



PUBLIC & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

PUBLIC SERVICES BUILDING
2051 KAEN ROAD | OREGON CITY, OR 97045

August 17, 2023

BCC Agenda Date/Item: _____

Board of County Commissioners
Clackamas County

A Board Recognition of the County Program/Project to Receive a 2023 National Association of Counties (NACo) Award

Previous Board Action/Review	To recognize the County program and staff that received a 2023 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).		
Performance Clackamas	This item aligns with the County's Performance Clackamas goals to build a strong infrastructure, build public trust through good government, and ensure safe, healthy and secure communities.		
Counsel Review	No	Procurement Review	No
Contact Person	Ed Nieto	Contact Phone	971-284-7094

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Clackamas County received a 2023 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The NACo Achievement Awards Program recognizes innovative county government programs, which are judged on:

- Innovation and Creativity
- Measurable results and effectiveness
- Enhanced level of citizen participation in, or the understanding of, government programs

The winning entry is:

WES Solids Handling Capacity Improvements Project

In the first months of the historic pandemic in 2020, Clackamas Water Environment Services (WES) was forced to develop innovative and unprecedented

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methods to educate stakeholders about a vital wastewater infrastructure project that required voter approval.

With in-person presentations not an option due to COVID-19 restrictions, WES still had to inform tens of thousands of stakeholders in Oregon City about the project desperately needed to serve the entire WES service area.

The project involved an outfall pipeline running from WES' wastewater treatment facility and under Jon Storm Park in Oregon City before reaching the Willamette River, where the outfall would discharge cleaned wastewater.

Because the pipeline would run under a city park (Jon Storm Park), Oregon City's charter required a vote of residents to authorize such construction.

Since the issue was a ballot measure, WES utilized innovative approaches while also complying with the Secretary of State's requirement that all language remain impartial and neutral to achieve "safe harbor."

WES had just a few months to develop and master new communications tools that were still largely unfamiliar to WES and the public to communicate with voters in one city about the desperately-needed project that would serve that city and all cities in the WES service area of nearly 200,000.

Utilizing its innovative, short-term communications strategy, WES successfully educated Oregon City residents and stakeholders about the importance of the Tri-City Outfall Project and how it was the only the only viable option to meet the entire region's wastewater treatment needs until 2080.

On Nov. 3, 2020, Oregon City voters overwhelmingly approved the project by a 73% - 27% margin.

Had voters rejected the measure, a possible alternative project would have cost at least tens of millions of dollars more but also faced a highly-uncertain outcome due to a number of geographical and logistical obstacles.

Failure to secure voter approval of the original plan was not an option. The outfall project is fully funded through WES' Capital Improvement Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the Board receive this presentation on the county's 2023 NACo award.

Respectfully submitted,



Sue Hildick, Director

Public and Government Affairs