

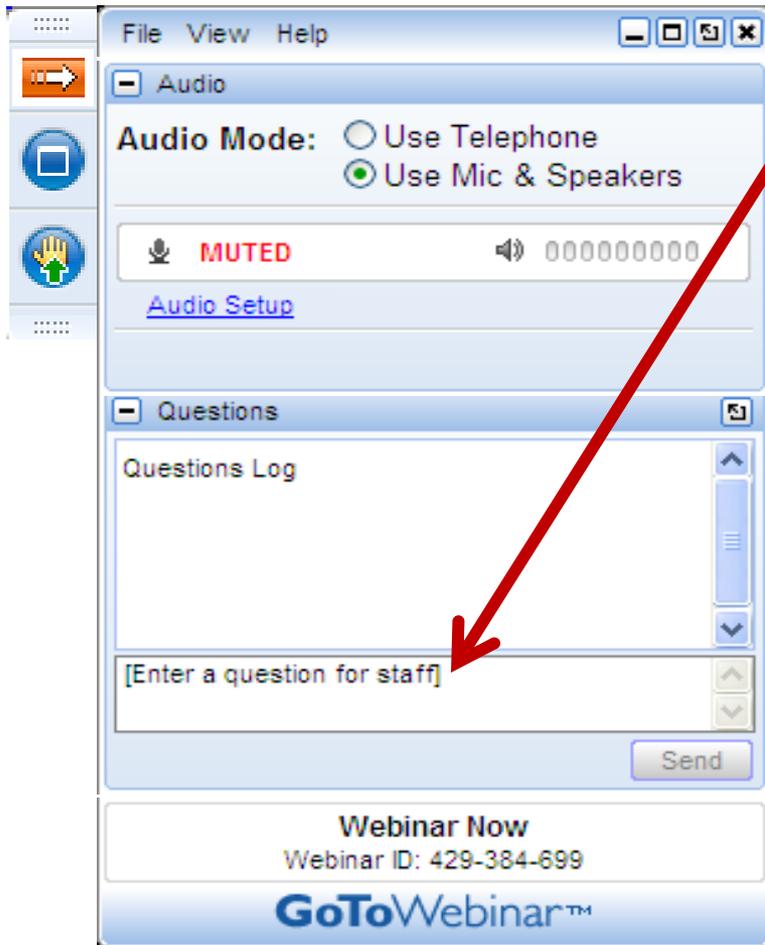
# Partnering Over Time:

Vinton County Water joins  
Jackson County Water

October 26, 2011  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm (ET)

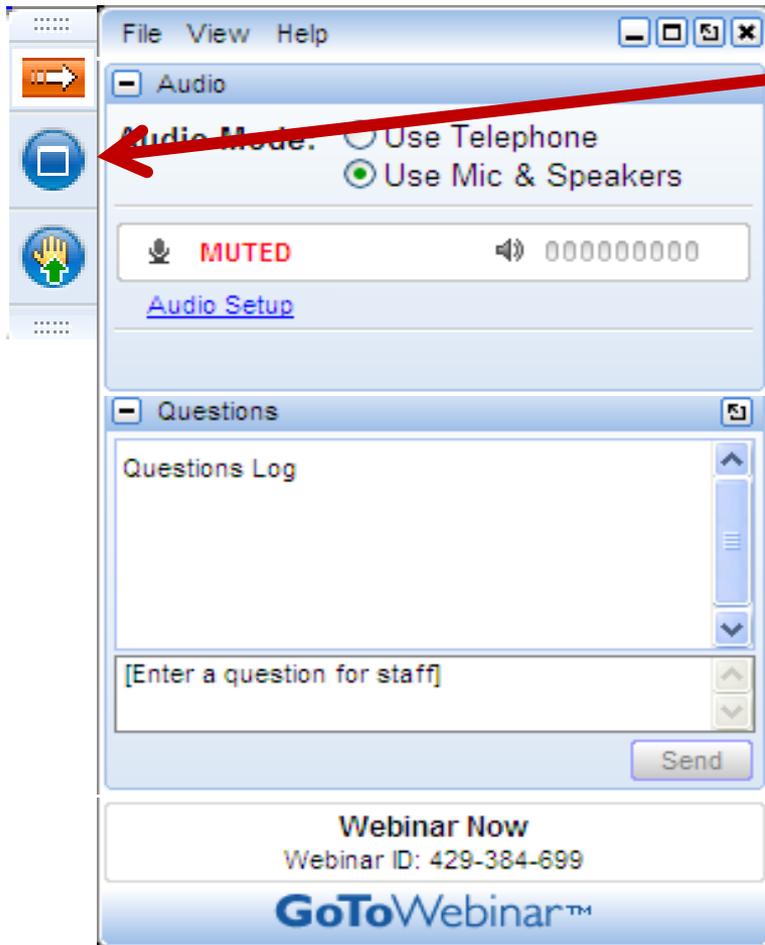


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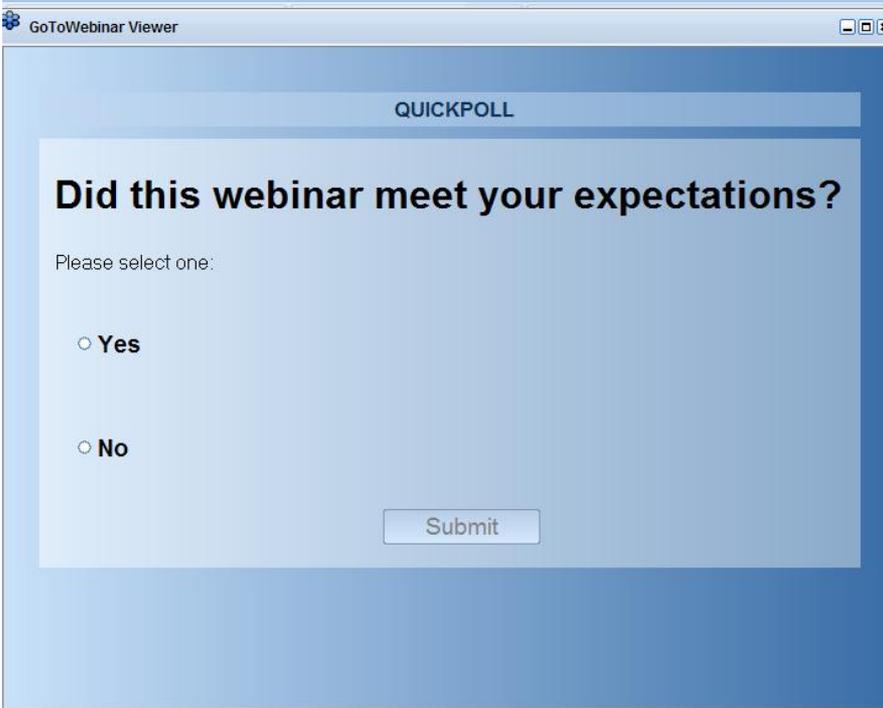
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The screenshot shows a window titled "GoToWebinar Viewer" with a poll titled "QUICKPOLL". The poll question is "Did this webinar meet your expectations?". Below the question, it says "Please select one:" and provides two radio button options: "Yes" and "No". A "Submit" button is located at the bottom right of the poll area. The Citrix logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the window, and the zoom level is set to 100% in the bottom right corner.

