

PES News:

Regional Grease Abatement Efforts

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In December 2007 PES article in the TWUA journal, we discussed various internal partnerships that should be considered when conducting a Grease Abatement program in your city or municipality. This month we would like to discuss one of the partnerships that may serve as a model with local entities in your area.

FOG (Fats, Oils & Grease) from residents in one city can cause serious problems in another city's pipes or treatment plant. We all realize that FOG issues do not stop at the city limits. The Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area is comprised of 12 counties and over 6 million people and is the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States. This creates a unique wastewater treatment situation with many shared flow situations.

Recently the cities of Arlington, Dallas, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Irving and the Trinity River Authority agreed to pool resources to combat FOG. These groups along with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) have formed the North Texas Grease Abatement Council (NTGAC). The purpose of this enterprise is to work collectively to educate and inform the public in the North Texas area about grease abatement.

One of the tools utilized to accomplish our goal will be a cooperative purchase program which will help magnify the educational efforts by combining the resources of the participating cities. Homeowners and apartments will be targeted along with restaurants and other business establishments that contribute to grease related stoppages in the sewer system. NCTCOG's role in the group will be to coordinate meetings, assist with outreach and provide help with managing finances.

Each contributing member city knows their dollars can only go so far and many utility operators do not know the most effective way to spend their limited funds for successful outreach.

By forming a council, we share ideas, media material, and pool our resources and talents. The NTGAC has developed a logo and is building a website, www.ceasethegreasentx.com featuring all the member cities. Presently, we are working on rebranding a public service announcement from the City of Irving with the NTGAC logo for play on cable and the internet.

Membership is open to all programs interested in grease abatement and is currently comprised of organizations that have joined the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's SSO Initiative. We anticipate that each city will contribute funds based on its population and these funds will not only be used on a media campaign but other joint outreach activities. Due to the close proximity of the cities in DFW, we can easily reach a large audience across boundaries with radio, cable, internet and billboard advertisements.

Through this cooperative effort, we are able to use existing materials but with one unifying logo and message - Cease

the Grease. Based on current experience, we are encouraging all member cities to target the holiday season (November and December) as the best time to reach our audiences. Currently, the City of Dallas is conducting its own media campaign with the help of a public relations company. The company has become familiar with water quality issues and can use their leverage in media buying to obtain the best rates for the combined resources of the NTGAC. Also, Dallas will be evaluating their media campaign soon and the NTGAC will be able to use only the most effective methods in their 2008 campaign to reach each target audience.

If you are faced with a FOG problem, you are not alone. Seek out others who have the same problem and band together. Ask those who are dealing with the same issues for assistance and resources. Many municipalities know the importance of reducing SSOs and are willing to share what they have done and even their creative material. Remember, FOG does not stop at the city line so we all have to work together to Cease the Grease. ♠

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