

DEQ, Madras Reach Agreement on \$4.6 Million Loan For City's Continuing Wastewater Disposal

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has signed an agreement with the city of Madras on a \$4.6 million, long-term Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan as part of the city's continuing wastewater disposal improvements. The city is expanding its treated effluent reuse capabilities as part of these improvements.

The loan monies, which represent nearly half of a \$9.6 million facility expansion project, will be used to increase the city's sewage treatment capacity and complete the first phase of the city's wastewater system improvements. Construction of the expanded storage and irrigation system is expected to start next spring, with an estimated completion in mid-2008.

The expanded plant capacities of the umbrella project will allow existing homes that have failing septic systems to be connected to the city's sewer system and also allow for new development. Reducing the number of failing septic systems will help eliminate possible groundwater contamination in the city.

Since 2001, farmers have been able to use treated effluent stored in a holding pond near the existing facility. The pond holds the effluent for six months during the winter. The stored effluent is then filtered and used for irrigation of surrounding agricultural lands, from about mid-April to mid-October. As part of the DEQ-supported portion of the project, additional effluent storage facilities will be built so that the city can use the treated effluent for irrigation of the planned golf course on the city's east side.

The city is in contract with the Oregon Department of Corrections to finance another \$4.2 million of the project. In addition, the city has been granted \$750,000 in U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development grant funds.

DEQ's Clean Water State Revolving Fund program loans money to public entities across Oregon, helping communities complete a variety of water quality improvement projects. Loans have ranged from \$7,000 to \$35 million, and DEQ has made loan agreements totaling more than \$600 million to borrowers since the program was established in 1990. The program is supported financially from annual grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), loan repayment and state-issued bonds.

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