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YOU ARE INVITED: HEADWORKS PROJECT GRAND OPENING

The City of Missoula will hold a public grand opening and ribbon-cutting for the Wastewater Treatment Plant's Headworks and Odor Control Improvement Project on Tuesday, Sept. 11, at noon. Following celebratory remarks and a ribbon-cutting with Mayor John Engen at noon, Superintendent Starr Sullivan and Treatment Supervisor Gene Connell will lead tours of the new, state-of-the-art facility.

The City has completed the \$9.7 million construction project to replace the aging headworks and add state-of-the-art odor control equipment. Construction began in fall of 2010. The project installed odor controls at the places in the treatment process that were identified as problems in the 2009 Odor Characterization Study. One of the spots where odor control is most difficult is at the headworks, where all the wastewater from the city comes into the plant and is first screened. Odor treatment now includes running all the air at the headworks through a deodorizer and using a photo-ionization process, in which lights and ionizing destroys odor by changing it chemically.

The project has significantly improved air quality in the vicinity of the plant. Odors associated with the plant have reduced by 90 percent.

"It's been a problem for years, and we're happy to have been able to implement upgrades that are working so well," Sullivan said. "The City wants to be responsible, and we want to be a good neighbor."

The 2009 study found that both the treatment plant and the neighboring EKO Compost, which collaborates with the City on bio-solids recycling, were contributing to the unpleasant odors in the area near Mullan Road and Reserve Street. EKO managers have changed their processes to do their part in clearing up the odor.

Treatment plant odors are a national problem. Most plants were built far from homes and businesses, often on rivers. Towns grew around them, and odor became a problem.

Missoula's history is similar. Back in 1910 and 1911, new sewer lines were installed in the part of Missoula north of the river. These lines collected the raw sewage and then dumped it into the Clark Fork River by three outfalls. Missoula's Wastewater Treatment Plant was built in 1963 and '64 on the other side of Reserve Street, which at the time was rural and far from the city.

Sanitary sewer today is recognized as a key to public health and to water quality, preventing the spread of diseases such as cholera. In Missoula, it protects both surface water in the Clark Fork River basin and our groundwater aquifer, which is our drinking water supply.

The project was financed by sewer revenue bonds. Morrison-Maierle Engineering designed the improvements, and construction was done by Dick Anderson Construction, both Montana-based companies.

Grand opening speakers will include:

Mayor John Engen

Starr Sullivan, Wastewater Division Superintendent

Nancy Cormier, lead design engineer, Morrison-Maierle

Jason Wiener, Public Works Committee Chairman, Missoula City Council

Brentt Ramharter, Finance Director, City of Missoula

The event will also feature videos produced by Missoula Community Access Television's Christian Ackerman, including a time-lapse film covering the construction period.

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