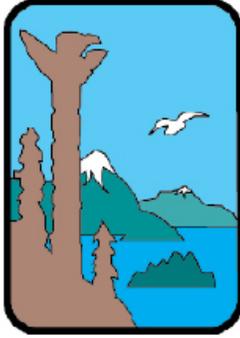


ALASKA
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Drinking water and wastewater systems benefit from nearly \$43 million in recovery funds

Construction underway in Mat-su and Kenai; work on others set to start

(Juneau, Alaska) – In an effort that stands to create jobs, invigorate local economies and protect the environment, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is distributing \$42.9 million to local governments to finance improvements to wastewater and drinking water projects. The Recovery Act funds are being dispensed as low interest loans, some with substantial subsidies requiring ten percent or less of the original loan to be paid back.

DEC has started to distribute funds and some “shovel-ready” projects are underway. Construction has begun on a \$2.5 million water main replacement in Palmer and a \$200,000 reservoir, pumping and distribution system upgrade at Nikishka Bay. These are among more than four dozen drinking water and sanitation projects to be financed statewide over the next five months. Sitka, Petersburg, Haines, Homer, Dillingham, Wasilla, North Pole and Fairbanks are among those hosting others.

“These projects will create jobs, improve aging water infrastructure and protect our health,” said DEC Commissioner Larry Hartig. “They will build stronger communities through infrastructure that ensures safe drinking water and proper sanitation for residents.”

“The projects are the result of the combined efforts of DEC, Alaska communities with shovel ready plans, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” said DEC Water Division Director Lynn Kent.

At least 20 percent of developments will promote green practices such as water and energy efficiencies. That includes the planning, design and construction of a potential project to partially close a Fairbanks North Star Borough solid waste landfill. Some \$2.5 million is slated to fund a system to collect landfill gas, convert it to electricity and put it into the borough’s energy grid. The money will also go toward a final closure cover and a storm water drainage system.

“We’re putting these funds to use quickly since many of the communities that will benefit have been waiting for money to become available,” said DEC Program Manager Bill Griffith. He says the projects will create at least 200 jobs across the state.



DEC begins to distribute nearly \$43 million in recovery funds for drinking water and wastewater systems: Upgrading a reservoir, pumping and distribution system at Nikishka Bay.

More photos available upon request.