



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development • Legislative and Public Affairs Staff
1400 Independence Ave SW • Room 4801-S • Washington, DC 20250-0705
Phone: (202) 720-4323 • Fax: (202) 690-4083 • TTY: (800) 877-8339 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

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Contact Kelly Clark 775-887-1222 x130

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND STOREY COUNTY ANNOUNCE \$7 MILLION TO REPLACE VIRGINIA CITY WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Virginia City, NV., Apr 19, 2013 --

@@USDA Rural Development and Storey County Announce \$7 million to Replace Virginia City Wastewater Treatment Plant

System Improvements Will Eliminate Pollution Threats to Historic 6-mile Canyon Watershed

(CARSON CITY—April 19, 2013) -- In celebration of Earth Day, USDA Rural Development (USDA RD) and Storey County today announced a \$7 million project to replace the wastewater treatment plant that serves the historic communities of Virginia City and Gold Hill. The funding will replace a system constructed in the 1970s with a larger and more efficient plant, eliminating the threat of watershed pollution during floods and providing service for years to come.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) remains focused on carrying out its mission, despite a time of significant budget uncertainty. Today's announcement is one part of the Department's efforts to strengthen the rural economy.

Special guests Congressman Mark Amodei and USDA RD Rural Utilities Service Deputy Administrator Jessica Zufolo made the funding announcement in Virginia City at the Fourth Ward School, along with Storey County Manager Pat Whitten and USDA RD State Director Sarah Adler.

"USDA has been protecting the environment by financing clean drinking water and wastewater treatment systems for more than 75 years; thus, it is a pleasure to be here today to witness an historic project in one of the west's most historic communities," said Zufolo. "On behalf of President Obama, I am here to carry the message that this administration expects federal funders to work with local governments to find win-win solutions for communities and the environment, and I can see that directive is being met here in Storey County."

"We are especially appreciative that the national allocation set aside for Earth Day investments allowed for the maximum grants on this project," said Nevada Rural Development State Director Sarah Adler. "I am also proud of my staff's effort for diligently working the final loan numbers through at a lower interest rate, thereby saving the project \$200,000."

USDA RD provided a \$3 million loan and a \$2.3 million grant from the Water and Environmental Program; an additional \$1.7 million grant from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was used for preliminary environmental and engineering design costs.

The Nevada announcement is one of 43 water and wastewater projects in 32 states that USDA has funded this year in honor of Earth Day. As a result, more than \$145 million will be invested across the country in essential water and wastewater treatment systems to improve water quality, protect groundwater and provide a safe and healthy environment for rural Americans.

One significant aspect of this project has been USDA RD, the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers working together to create a programmatic agreement that allows the agencies to complete the environmental review process more efficiently and ensures that each agency's environmental protection regulations are met. This will save the community unnecessary delays during pre-construction.

Pat Whitten, the Storey County manager, called the wastewater treatment plant a "very positive move forward for the region."

"Not only will this plant handle our community needs now, it provides support for economic development into the future for both our tourism economy and the growing industrial complex," said Whitten.

The wastewater treatment plant is phase one of a number of planned projects, which in the future will include sewer line extensions. A request for proposals on the project may be released as early as September, with construction estimated to begin in March, resulting in 40 temporary jobs.

Following the funding announcement, USDA RD and Nevada Rural Water Association staff provided an educational program on watershed protection at Hugh Gallagher Elementary School in Virginia City.

Forty-eight 4th and 5th grade students learned about the importance of protecting their watershed.

Earth Day is observed annually on April 22 to raise awareness about the role each person can play to protect vital natural resources and safeguard the environment. Since the first Earth Day celebration in 1970, organized through the efforts of the late Wisconsin Senator and conservationist Gaylord Nelson, the event

has expanded to include participation by citizens and governments in more than 195 countries.

USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as USDA implements sequestration – the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act. USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more than \$700 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as little disruption as possible.