



## News Release

### **Sandbranch Development and Water Supply Corporation Board Accepts Engineering Firm Recommendation**

#### **Firm to be Named Upon Approval by USDA**

May 16, 2016

DALLAS, Texas – The Sandbranch Development and Water Supply Corporation board of directors unanimously accepted the recommendation for a top engineering firm to study solutions for bringing water to the Sandbranch community.

In related action, the board authorized Eugene Keahey, water supply corporation executive director, to continue pursuing the USDA Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Household grant, known as a SEARCH grant, which can fund engineering exploratory studies up to \$30,000.

Mary Nash, president of the water supply corporation board of directors, said, “We are actively working to get the SEARCH grant to fund this study, so we won’t release the name of the selected engineering firm yet because the process isn’t entirely complete. When and if we have approval for the USDA grant, we’ll announce the name of the firm.”

Once a study is complete, any solutions the engineering firm proposes could be funded by as much as 75% by United States Department of Agriculture grants while the remaining 25% could come from other grants and funding sources.

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## About Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Mt. Zion Baptist Church, through the non-profit organization Project Dream Haus, serves as the Sandbranch Community's primary source of social services and water distribution. This historic church, one of the oldest African-American churches in North Texas, was established in 1878 by 12 freed slaves under the leadership of Rev. Allen Hawthorne. In 1910, three Kleberg residents donated a plot of land to establish a Negro cemetery in the southeastern section of Dallas County near the church. At least two of the founding families of Mt. Zion Baptist Church have loved ones buried in the Sandbranch Cemetery. Originally, the church was located near what is now Simonds Road; however, in the late 1930s, church members, after working their day jobs and using their own skills, constructed its current building on Burns Drive. From its beginnings, the church has been active in the community by supporting voter registration drives, trash clean up efforts, and medical screenings. Pastor Eugene B. Keahey was named the church's pastor in 2013.

## About [Project DreamHaus](#)

Project DreamHaus, formerly E. B. Keahey Ministries, was founded in 2001 by Eugene and Deanna Keahey with a mission *to help the underserved become self sufficient through education, economic awareness, and strong community development*. The ministry provides food, clothing, and support to those in need through the Bert Roy Mobile Food Pantry, Deanna's Clothes Closet, and *Sandbranch...everybody's community!* As it offers these services, Project DreamHaus demonstrates its motto, "Changing Lives One Dream at a Time!"

## About [Sandbranch...everybody's community!](#)

*Sandbranch...everybody's community!* is a grassroots effort organized by Project DreamHaus to bring water, sewage, and social services to Sandbranch, TX., an unincorporated community in the southeastern corner of Dallas County. Just 14 miles from one of the richest cities in America, Sandbranch is the poorest community in Dallas County. It has been without running water for over 30 years. *Sandbranch...everybody's community!* is guided by an unpaid advisory committee made up of business, education, legal, and public relations professionals who believe giving a basic human right ---clean, drinkable water---to the citizens of Sandbranch is imperative. This team created the [Strategic Vision and Plan for Improvements to the Sandbranch Community](#) to address the water and sewer as well as humanitarian and social services needs in Sandbranch.