# Quick Poll:

Who is joining us today?

# Disclaimer

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# Today's Panel



- Larry Foster, Jackson County Water Company
- Jim Holtz, Former VP Vinton County Water Company, Board member Jackson County Water Company
- David Douglas, USDA RD
- Sarah Wallace, Ohio EPA
- John Rauch & Deb Martin, GLRCAP

# Larry Foster

Larry has been General Manager of Jackson County Water Company since 1990. Under Larry's leadership, Jackson County Water Company has grown to serve over 6000 customers. He is a Class III Water Operator. He is involved in many organizations including Ohio Rural Water Association and AWWA. Larry and Jackson County Water Company have been a partner with the Rural Community Assistance Program and were recognized in 2010 for their good work.



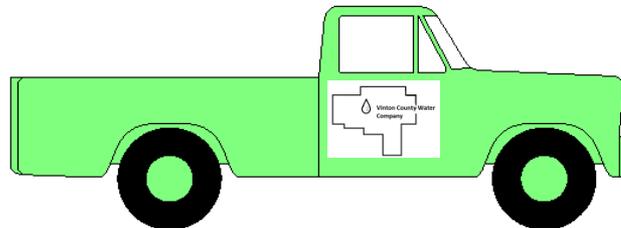
# Jim Holtz

Jim was appointed to The Vinton County Water Company Board of Trustees after attending a board meeting to complain about the telemetry. Jim was then elected Vice President and held that position until the association was unincorporated.



Jim was elected to the Jackson County Water Company board and serves on several committees. His leadership is appreciated by all members in the service area.

THEN



NOW



# David Douglas



Dave is the Community Program Director at USDA - Rural Development. Both Jackson County Water Company and Vinton County Water Company were started with financing from then FmHA . USDA has played a major role in both organizations.



Committed to the future  
of rural communities.

# Sarah Wallace



Sarah is an environmental engineer with Ohio EPA. In addition to working with public water systems, Sarah coordinates SRF activities in over half of Ohio's Appalachian Counties. She is always looking for solutions that make sense.



# John Rauch

John is the RCAP Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region. He has worked with Jackson County Water Company and Vinton County Water Company since the mid 1990's. One of his duties includes working with water systems to facilitate partnerships. Prior to joining RCAP, John worked for FmHA.



# Deb Martin



Deb is Director of Great Lakes RCAP. She started in the field as a technical assistance provider and has set the bar very high in terms of quality of service and work ethics. Today, Deb will be facilitating the discussion between our panelists.



# Today's webinar:

- What are water system partnerships?
- The partnership between Jackson County Water and Vinton County Water
  - How the partnership changed over time
  - The players – their roles and perspectives
  - Lessons learned

# What are Water System Partnerships?



# What are water system partnerships?

- It's a **tool** for building technical, managerial and financial capacity.



# What are Water System Partnerships?

## Do you know a system that faces these challenges?

### – Technical

- Inadequate or aging infrastructure
- Limited/poor source quality/quantity
- Lack certified operator

### – Financial

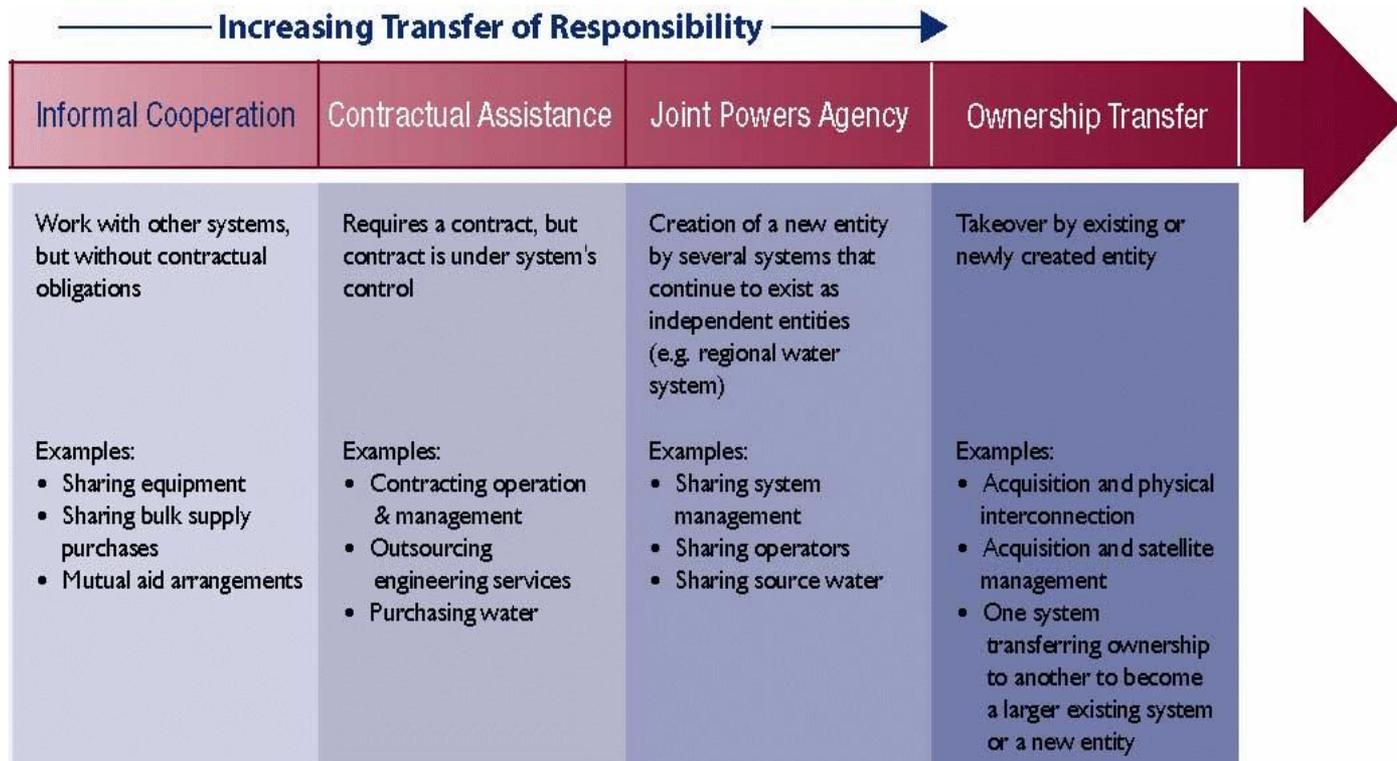
- Diseconomies of scale (few households = high costs)
- History of water rates that are too low
- Limited knowledge of financing options

### – Managerial

- Limited part time management attention
- Lack of expertise in long-term water system planning or operations

