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EWSU initiates three Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade projects *Projects aim to save energy, reduce odor and improve plant operations*

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – The Evansville Water and Sewer Utility (EWSU) will soon begin three large-scale construction projects to improve the efficiency and operations of its East and West Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP). Both the East WWTP, located on Waterworks Road near the Ohio River, and the West WWTP, located on Tekoppel Avenue, were built in the 1950s.

“Residents will notice a lot of construction at the East and West Wastewater Treatment Plants this summer,” Mayor Lloyd Winnecke said. “We are making this investment to ensure our plants operate efficiently and, in the long run, reduce our operating expenses.”

Altogether, the three projects represent a \$22 million investment in the WWTPs and include:

- Anaerobic digester rehabilitation (\$13 million) – Eight anaerobic digester tanks, each 30 feet tall and approximately 75 feet wide, cumulatively hold 8 million gallons of anaerobic digested sludge that is converted to biosolids, methane and other gases. This project rehabilitates the metal lids to these digesters. Each of the 300,000-pound lids will be removed by 450-ton cranes so they can be cleaned, sandblasted and repainted. Two lids will be rehabbed at each time, starting at the East WWTP, ensuring treatment continues at normal levels. This rehabilitation project is estimated to save EWSU approximately \$250,000 a year by allowing the utility to capture the methane gas and use it as a power source.
- Aeration blower rehabilitation (\$5.6 million) – High-speed, industrial-sized blowers force air through the secondary aeration to speed the process of organic digestion of waste in the water. The blowers, which currently run at all times, are being replaced with ones that cycle on demand at peak times. The stainless steel pipes used to channel air to the blowers are also being moved above ground to allow crews easier access for maintenance and repairs.
- New centrifuges and metal recoating (\$4.2 million) – Existing belt press technology, which squeezes liquids from the sludge, is being replaced with centrifuges. The air released from the centrifuges will be processed through new filtration beds, and wood chips are being added to filter the air, greatly reducing the odor surrounding the WWTPs. Additionally, because sludge treatment emits an acid that deteriorates the surrounding metal structures, interior metal surfaces will be recoated to extend their functionality.

“Treatment plants use complex techniques to treat the sewage, and keeping the systems working properly takes a significant investment,” added Allen Mounts, executive director of EWSU. “Our wastewater treatment plants are more than 60 years old and we want to upgrade their capabilities to maximize operations as we look to the future.”

These projects are part of EWSU’s master plan, which is financed through capital bonds.

More information about the wastewater treatment plants is available at www.ewsu.com.

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