



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development
Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb. 68508
(402) 437-5551 (Phone) (402) 437-5093 (TDY) (402) 437-5408 (Fax)

Jolene Kasper, Rural Development Specialist Norfolk, Nebraska (402) 371-5350
Earl Bogard, Jr., Mayor Ponca, Nebraska (402) 755-4165

NEW WASTEWATER FACILITY FOR PONCA VIA USDA FUNDING

Norfolk, Neb., May 24, 2004—Mayor of Ponca, Earl C. Bogard, Jr. announces the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development late April awarding of close to \$1.2 million in low interest loan funds and grant funds of \$666,000 to the City of Ponca. The USDA monies will allow the city to upgrade their wastewater treatment facility benefiting the 1,026 rural residents of Ponca.

Treatment facility upgrades are designed to meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit standards as documented in the city's NPDES permit. The city has been in violation since 1999 when the standards were instituted by government agencies. The upgraded facility has more stringent standards associated with the new NPDES permit to be issued in 2005. The treatment facility is scheduled to be operational by January 1, 2006.

Ponca's existing wastewater treatment facility was constructed in 1971 before EPA standards were in force. Presently the facility exceeds standards for ammonia, total suspended solids, and carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand. Additionally, the maximum volume of the trickling filter is above maximum design standards. The new facility will include a mechanical fine screen system, flow metering capability, extended aeration facility, circular fine clarifiers, and bulk biosolids treatment facilities. The facility includes the capability to meet increased loading to meet future growth over the next 20 years. The state issued a consent order which designates the timelines to be met to bring the facility into compliance.

Jolene Kasper, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development is working with the city to assist in meeting federal application requirements and to ensure design and operational timelines are met. Roger Protzman is the JEO Norfolk engineer for the wastewater project.

The city's loan will be repaid through revenue generated within the wastewater utility. Some increase in sewer rates will occur over the next year. The Nebraska Rural Water Association will assist the Mayor and City Council in determining rate increases that will provide the amount of revenue needed to repay the USDA low interest loan. USDA Rural Development funding was provided through its Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant program. The loan term is 20 years at 4.375 percent interest.

For additional information contact Jolene Kasper at 1909 Vicki Lane, Suite 103 Norfolk, Neb. 68701 or phone (402) 371-5350, (402) 437-5093 (TDY). Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/>.

#

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA, Director, OCR, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.