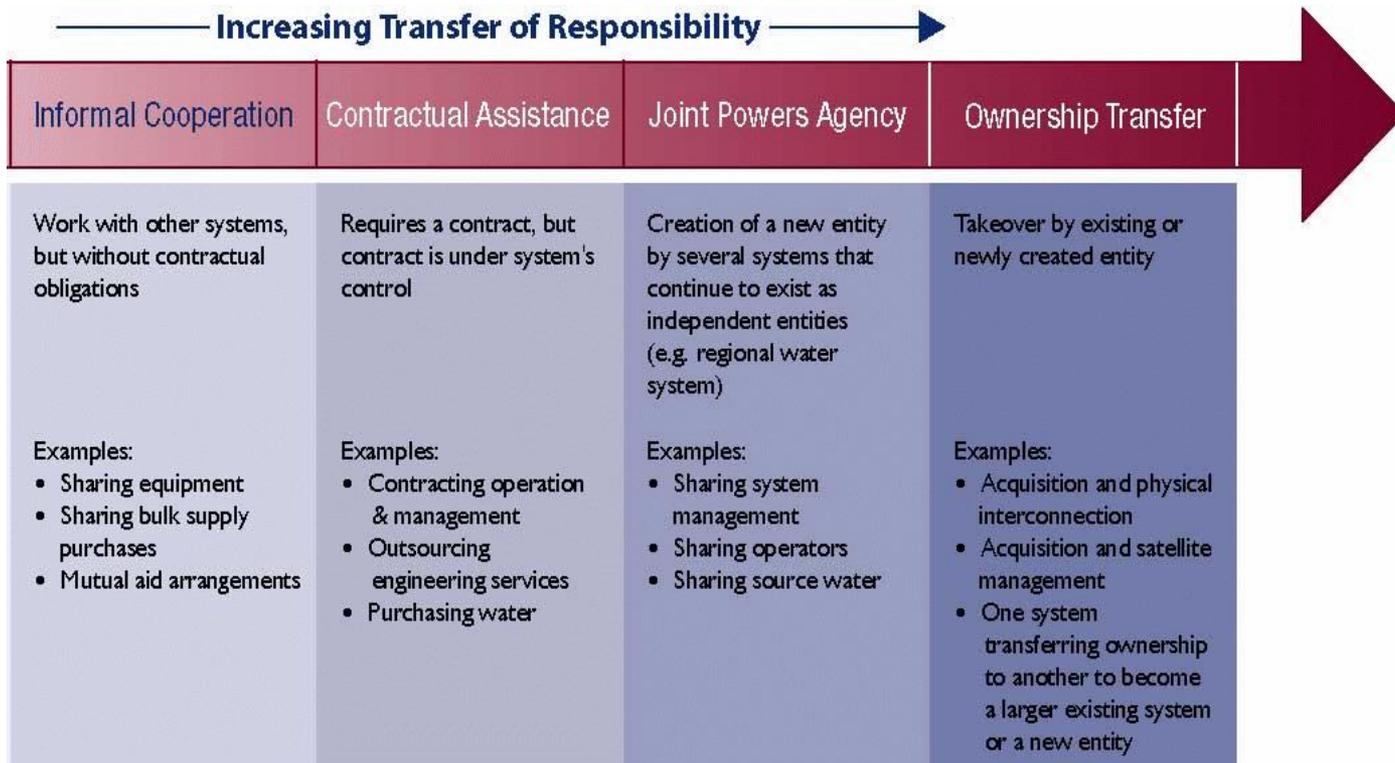
# What are water system partnerships?

## The range of different types of partnerships



# Quick Poll

What kind of partnership have you seen the most often?

