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Washington County gets grants for new treatment system

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A Washington County subdivision is scheduled to receive a new sewage collection system and a re-circulating sand filter treatment plant, financed in part with a recent \$30,000 USDA Rural Development grant.

Washington County's Public Water Supply District #4 recently was awarded the \$30,000 as part of the USDA's Rural Development funding initiative. The initiative is designed to improve the economy and quality of life in rural communities by supporting and providing government loans and grants.

The sewer project will replace individual septic system for 114 homes in Holiday Shores, a subdivision built around an old fishing lake in Washington County, southwest of Bismarck, explained John Steffen, secretary for the water district.

The additional money was needed because contract bids came in higher than expected.

There are 900 lots around or near the lake, but most are vacant or contain only small hunting/fishing shacks, Steffen explained.

The grant money will augment funds already received for the nearly \$2 million project. Previous funding included \$638,000 in grants and a \$438,000 loan from USDA Rural Development. Additional money came from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and a Missouri Community Development Block Grant.

"Contracts will be awarded Friday and construction should begin in a few weeks," Steffen said. "The project should be completed by fall."

The state's Rural Development main office typically allows local U.S. legislators to announce grant recipients. U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill made this grant announcement.

"Missouri's families should not have to worry about whether their drinking water is safe," McCaskill said. "I'm pleased this federal funding will help Washington County improve their sewage collection and processing facilities and ensure clean water for families in rural areas."

McCaskill said she believes federal grants are a positive alternative to earmarks, which in the past have been authorized during a "secretive process with little accountability."

Competitive federal grants bring federal assistance to Missouri in an honest and fiscally

responsible manner, she added.

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