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Utility Secures Low-Income Customer Assistance for Water Meter Repairs

Community Action Program of Evansville to begin taking applications for repair work starting

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – The Evansville Water & Sewer Utility (Utility), Community Action Program of Evansville, Inc., (CAPE) and Johnson Controls announce a partnership to provide qualified low-income customers with payment assistance if they have been notified to complete repairs to leaking water lines connected to the Utility's water meter and/or water meter pits located on their "owner occupied" property.

CAPE will manage the new program, titled "Water Meter Pit Repair Program." Starting Monday, Feb. 23, eligible Evansville residents who have been informed of needed water meter pit related repairs by the Utility can contact Gale Brocksmitth at the Evansville CAPE office at 812-492-3941 for more information and qualifications requirements. All qualified customers will be given an appointment to apply for assistance.

"CAPE is excited about the opportunity to work with the Evansville Water and Sewer Department to assist in this important upgrade for our city's water system," said Gale Brocksmitth, director of planning and corporate affairs at CAPE. "With our assistance, we can provide customers and the Utility more efficient services."

In November 2014, at the direction of Mayor Lloyd Winnecke, the Utility began aggressively seeking a community partner to aid in the process of helping low-income customers make necessary repairs to their water lines that connect to the Utility's water meters. The re-

inspection of water meters by the EWSU continues to reveal very few property owners actually face costly water meter repairs.

“The efforts of the Utility, Johnson Controls and CAPE, coming together to provide this type of assistance, shows the commitment our community has to ensuring Evansville is equipped for efficient, economical practices,” Mayor Winnecke said. “I am glad to see the partnership come together in a successful way.”

“CAPE is an ideal partner for us to manage this program as they have the experience assisting Evansville residents who have financial challenges with home ownership and maintenance,” said Utility Director Allen Mounts. “In addition, CAPE has the expertise and resources to assist qualified Evansville residents who own and occupy their homes with obtaining competitive quotes for qualifying repairs; including selecting the qualified contractor and verifying that repairs have been performed to acceptable requirements.

The “Smart City 2.0” program, approved by the City Council in 2013, will improve the area’s use of energy, water and network infrastructure and includes upgrades to a city-wide automated meter reading system and the replacement of approximately 75% of the Utility’s water meters. This effort will improve EWSU’s customer service and streamline operations as well as bill and collect for actual usage, eliminating the need for outdated, inaccurate, manually-read meters. Local contractors and engineering firms, including minority- and women-owned businesses, are performing the installation and upgrades featured in the Smart City 2.0 initiative.

Johnson Controls, a global multi-industrial company and employer of more than 1,800 Indiana residents, was selected to develop and implement Smart City 2.0, and recently provided an initial \$25,000 in funding for the Water Meter Pit Repair Program, plus the opportunity for an additional contribution of \$25,000 if needed to make the partnership possible.

To date, more than 38,100 of the city’s 63,400 active water meters and meter pits have been inspected to determine if the plumbing and meter pit meet the requirements necessary to upgrade the water meters. The remaining meters will be inspected later this year. In limited situations, the Utility may need a customer’s assistance in gaining access to the customer water meter pit.

More information about the water meter upgrade process can be found at www.ewsu.com/meter-upgrade.

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