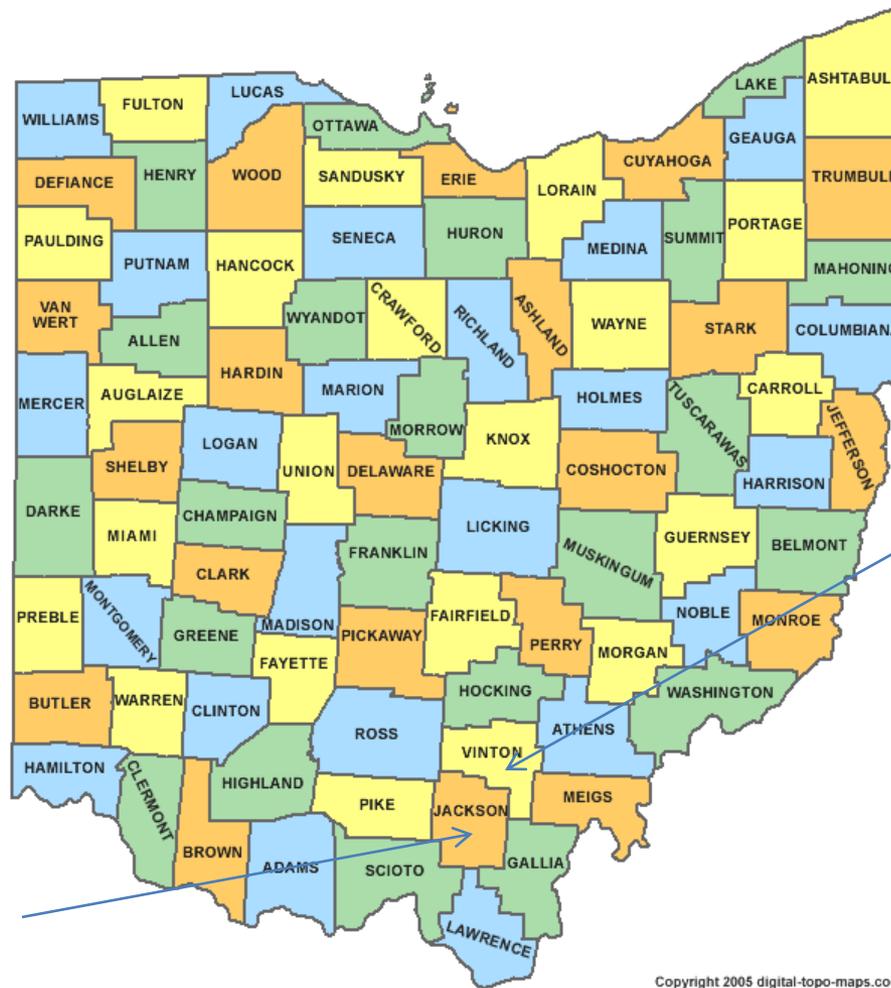


# The story of two water systems: Vinton County Water & Jackson County Water



# Location of Systems

Ohio  
MHI \$40,956



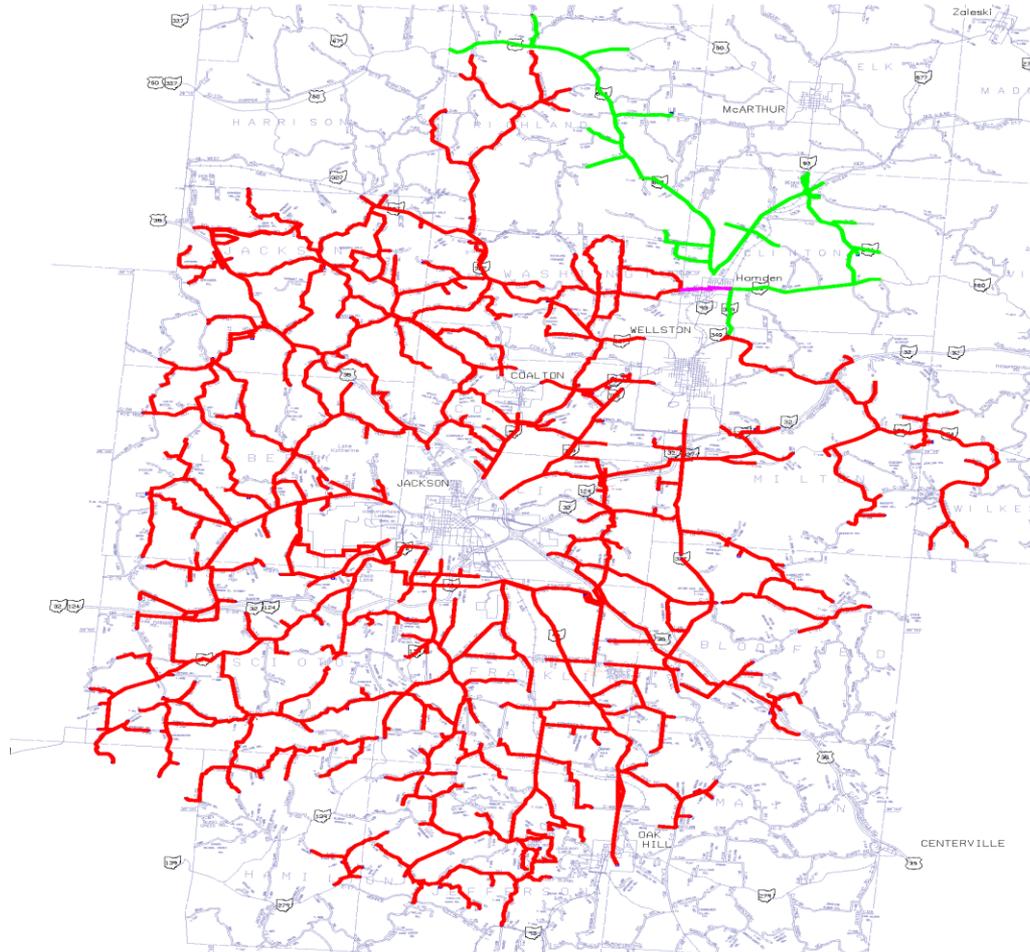
Vinton County  
MHI \$29,465

Jackson County  
MHI \$30,661

# Service Area Map



**Red lines**



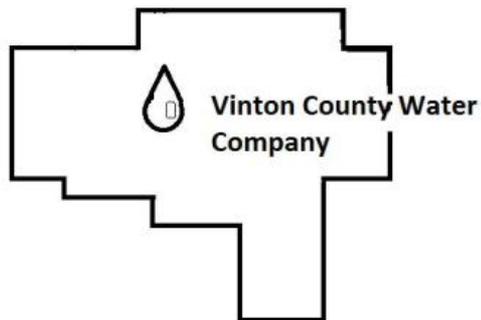
**Green lines**

**Connection**

# The Systems at a glance

## Vinton County Water Company

- Member owned Not -for-Profit
- Served a very rural area
- Served about 600 connections
- Distribution System bought treated surface water
- System is about 20 years old

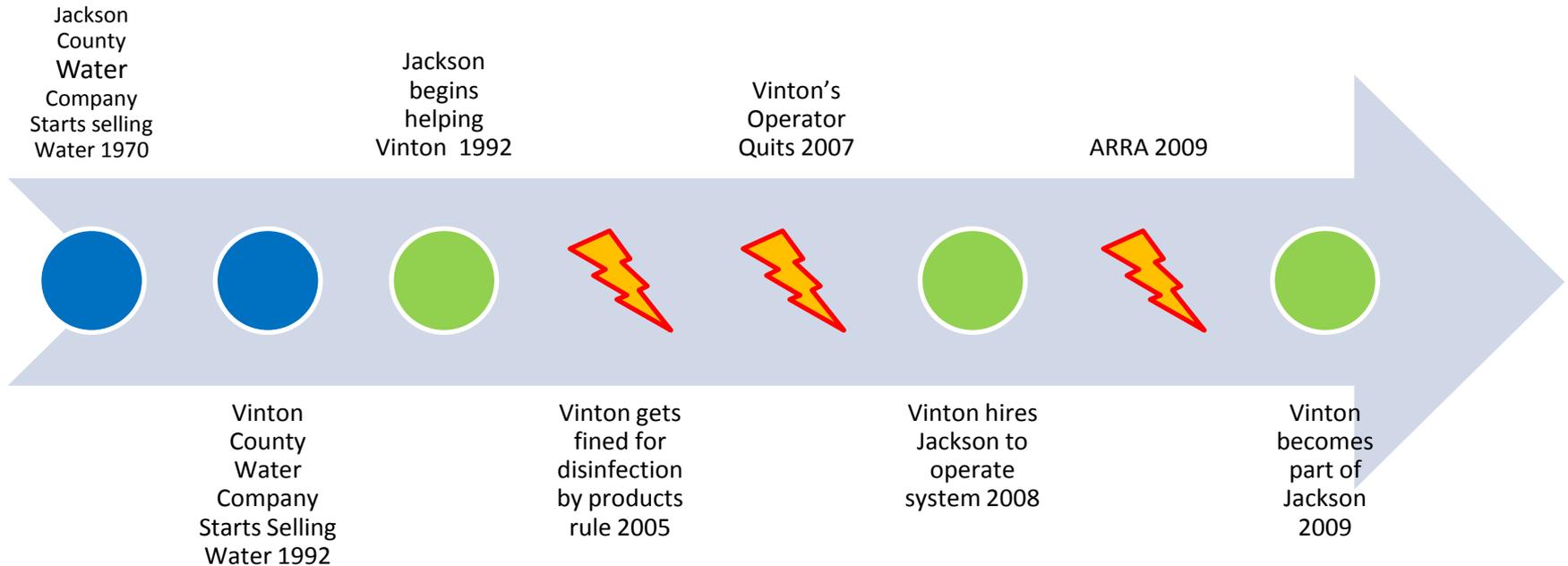


## Jackson County Water Company

- Member owned Not -for-Profit
- Serves a very rural area
- Serves about 6,000 connections
- Treats and distributes ground water
- System is about 40 years old



