which would have been spent to tear it down. (This Was Brainerd, *Brainerd Dispatch*, 11 August 2008)

04 August 1970. Tom Loudon, Brainerd Beauty College operator, presented a plan to the city council for turning the old water tower into a restaurant high above the streets. It would extend 12 feet beyond the current bowl and would accommodate 80 to 100 people. (This Was Brainerd, *Brainerd Dispatch*, 04 August 2010)

14 August 1973. A vote to ask to bond the cost of renovating the historic Brainerd water tower and have the proposal placed on the December city ballot was carried unanimously during a meeting of area businessmen. Estimates of the cost range from \$80,000 to \$100,000. (This Was Brainerd, *Brainerd Dispatch*, 14 August 2013)

NOTE: National Register of Historic Places, added 1974

-Compilation Ann M. Nelson

From CZ46, P. 125:

"The bowl that holds the water was made in a single continuous pouring. The structure has architectural beauty, **requires no painting, and costs nothing to maintain."**

-Carl Zapffe Sr., 1946

In 2014 some falling debris prompted the discussion again of what is to be done to fix this, or should the tower be demolished. It was refurbished last apparently in 1973. Some questions should be answered:

-There is only one other such tower, built after ours, in Pipestone, MN. Has it been painted, or stuccoed? Is it chipping too, or has it ever?

-Should ours have been stuccoed in the first place? Why was it done? Structural or just esthetics? Was it to repair other damage?

Water Tower, concrete, in Pipestone, MN:



The Pipestone Water Tower, now known as the Concrete Water Tower, can be seen from several miles away
Courtesy of Lorraine Draper

Since its completion in 1921, Pipestone's concrete water tower has been a visible landmark of the city, rising high above the countryside and marking the city to travelers from several miles in the distance. Designed by L. P. Wolff of St. Paul, the structure is one of only two known water towers designed by Wolff in the United States and is significant for its poured concrete construction. The other tower is located in Brainerd, Minnesota. Campbell Construction Company built the tower from 1920 to 1921 for a cost of \$24,610. The tower is 132 feet tall and approximately 25 feet in diameter. The interior of the supporting column is open and punctuated by a spiral series of windows. The concrete bowl atop the tower holds 150,000 gallons of water. At the time of construction, a 500,000-gallon underground reservoir was created at the base of the tower. With no natural glacial lakes in the area and sporadic rainfall, the tower is necessary to store the precious moisture taken from the soil. The tower draws water up from the earth through a pump and then gravity allows the water to flow when needed.

The structure is unusual in that there are windows and an interior stairway. The water tower began serving the city

October 26, 1921, replacing an aging steel standpipe erected in the late 1880s. The concrete water tower continued to supply the city with water until 1976, when a newer, larger water tower was built. A restoration project was undertaken in the spring of 1990 with matching funds from "Celebrate Minnesota 1990." Along with the restoration of the tower, a wayside rest area was established. The restored tower became the focal point of an annual community celebration, the Water Tower Festival, which is held the last weekend in June.

The concrete water tower is located in the 500 block of 2nd St., NE., Pipestone. The tower is not open to the public but the rest area is open from spring to fall.



The Pipestone Water Tower was designed by L. P. Wolff
National Register Collection

-CWF, 3/17/2010; UPDATED: 9/25/2017