



Public Works Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislature Acts to Help Fund Regional Wastewater Solution *Owatonna's Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion Project Progressing*

OWATONNA, May 23, 2023 – On May 22, the Minnesota legislature approved \$22 million in funding to support Owatonna's Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion project. Another \$4.5 million was approved for Medford to modify its wastewater collection system so it can connect to Owatonna's plant. By combining the resources of the Cities of Owatonna and Medford with state funding, this regional project maximizes the use of tax dollars through economies of scale, a lower cost per gallon for treatment, better performance and reliability, greater staff efficiencies and reduced permitting, sampling and testing. It is also the most environmentally sound option for the region's waterways. This regional facility will meet current and future capacity needs for both cities.

Construction began last July on Owatonna's Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion. Over the last few months, the project has progressed and is expected to be completed in late 2024. Valves were installed in the Main Lift Station which is at the head of the plant where all Owatonna's wastewater flows and then is pumped up to the treatment processes. In the new Fine Screen Building, the three drum screens were flown into place in the upper level of the building. Then, the roof was installed. Much of the interior process piping, plumbing and painting has been completed. Work is in progress on the interior stairs, metals and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. The concrete work in the Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) has been completed, chemical tanks and gates have been installed and much of the pump and process instrumentation equipment has arrived onsite. Its precast walls are expected to be installed next month. The foundation of the Solids Thickening Building has been completed and walls are being poured.

Additional project information, videos and photos can be found online at [Expansion | Owatonna, MN.](#) An expansion of Owatonna's existing wastewater treatment plant was initiated in 2017. The plant has been operating at or above its capacity for the past several years. In 2021, plans got underway to expand the plant from its current capacity of five million gallons per day (MGD) to more than nine MGD, an 80 percent increase. To prepare for the plant's expansion, the City began implementing incremental rate increases ten years ago so it can continue to meet the financial needs of the plant's operations while maintaining affordability for residents and businesses. In addition to covering more than \$3 million in project planning costs already, the City has also set aside \$10 million in reserve funds for this expansion project. An additional \$8 million in grant funds will be used to help cover project costs.

Owatonna is one of just a few major discharge points in the Cannon River watershed. The technology used in the new plant will help ensure no additional degradation of the regional watershed, despite the increase in capacity. The plant expansion will utilize captured methane, clean it and funnel it into the

City's natural gas distribution system in partnership with Owatonna Public Utilities to expand renewable energy sources.

The City of Owatonna is committed to providing a community where residents and businesses can thrive. Known for its strong community, education and business culture, Owatonna provides a high quality of life for its residents. Located in southeastern Minnesota, Owatonna is the county seat for Steele County and is home to several major employers.

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