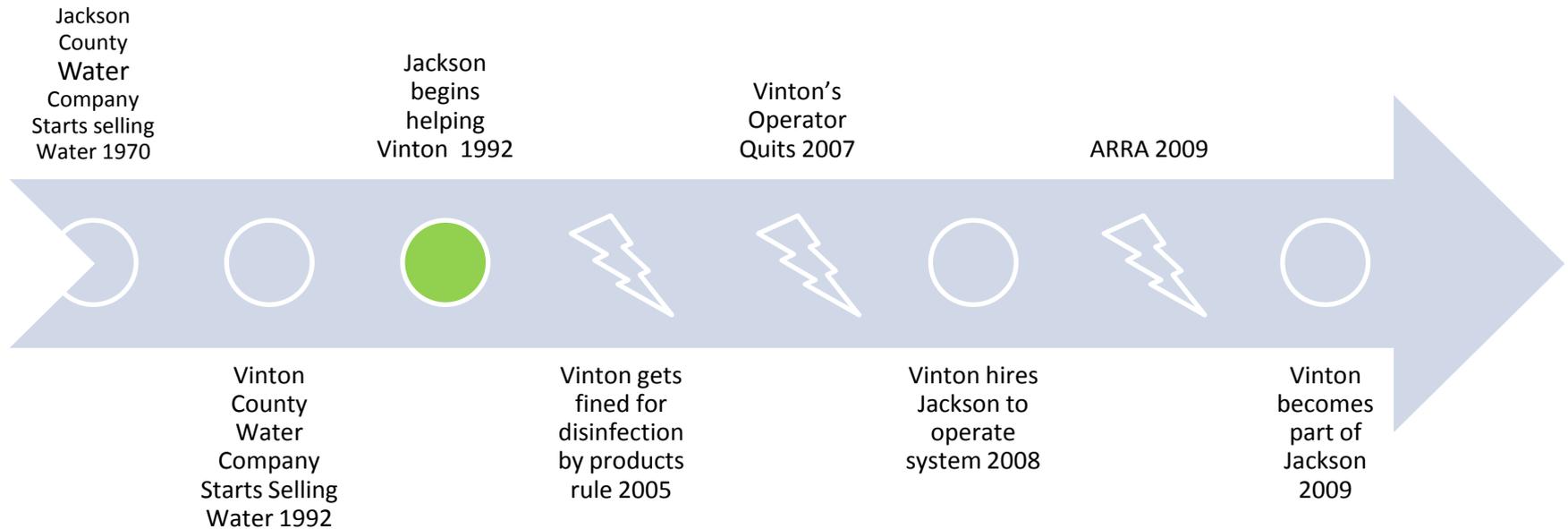
# 20 Years of Partnering



# A helping hand



# Jackson County lends Vinton County a helping hand



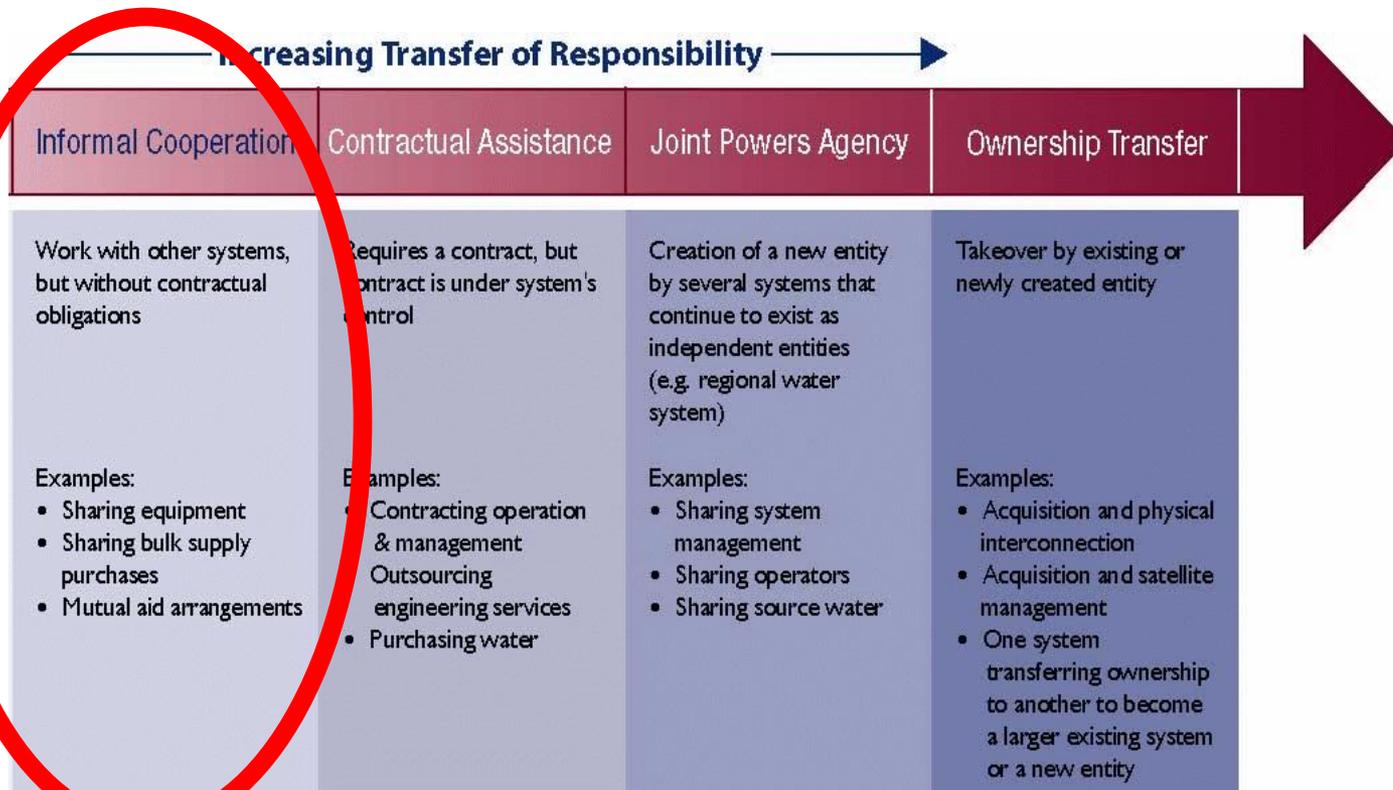
## Jackson County lends Vinton County a helping hand

- Jackson County Water Company acted as a good neighbor to Vinton County Water Company



# Informal Cooperation

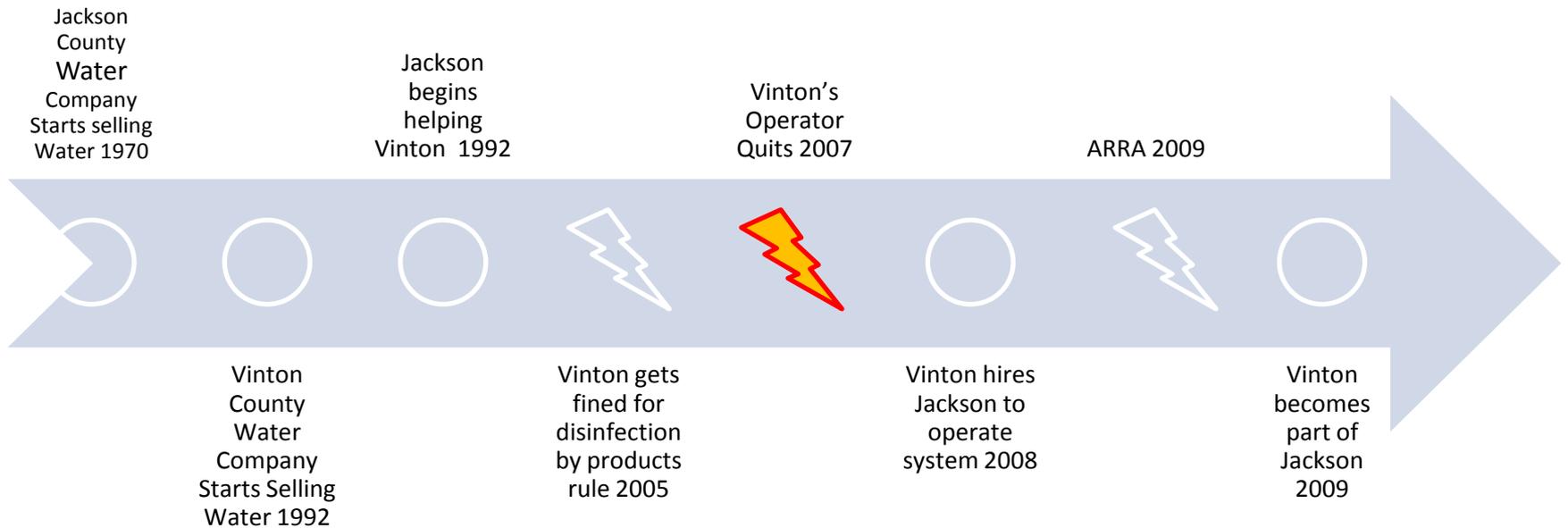
## The range of different types of partnerships



