

Press Release By Orange Water and Sewer Authority

Orange County, NC - Thanks to the efforts of Congressman David Price, Congress has approved a \$644,605 grant to the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) to help pay for a water reuse project that OWASA is developing in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The reuse system will provide non-drinking water to certain facilities such as chiller plant(s) where the University now uses OWASA drinking water for cooling tower make-up water.

It will enable the future reuse of highly treated ("reclaimed") water from OWASA's Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is on the southeast side of Chapel Hill, starting in 2007. In May, 2004, a three-year, \$50 million improvement project began at the Mason Farm plant that will in part enhance the treatment process to meet State standards for water reuse.

"As new residents are drawn to the Triangle and the many advantages it offers, we must work to ensure our water and wastewater treatment capacity keeps pace with population growth," said Price. "Leaders in Orange County are responding with innovative, environmentally-friendly and cost-effective solutions to these challenges, and I'm proud to help further those efforts."

"We deeply appreciate Congressman Price's support of the water reuse project and his work to secure this funding," said Mark Marcoplos, Chair of the OWASA Board of Directors.

"The reuse of highly treated wastewater will be a very important part of our community's strategy to meet long-term water needs in a more economical and sustainable manner. Reuse will help us cope with future droughts and meet our future water needs with our high quality, locally protected, and locally controlled reservoirs," he said.

Carolyn Elfland, the University's Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Services, said "The University is pleased to be a partner in this win-win project, which provides a drought-tolerant

source of water to meet Carolina's critical chilled water requirements and eliminates the need for capital improvement projects to expand the community's potable water system, a savings for every customer."

Background information

The University estimates that the water reuse system may initially reduce drinking water demand by about 0.6 million gallons a day, or about 7 percent of the community's average daily drinking water demand. In the long term, reclaimed water use could help meet more than 2.5 million gallons a day, or about 15 percent, of the community's water demand.

The reuse system will also reduce the discharge of nutrients from the Mason Farm plant to Morgan Creek, which flows into Jordan Lake. This will provide water quality benefits because nutrients encourage growth of algae in Jordan Lake.

The reuse system could also be extended in the future to serve additional locations outside the UNC main campus where and when it is feasible to do so. Because a reuse system requires the installation of a separate set of pipes, it is usually not cost-effective to extend reclaimed water service to existing residential developments. However, as many other communities around the country have found, it may be cost-effective to install reclaimed water lines in new development.

The planned reuse system will involve installation of a pumping station, storage tank and piping to carry the reclaimed water from the Mason Farm plant to the University campus. The first phase of the water reuse system is now estimated to cost about \$9.8 million, and will include about 14,000 feet of reclaimed water pipes.

Detailed design work and other engineering work for the reuse system will be funded from a \$1.866 million grant to OWASA in July, 2004 from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund. Together, the Federal and State grant funds will help cover about one-fourth of the initial cost to design and build the system.

OWASA and University representatives agreed in a letter of understanding in February, 2004 to

Congress Approves Grant For Triangle Water Reuse Plant

January 20, 2005

plan the reuse system, and have begun drafting a water reuse system contract. OWASA's construction, maintenance, operating, administrative and other costs of the reuse system will be fully covered from reclaimed water fees and charges to be paid by the University and any other future users of the system.