



Service line warranty offered

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The City Council is allowing a private firm to use Lawton's name and city logo to market a warranty program that will cover sewer and water service line repairs.

Council members approved a one-year non-exclusive agreement with Utility Service Partners Inc., doing business as Service Line Warranties of America. Utility Service Partners administers the National League of Cities service line warranty program, meaning the program carries the NLC endorsement, city officials said.

The warranty program covers repair costs on infrastructure that otherwise must be covered by homeowners.

Under city code, homeowners typically are responsible for repairs on their service lines, the lines that connect the city's water or sewer line to homes. City crews maintain water and sewer mains, but, unless the city is responsible for damage to a service line, the homeowner must cover that cost.

That's where the service line warranty program comes in, said Assistant City Manager Bryan Long, who worked with Utility Service Partners to craft the program. The idea is to offer homeowners a voluntary participation warranty program for exterior water and sewer lines, covering qualified repairs. The firm would sign contracts with homeowners; the City of Lawton would not be involved or incur any costs or responsibility.

City Attorney Frank Jensen said the city's only involvement is allowing the company to "use us to market." In exchange, Lawton residents receive a 10 percent discount on the cost they will pay. Jensen cautioned the program is a warranty program, not insurance, and won't cover wear and tear, or damage that may result inside a structure. Coverage is limited to "everything from the point of contact with the city's main to the point of contact with the house," he said.

The City of Lawton could have received some financial benefit from the program, but won't, city administrators said.

Brian Davis, Utility Service Partners' regional account manager, said the firm typically

pays 10 percent royalties to participating municipalities, but Lawton waived those royalties to reduce the cost of the warrant program for residents. Davis said that cost would be \$4.50 per month for sewer and \$5.50 per month for water . The firm intends to begin the program in Lawton in the fall and would offer one warranty program (covering sewer lines, for example), then make the other program available in spring 2012.

The program would cover \$4,000 per incident for water service lines and \$5,000 per incident for sewer service lines. On the water side, the warranty would have an additional \$500 in coverage for damaged sidewalks, while an additional \$5,000 in coverage on the sewer side would cover street repairs, should a plumber need to cut a city street to repair a broken sewer service line.