# Things change



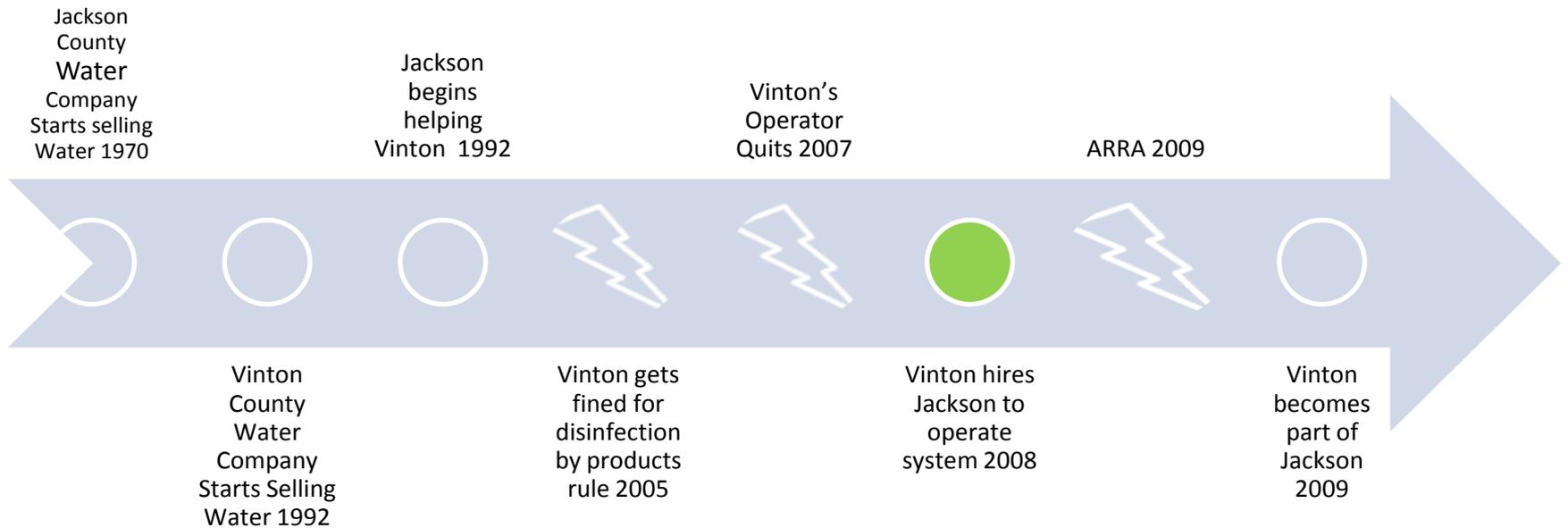
# Things change...



# A new working relationship



# Vinton County hires Jackson County



# Vinton County hires Jackson County

- Vinton County contracted with Jackson County to operate their system



# Contractual Assistance

## The range of different types of partnerships



# More Changes Ahead:

**Vinton County  
Water negotiates  
to sell the system  
to Jackson  
County Water**



# Negotiating to Sell Vinton County Water



- Financed both Vinton County Water and Jackson County Water in the beginning
- Brought the two water systems together for some meetings to discuss a sale early on
- Payment problems / poor financial health



# Negotiating to sell Vinton County Water



- Could not keep operator
- High THMs exceeded MCLs
- Board did not have training and experience to efficiently make operational decisions



# Negotiating to sell Vinton County Water



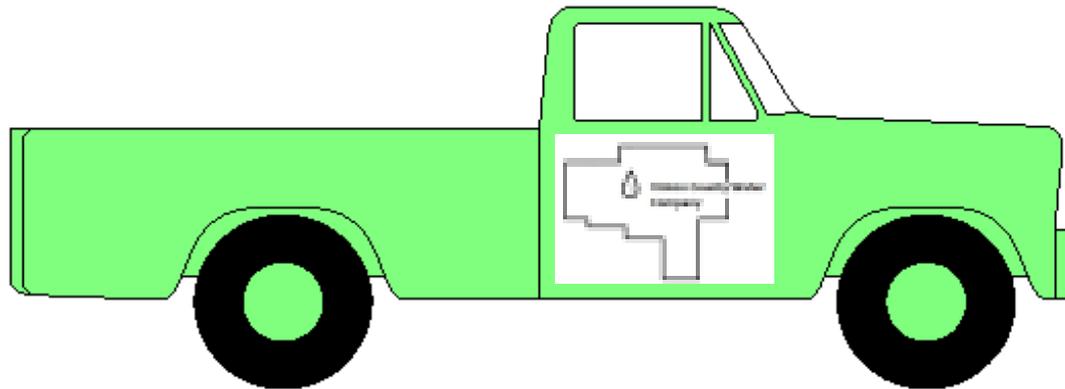
- Economies of scale for the new wells & treatment
- Fits within long term plan
- Fixed part of Jackson County Water violations (G-Line)



Jackson County Water had been helping Vinton County Water for years - **Learned** the system

# Negotiating to sell Vinton County Water

- Customers voted twice in 2008 not to sell Vinton County Water.
- The Truck Incident!



## Quick Poll :

What do you think are the most common barriers to forming water system partnerships?

# ARRA

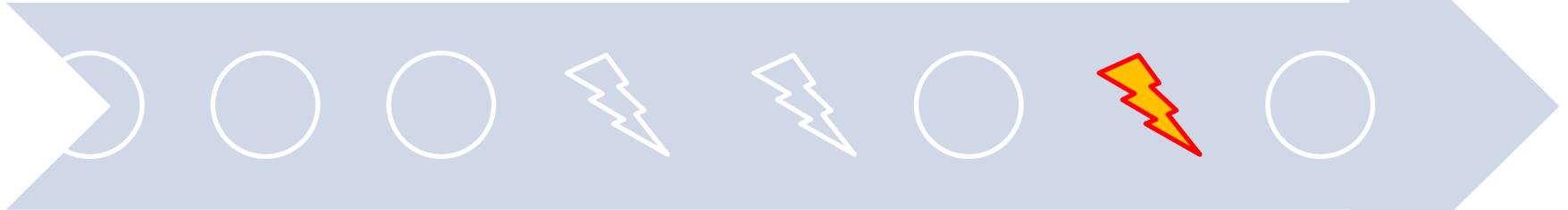


Jackson  
County  
Water  
Company  
Starts selling  
Water 1970

Jackson  
begins  
helping  
Vinton 1992

Vinton's  
Operator  
Quits 2007

ARRA 2009



Vinton  
County  
Water  
Company  
Starts Selling  
Water 1992

Vinton gets  
fined for  
disinfection  
by products  
rule 2005

Vinton hires  
Jackson to  
operate  
system 2008

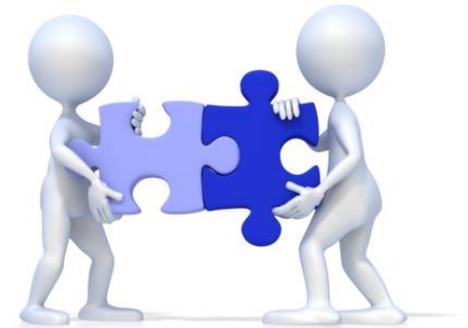
Vinton  
becomes  
part of  
Jackson  
2009

