

NEWS RELEASE
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MASON COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITIES
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TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN, SEATTLE TIMES, SEATTLE P-I, THE TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE, SEATTLE DAILY JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, KING 5, KIRO 7, KOMO 4, KCPQ, NORTHWEST CABLE NEWS

RE: Belfair Wastewater and Water Reclamation Facility groundbreaking event

Mason County Public Utilities and Waste and the Mason County Commissioners will celebrate the beginning of the two-year construction project for the Belfair Wastewater and Water Reclamation Facility with a ceremonial groundbreaking on Monday, Oct. 12, 2009 in Belfair. The event will take place at 2 p.m. at the future site of "Pump Station #2," behind the Belfair Assembly of God Church at 23001 NE State Route 3.

Mason County Commissioners Tim Sheldon, Lynda Ring Erickson and Ross Gallagher will welcome contractors to the community. U.S. Congressmen Norm Dicks will share words with attendees, then join Mason County Commissioners, and contractors for both projects, Ceccanti, Inc. and Boss Construction, in digging the first dirt. Ceccanti, Inc. was identified as the apparent low bidder to construct the conveyance pipes and pump stations for the project, and Boss Construction was the apparent low bidder for the water reclamation facility. Light refreshments will be served and the public is encouraged to attend.

This project will create construction jobs in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Through State Legislature appropriation, this project has received funding from Washington State Departments of Ecology and Commerce. In addition, the project received funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by the Washington State Department of Ecology. This state and federal funding has been combined to cover a very large portion of the project costs, including over \$32 million in grants that do not need to be repaid.

Project history

Since 2001, Mason County has been working with local constituents and stakeholders to develop the project vision, produce the facilities plan, develop policy for the new wastewater system, and secure funding for the facilities, as required to maintain compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA). Following publication of a programmatic final environmental impact statement and the Department of Ecology's approval of the Mason County Belfair/Lower Hood Canal Water Reclamation Facility Plan Supplemental Information in May 2007, the County hired engineering firm CH2M HILL to design the wastewater and water reclamation facilities.

The Belfair Wastewater and Water Reclamation Facilities

The new Belfair system will use flat plate membrane technology, a sustainable approach to water management that protects Hood Canal and meets Class A standards for future water reuse. The treatment plant has been designed so it can be expanded as the community grows within the Belfair Urban Growth

Area (UGA). The project will build a safe, efficient and environmentally-friendly sewer system that will be the backbone of the sewer system for the Belfair UGA.

Environmental benefits

This system is seen as a pivotal element vital to the health of Hood Canal. Septic systems contribute nitrogen to Hood Canal, resulting in water quality problems that affect human and aquatic species' health. Onsite wastewater systems also require larger lot sizes than public sewer systems, preventing denser development. Significant population growth in the Lower Hood Canal watershed was determined by the Washington State Department of Health to be a major contributing factor in water quality decertifications in this area. The new system will treat water to Class A standards for reclaimed water, initially for spray irrigation. Beyond this initial project, Mason County is actively researching for future customers and markets to use reclaimed water created by the Belfair Water Reclamation Facility. Reclaimed water can be used for irrigation, cooling, fire suppression, industrial process water and many other uses.

Sustainable Design

The treatment plant building has been designed using LEED principles. Energy and cost-saving air bearing blowers are anticipated, and Low Impact Development techniques have been incorporated, including the use of rain gardens. Facilities were sited to minimize their impact on wetlands, streams and other sensitive areas, then designed to fit within their existing surroundings. Natural resources have also been considered for conveyance construction techniques; trenchless drilling technology will be employed to cross under streams. The system includes odor and noise controls.

Economic benefits

The new wastewater system is important for the future of economic development in the Belfair community both from near-term construction activity in the area and on a long-term basis for employment associated with improved infrastructure. In addition, Hood Canal supports a vibrant commercial shellfish industry, as well as recreational shellfishing opportunities that attract many tourists year-round. In Lower Hood Canal, where Belfair is located, water quality has deteriorated due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria and increasing nutrient loading. On a long-term basis the project will be the backbone for urban infrastructure in Belfair as mandated by the Growth Management Act.

Public involvement

The project team is committed to informing and involving Belfair citizens throughout the project. Residents of the Belfair community can expect updates and informational public open houses as the project moves forward, including details about project construction activities, connecting to the sewer and potential grants and loans to assist with connection fees.

For media inquiries and information, please contact the Belfair Wastewater and Water Reclamation Facilities Hotline at 360-801-2482 or visit the project Web site at www.masoncountywastewater.com.

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MASON COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITIES & WASTE MANAGEMENT

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