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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Smoke Testing of Sanitary Sewer Planned for End of July

DUBUQUE, Iowa – As part of the City of Dubuque’s Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Program, the City of Dubuque Engineering Department will be conducting sanitary sewer smoke testing in selected areas from July 30-31. 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 stormwater pipeline cross connections.

Smoke testing of the sanitary sewer system will be conducted on the Clarke University campus on July 30 and may affect residences in the areas of Clarke Drive and West Locust Street. On July 31, smoke testing will be conducted at Senior High School and may affect residences in the areas of Clarke Drive, West Locust Street, Rosedale Street, and North Grandview Avenue.

Inspection crews will lift manhole lids and use equipment to observe and record smoke testing. 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.

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 City's Water & Resource Recovery Center. 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.

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

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