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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Treatment plant expansion serves growth, protects Sound

Work is under way on a project that will limit wastewater discharge into Puget Sound, stay ahead of anticipated environmental requirements and accommodate future growth in Pierce County.

All of that will be accomplished through a \$305 million project to expand and improve the Chambers Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in University Place.

"Just like our customers, we are serious about environmental protection and sustainability," said Brian Ziegler, Pierce County Public Works and Utilities director. "We are ensuring the future of Pierce County's economy by building new treatment capacity to respond to the growth already on its way."

Upgrades are designed to meet county growth needs through 2025 but will be built to accommodate future expansion scenarios through 2040. Without expansion, the plant would reach its treatment capacity by 2016.

All components of the existing wastewater treatment plant will be upgraded, some of which date to the early 1980s. Earth moving to prepare the site started in July 2010. Design work is underway, with construction expected to start in 2012.

The improvements will include:

- New treatment technology for enhanced nitrogen removal.
- Increased odor control.
- Expansion of the biosolids processing system that produces SoundGRO® fertilizer.
- Expanded disinfection capacity and new processing equipment.
- New laboratory, operations, maintenance and warehouse facilities.

Project funding comes from a combination of monthly sewer fees, connection charges and grants. A \$62 million bond issue, the first of three needed to finance the project, was authorized by the County Council in August 2010.

"Good financial practices have allowed us to keep our rates among the lowest in the region, even as we take these important steps to expand capacity and improve environmental protection," said Sewer Utility Manager Tim Ramsaur. "The regulatory agencies and organizations we work with recognize our commitment to improve the health of Puget Sound."

Pierce County's Sewer Utility provides wastewater management, collection and treatment services to about 252,000 customers that generate an average of 19 million gallons of wastewater per day. By 2020, the volume of wastewater is expected to reach 28 million gallons per day, increasing to 42 million by 2040.

The sewer system serves a 117-square-mile area that includes University Place, Lakewood, DuPont, Steilacoom and a portion of Tacoma. It also serves the unincorporated communities of Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, South Hill and Frederickson.

For its commitment to quality and environmental stewardship, the Sewer Utility received the 2008 Northwest Biosolids Management Award, the 2007 Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices, and multiple Department of Ecology Outstanding Performance awards for perfect compliance with state regulations.

For more information, visit www.piercecountywa.org/sewerexpansion.

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