

For Immediate Release  
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SILOAM SPRINGS—The City of Siloam Springs held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new addition to the wastewater treatment plant Wednesday.

Water/Wastewater Director Trevor Bowman opened the ceremony by welcoming the crowd and sharing with them how pleased the City is to have this project underway. Bowman thanked everyone for attending, including representatives from Senators Pryor and Lincoln's office and Representative Boozman's office. Local industries, the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission, the Arkansas Natural Resource Commission, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and John Brown University were also represented.

Former Siloam Springs Mayor M.L. "Moose" Van Poucke, who was instrumental in raising community support for the project, spoke at the ceremony. He praised the citizens of Siloam Springs for passing the bond issue that allowed the City to make the improvements.

"I am extremely proud of the people of Siloam Springs for coming along and putting their money where their mouth is, letting us build this facility," Van Poucke said.

He expressed disappointment that, after many years of lobbying for state and federal funds, the project fell \$5 million short of what was needed to install membrane bioreactor technology (MBR). He said the City conducted a six month trial of MBR technology, during the worst time of the year for a wastewater trial, and the results showed that the City could in fact remove phosphorus to levels below .037 mg/L the Environmental Protection Agency may require in 2012. The plant is designed so that MBR technology can be added at a later date.

"Now all we need from the stimulus package is \$5 million," Van Poucke said, commenting that if the money is available, City Administrator David Cameron would go after it. "We need it so we can be a good citizen to Oklahoma."

Ed Fite, of the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission and a founding member of Save The Illinois River, also spoke, telling the story of how he and Van Poucke sat down over an ice cream cone to come up with a solution to Oklahoma and Arkansas' wastewater problem. He expressed disappointment that a final solution has yet to be implemented.

"I'm sorry we didn't get the \$5 million. I'm hoping this is the beginning of something that will connect the two states, where we can work hand-in-hand on a watershed agreement and balance quality of life with the common good," Fite said.

Work began on the wastewater treatment plant expansion on Feb. 27. Upon completion, the plant capacity will be increased approximately 25 percent, from 4.4 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) to 5.5 MGD, and will reduce phosphorus levels in the discharge from an average of 1.9 mg/l over the last twelve months to an estimated average of 0.5 mg/l.