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NEWS RELEASE

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Water Meter Replacement Project Recognized by EPA as Project Nears 75% Completion

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is recognizing the City of Dubuque with its 2010 Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund Award for Sustainable Public Health Protection. EPA Region 7 Chief of the Wastewater Management Branch Glenn Curtis will present the award to the Dubuque City Council at tonight's City Council meeting. Dubuque is one of two communities in Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and nine tribal nations) to receive the award.

The City of Dubuque is in the midst of a city-wide water meter replacement project which will allow its water customers to identify water waste and consider corrective measures. This project will translate into "smarter" water use and increased energy savings. More efficient water use will also reduce the use of both energy and chemicals the City must use to treat and deliver water.

As of March 21, almost 75 percent of the nearly 23,000 water meters in Dubuque have been replaced with new meters featuring automated meter reading (AMR) and advanced leak indication technology. The initial installations of the mandatory water meter replacement project began in March 2010 and have gradually been ramped up to the current rate of approximately 400 meter installations per week. The project remains on schedule for its completion by the end of this summer.

The City has contracted with Northern Water Works Supply (NWWS) to install the new meters by geographic "zones." Dubuque water customers receive a notification letter when it is time for them to schedule an installation appointment and are encouraged to respond to this notification in a timely manner. "We deeply appreciate the support we've received from the public on this project," said Water Department Manager Bob Green. "Our ability to keep this major infrastructure improvement project on schedule is dependent upon the cooperation of our customers and we're very grateful for the way they have responded."

Currently, NWWS has 10 full-time installers, two lead installers, and a supervisor working on the project. Installers work six days per week and they are averaging 66 meter installations per day. All NWWS installers have completed training and background checks and have identification, wear identifiable uniforms, and drive marked vehicles. NWWS is also partnering with Jaeger Plumbing and Modern Piping of Dubuque on certain installations.

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The new meters are outfitted with a radio frequency meter interface unit (MIU), which collects meter usage data and remotely transmits the information to data collectors. The MIU and water meter work as a unit to detect intermittent leaks, continuous leaks, reverse-flow situations, and zero-usage situations. The system will automatically transmit meter usage data over radio frequency waves each hour to data collectors placed throughout the community which then transmit the data to City Hall. The new meters also allow customers to see their current meter reading, current flow rate, and any leak indication by simply shining a flashlight on the new meter.

The meters, manufactured in the U.S. by Neptune Technology Group, are also augmented with an Unmeasured Flow Reducer (UFR), manufactured locally by A.Y. McDonald Manufacturing Company. The UFR assists the new meters in detecting and measuring low-flows, such as leaks and drips that have previously been immeasurable. By utilizing the UFR along with the new meter's digital leak indicator, customers can easily monitor their homes for even the smallest leaks. One customer fixing a 1/20 gallon-per-minute continuous leak can save over 20,000 gallons per year of previously wasted water.

In conjunction with the meter replacement project, the City has converted its utility billing system to invoice customers based on gallons of water used instead of cubic feet of water so customers can be more aware of just how much water they are using. The City has also created a grant program for financial assistance on costs of repairs of leaks identified through the project. The City will pay 50 percent of the replacement cost, not to exceed \$100, for repairs made to devices inside the home.

The new water meters are an example of the City's ongoing sustainability initiative and allow water customers to identify waste and consider behavior changes which will translate into "smarter" water use and increased energy savings. More efficient water use will also reduce the use of both energy and chemicals in treating and delivering water.

Funding for this \$8.7 million project is from a \$7.7 million State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan and a \$1 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) forgivable loan. Additional information, images, and frequently asked questions, is available on the City of Dubuque website at www.cityofdubuque.org/watermeters.

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