

Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department

Quarterly Report
October ~ November ~ December 2008



REGIONAL OPTIMIZATION MASTER PLAN

Request for Extension of ROMP Time Line Explored

With the economic crisis burdening local residents, a bid to extend the Regional Optimization Master Plan timeline was made to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. County Administrator, Chuck Huckelberry led the effort for the approval of a five-year extension to complete the ROMP. On December 8, representatives of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) heard the department's proposal for a five year extension. ADEQ provided two options for pursuing an extension, but offered an informal opinion that a five-year extension would not be supported by ADEQ.



The ADEQ representatives did indicate that perhaps a one to two year extension might be approved. In discussing the process that would be required to pursue an extension, the department learned that such an effort could take up to 18 months, and that there would be no guarantee that the request would be approved.

Unfortunately, a one to two year extension would do very little to provide relief from significant short-term rate increases needed to support the ROMP. Additionally, implementation of the current schedule would have to continue throughout the application process. Because there is no guarantee that an extension would be granted, the department would have to proceed based on the current schedule to avoid regulatory actions and punitive fines that would be applied if we failed to meet regulatory deadlines. Other jurisdictions (Atlanta, Georgia and Cincinnati, Ohio) have faced millions of dollars in punitive fines for not meeting mandated regulatory programs similar to the ROMP.

A one to two year extension would not provide significant relief to rate payers and ultimately would lead to an increase in the cost of the ROMP through inflation and higher debt service. In addition, no slow-down of the current schedule would be possible while the department waited to learn whether the extension request would be approved or denied. Because of these issues, the County Administrator determined that pursuing an extension of the ROMP timeline was not in the best interest of Pima County's rate payers.



Water Reclamation Campus

The department is moving forward with the design/build/operate (DBO) procurement method for the Water Reclamation Campus. After construction is completed, the successful DBO firm will operate the facility for a period of 15 years. A two-phase selection process provided in state law for a qualified firm will take place during 2009.

Plant Interconnect

Design of the Plant Interconnect was completed and reviewed/approved by staff during this quarter. Cultural Resource work is continuing and a Guaranteed Maximum Price is currently being negotiated with the construction contractor.

Ina Road

During this quarter, a Project Manager/Construction Inspection firm for the expansion and upgrade of the Ina Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility was selected. The department now has a signed contract with Jacobs Field Services North America, Inc. Negotiations with the initially highest-ranked firm were terminated due to a failure to reach concurrence on a number of issues, including a contract price. Cultural Resource investigations and design of the project continued during this quarter with Desert Archeology completing exploratory soil excavation in December.

A 30 percent design for the interim biosolids processing and the 10 percent design report for the overall Ina WRF Capacity and Effluent Upgrade Project were completed in this quarter. Additional design work is ongoing.

CONVEYANCE SYSTEM

Arcadia Sewer Project

A new firm was selected to take over work on the Arcadia Sewer Project. The previous firm did not meet county standards in a number of areas.

Santa Cruz Interceptor, Phase II

Santa Cruz Interceptor, Phase II project was completed this quarter. All that remains are punch list items. This project connected a new interceptor with the Santa Cruz Interceptor East and the Santa Cruz Interceptor Central.

Over the course of the project, Community Relations staff met weekly with residents in two mobile home/RV parks impacted by this project to minimize inconvenience to their residents and to relate to the construction/engineering teams the concerns of the neighborhoods.



Construction of Phase II of the Santa Cruz Interceptor Project was completed this quarter.

TREATMENT FACILITIES

Avra Valley Wastewater Reclamation Facility Expansion

Construction of the expansion of the Avra Valley Wastewater Facility continued in this quarter, with Ultra Violet disinfection and sand filtration system placed into operation in October. Construction will be completed next quarter with start up expected this spring.

Marana Wastewater Reclamation Facility Expansion

The construction of the Ultra Violet Disinfection and Sand Filtration Systems of the Marana Expansion Project was completed. Operation of the expansion was turned over to the RWRD on October 28. The remaining phases of the Marana expansion project are on hold.

Corona de Tucson Wastewater Reclamation Facility

The south train of the new expansion was taken out of service to allow warranty repairs to be made. The North Reactor handled all flows while the south train was out of service.

Ina Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility

The ongoing capacity study at the Ina Road WRF continued in this quarter. With permission from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, staff tested the ability of the 12.5 mgd capacity expansion to treat more than the 12.5 mgd. The expansion has been able to process 17 mgd while still meeting regulatory requirements. This testing will continue in the next quarter.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Outreach Efforts

During the week of Thanksgiving and the week of Christmas, the department ran new public service announcements (PSAs) on local radio and television stations, including Spanish language media outlets. The PSAs educated the public about the proper disposal of grease, informing television viewers and radio audiences that the disposal of grease down drains can lead to sewer blockages and the back up of raw sewage into streets, buildings and the environment.

Advertisements were also placed in *Bear Essential News for Kids*, a monthly newspaper distributed to grade school children and their parents in the metropolitan Tucson area. This publication has a circulation of 65,000 and is used as an educational resource by many Tucson-area teachers. Advertisements which discussed the proper disposal of cooking grease ran in the November and December editions.



Community Relations staff member, Lilian von Rago demonstrates the menacing nature of the Grease Monster, the Grease Campaign's mascot.

In addition to public service announcements, the department also placed posters promoting the message of proper grease disposal on city buses. Media alerts sent out during the SOS Grease Campaign resulted in a number of newspaper, radio, and television stories about campaign events and the importance of proper grease disposal.

The annual grease collection event on the day after Thanksgiving was widely advertised both before and on the day of the event. Community Relations and other RWRD employees staffed the collection sites in conjunction with representatives from the Pima Association of Governments, and Grecylce, a private sector environmental firm. Community Relations employees also represented RWRD at three environmental/community events during the month of October and made a presentation to Mansfield Middle School students about the wastewater treatment process and wastewater treatment issues specific to Pima County.



Wastewater News

An Intergovernmental agreement with the City of Tucson allows for the inclusion of a department newsletter in the City of Tucson's water/wastewater bill three times a year. *Wastewater News* reaches 250,000 households/businesses. The three months assigned to RWRD are July, November, and December. The November and December bill inserts included information on the following issues:

November: Save Our Sewers Grease Collection Event, Regional Optimization Master Plan, City/County Household Hazardous Waste Program

December: Proper Disposal of Grease, Public Benefits of Reporting Sewer Vandalism, How the Treatment of Wastewater Contributes to Environmental Sustainability.

Wastewater Column in Tucson Water Monthly Newsletter

Beginning in November, RWRD was offered the opportunity to submit a monthly column to be printed in Tucson Water's newsletter that is sent to 250,000 households and businesses each month. In 2008, these columns covered the following topics:

November: The Features and Operation of the Public Sanitary Sewer System in Pima County

December: The Differences between Public and Private Sewers in Pima County.