## Negotiating to sell Vinton County Water

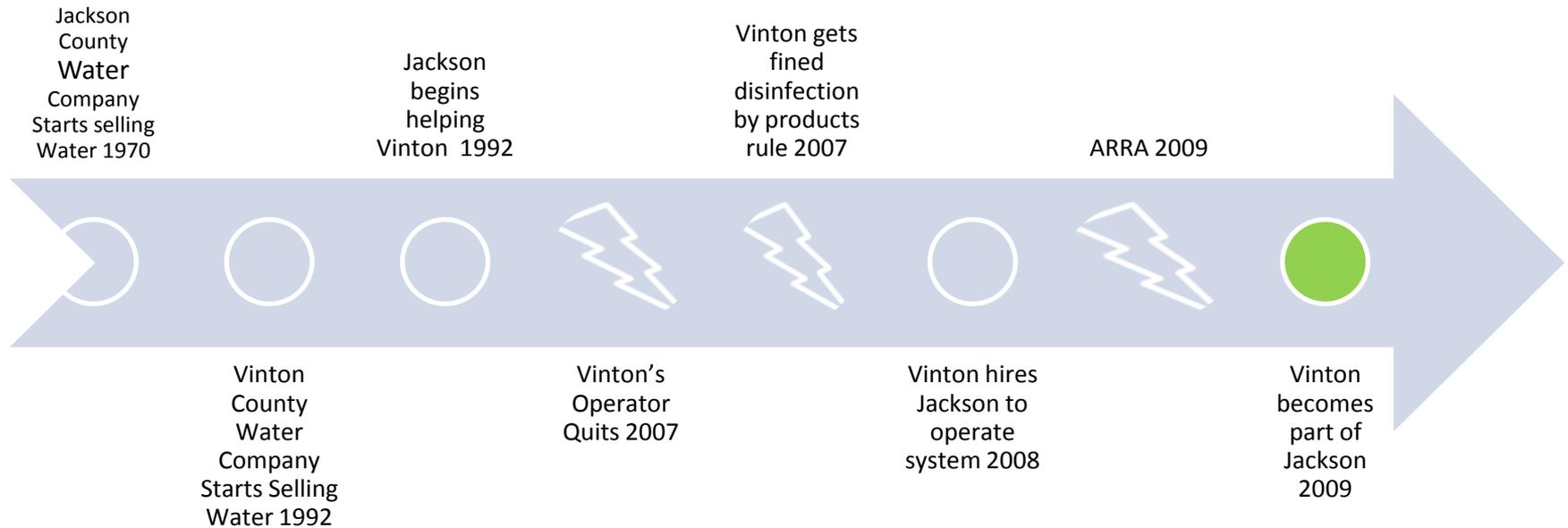
- An INDEPENDENT view of all sides to the question.
  - RCAP completed a five year forecast and rate recommendations for Vinton County Water
  - Visioning session with the Board of Vinton County Water to look for alternative solutions
  - Worked with Jackson County Water to determine their needs.



