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N E W S R E L E A S E

July 13, 2012 – For Immediate Release

Smoke Testing of Sanitary Sewer Planned for End of July

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque Engineering and Public Works Departments continue to inspect the sanitary sewer system for signs of excessive wear and tear, as well as for structural defects and storm water pipeline cross connections. Through the Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Program, the Engineering Department will be conducting smoke testing in selected areas between July 19 and July 31. Smoke testing is most effective when performed during the times that the ground is dry, such as July, August and September.

Smoke testing of the sanitary sewer system will be conducted in the area bounded approximately by Central Avenue to the east, Clarke Drive to the south, and Primrose Street and North Grandview to the west. (See map attached.) An inspection crew will travel throughout the neighborhood, lifting manhole lids, setting out testing equipment, and entering yards to observe and record the smoke testing.

The goal of the I&I Reduction Program is to reduce the amount of rainwater and groundwater that enters the sanitary sewer system during wet weather. Allowing these clean water connections causes sanitary sewer back-ups into basements, overflows into creeks and wetlands, and increased operating costs to process the water at the Dubuque Water Pollution Control Plant. Removing this clean water will reduce collection and treatment costs, allow the sanitary sewer system to work more effectively, allow the city to optimize the performance of the existing pipe system and treatment, and minimize sanitary sewer backups into basements.

Smoke testing consists of introducing non-toxic smoke into sanitary sewer pipe sections under moderate pressure. The crews will document where the smoke is emitted and prioritize needed repairs. Since the smoke will be placed into the sewer system that is connected to homes, residents are encouraged to pour tap water into their floor drains and sinks. This small amount of water creates a seal that keeps the smoke out of the homes. Residents do not need to be present during smoke testing.

Dry traps, drains without traps, and other plumbing defects will allow the smoke to enter the dwelling connected to the sewer line that is being tested. The smoke is non-toxic, leaves no residue, and creates no fire hazard. If a resident is present and smoke enters the house or building, please report all locations to the work crews (563-513-8966) and open a window to allow the smoke to dissipate. It may also be desirable to contact a plumber if the smoke enters the house in a manner other than a dry drain trap.

For more information on the I&I Reduction Program and sanitary sewer smoke testing, visit www.cityofdubuque.org/i&i or call the I&I information line at 563-690-6113.

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