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Press Release

Arkansas City launches stormwater pollution prevention effort

Public Works Department starting campaign this month to raise awareness

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (December 11, 2015) — The City of Arkansas City is beginning an effort this month to raise citizen awareness of the dangers of stormwater pollution and help to prevent it entirely.

This stormwater pollution prevention campaign is being directed by the Public Works Department.

The campaign will consist of a mailer in residents' utility bills, posts on Facebook and other social media, and decals affixed to stormwater release outlets to warn citizens of the dangers of dumping.

The blue and green decals warn "No Dumping — Drains to River" and urge residents to "Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution." Volunteers are requested to help to distribute the decals.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Assistant Public Works Director Mike Crandall at (620) 441-4488 or mcrandall@arkansascityks.gov.

Dangers of stormwater pollution

Stormwater pollution can have a multitude of undesirable and detrimental effects on the ecosystem.

For instance, sediment in water reduces the ability for light to penetrate it, which can hinder aquatic plants from properly using photosynthesis.

Yard waste and other organic materials in stormwater can produce bacteria that use up the oxygen in the water, thus harming or killing aquatic animals.

Most important, stormwater eventually drains into waterways and bacteria produced by waste poses a threat to human health for downstream communities that draw their drinking water from those rivers.

For immediate release

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“Please help to prevent the polluting of our rivers by not dumping chemicals, yard waste or other pollutants into the storm drain system,” Crandall said.

Common stormwater pollutants include:

- Antifreeze;
- Cooking grease;
- Detergent;
- Home improvement waste, such as concrete, mortar, etc.
- Motor oil;
- Oil filters;
- Paint;
- Pesticides and fertilizers;
- Pet waste;
- Solvents and degreasers;
- Trash and debris;
- Yard waste, especially leaves, grass, and mulch.

About Arkansas City’s stormwater system

Stormwater is rainwater or snowmelt that does not soak into the ground or evaporate following a storm. Instead, it runs off surfaces such as roofs, lawns, paved streets and parking lots.

Stormwater can become polluted by litter, dirt, bacteria, chemicals and oils that it picks up along its journey. When polluted stormwater reaches a water body, it can have a harmful impact on the plants and animals in and around the water. It also can affect people who swim or fish in the water.

The City’s stormwater utility, which is part of the Public Works Department’s Public Services Division, is responsible for funding the operation, management, construction and maintenance of stormwater facilities. This utility generates its revenue through user fees.

The fees are used to maintain and upgrade drainage facilities within the City, as well as funding state and federal mandates regarding stormwater facility reviews, inspections, and the erosion and sediment control program that relates to new construction.

Residential stormwater fees are \$3 per month and commercial fees are \$6 per month.

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The City's stormwater management system is a complicated mixture of closed-pipe systems — including 15.5 miles of underground storm sewer pipes, plus stormwater inlets and drains — and open-channel flow structures such as gutters, box canals and earth ditches.

It also consists of several stormwater detention facilities throughout the City, especially in areas of new construction or development.

For more information, visit www.ksstormwater.com, www3.epa.gov or www.stormwatercoalition.org.

What can citizens do about stormwater pollution?

- Don't litter or dump trash illegally.
- Never dump oils or chemicals into catch basins.
- Check vehicles for leaks that might be running onto the pavement.
- Use non-toxic, phosphate-free, biodegradable cleaners when washing cars and boats, or go to a car wash.
- Avoid using chemicals on lawns.
- Plant bare and graded areas to reduce erosion.
- Clean up after pets.
- Check plumbing systems and/or septic tanks to ensure they are not leaking or discharging into storm drains.
- Use water-based paints. Look for products labeled "latex" or "cleans with water."
- Water lawns early in the morning. Sprinklers should be left on long enough to allow water to soak in, but not run off.
- Never dispose of cement washout or concrete dust into driveways, streets, gutters, or storm drains.
- Educate yourself and your family on additional tips for stormwater pollution prevention.