**A Lasting Partnership –  
Vinton County Water decides to  
sell the system to  
Jackson County Water**



# Vinton County sells to Jackson County



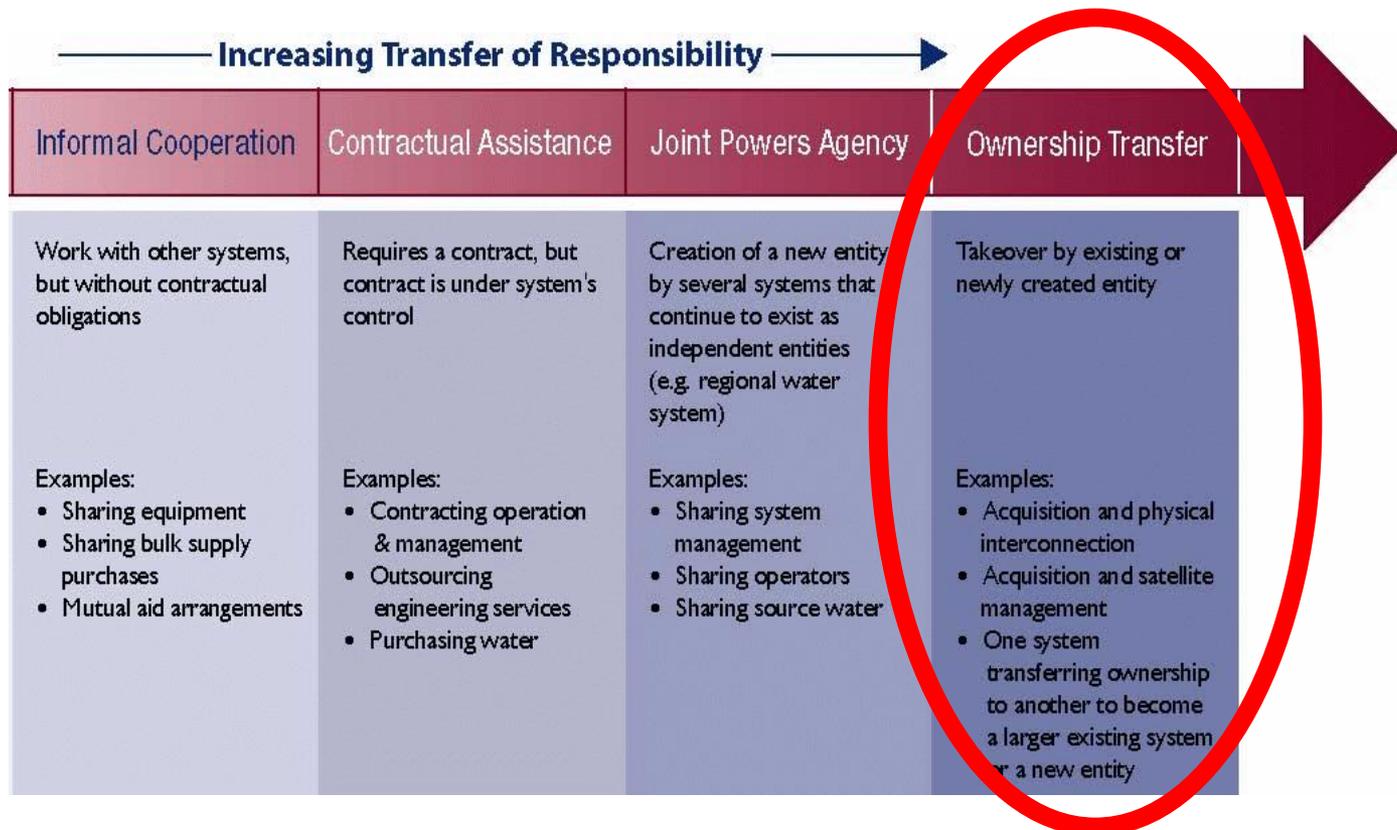
# Vinton County sells to Jackson County

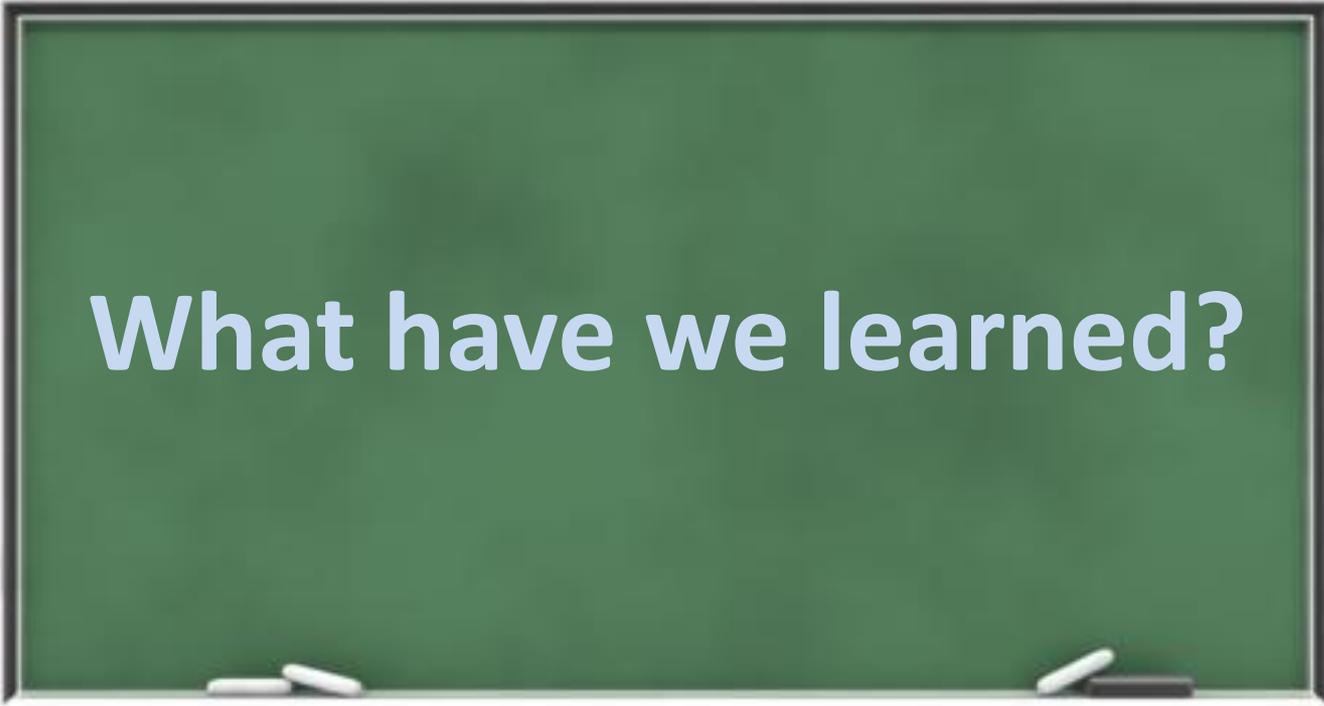
## The Results:

- Customers of both systems receive **reliable service**
- Both utilities are in **compliance**
- Rates are **affordable**
- Improved local buy in and stakeholder relations.
- Vinton County Water is more **sustainable**

# Ownership Transfer

## The range of different types of partnerships





**What have we learned?**

# What have we learned?



- Fines **don't** solve problems
- **Educate** the decision makers
- The system has to be **willing** to resolve its problems
- Technical **assistance** is part of our responsibility
- **Stay on top** of the situation
- **Partnerships** are a tool

# What have we learned?

- Look for a **WIN, WIN** solution
- **Transparency** is key to building trust
- Maintain mutual **respect**
- Be patient, **patient**, patient



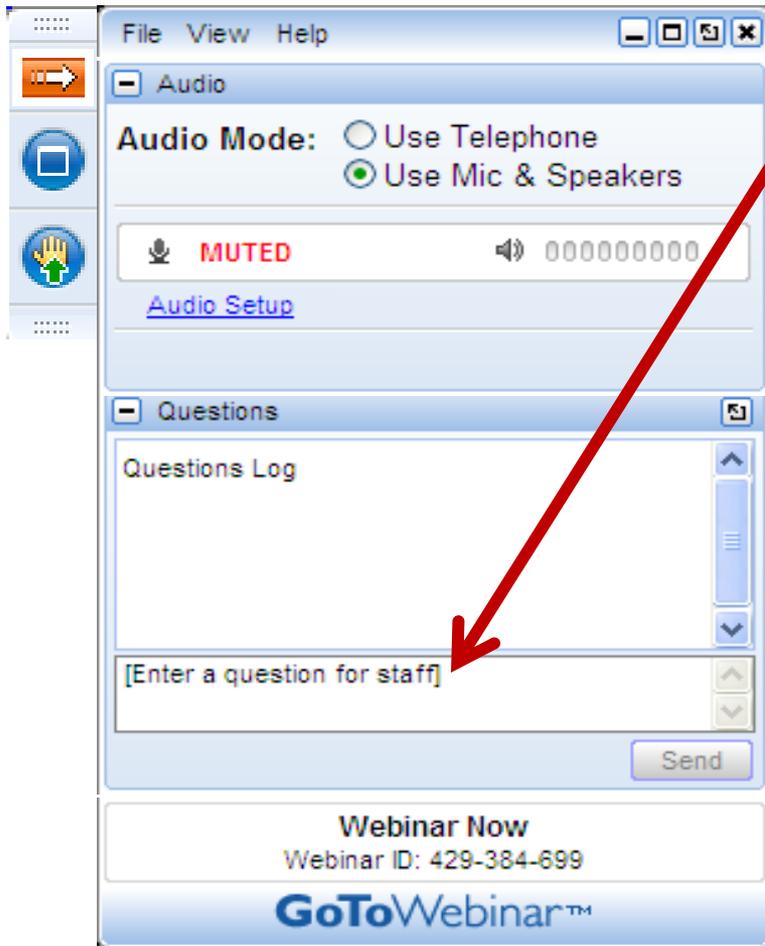
# Closing thoughts from Vinton County Water & Jackson County Water



# Quick Poll:

Webinar evaluation

# Questions and Answers



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# Rural Community Assistance Partnership

Improving the quality of life in rural communities



## Western RCAP

**Rural Community Assistance Corporation**  
(916) 447-2854  
[www.rcac.org](http://www.rcac.org)

## Midwest RCAP

**Midwest Assistance Program**  
(952) 758-4334  
[www.map-inc.org](http://www.map-inc.org)

## Southern RCAP

**Community Resource Group**  
(479) 443-2700  
[www.crg.org](http://www.crg.org)

## Northeast RCAP

**RCAP Solutions**  
(800) 488-1969  
[www.rcapsolutions.org](http://www.rcapsolutions.org)

## Great Lakes RCAP

**WSOS Community Action Commission**  
(800) 775-9767  
[www.glrca.org](http://www.glrca.org)

## Southeast RCAP

**Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project**  
(866) 928-3731  
[www.southeastrcap.org](http://www.southeastrcap.org)

Rural Community Assistance Partnership  
1522 K Street NW, Suite 400 | Washington, DC 20005-1255  
(202) 408-1273 | [www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org)

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- Sarah Wallace 740 380 5207 sarah.wallace@epa.state.oh.us
- Allison Watanabe 202 564 0128 watanabe.allison@epa.gov
  
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