Using Signage to Improve Public Awareness of the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Project Public Notification Requirements

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is implementing a nationwide initiative focused on enhancing public awareness of EPA financial assistance. Another goal of this initiative is to increase public awareness regarding improvements that municipalities make as a result of the SRF loan programs. Beginning October 1, 2015, all loan recipients in Illinois will be required to post a sign at the project site or make an equivalent public notification.

In order to comply with the new requirements, IEPA recommends loan recipients use one of the options described below. When selecting an option, please remember the goal is to communicate to the largest audience possible about the positive role that SRF funding is having on the community. This may include communicating in multiple languages. If a municipality has a significant number of non-English speaking citizens, notice should be made in the appropriate language(s). Each project and community is unique so the choice of communication method, information to include, graphics, and languages must be made locally.

Public notification should be issued after a construction contract is awarded for the project. The form located at the end of this document will then be submitted to IEPA along with supporting documentation as confirmation that the requirements have been met. No matter which method is chosen, costs related to the public notification are eligible for loan funding. A cost estimate may be submitted prior to receiving a loan agreement or it may be paid from loan contingency.

Option 1: Local Newspaper or Newsletter

Loan recipients may choose to publish in a local newspaper or newsletter as an effective way to reach the most area residents. If this option is chosen, there are a set of guidelines that must be included in the public notice or article.

Newspaper public notice or newsletter article must include the following:

- Name of the facility, project, and community served;
- The loan program that is being used for the project;
- The project is being funded either wholly or partially by the Agency;
- Brief description of project; and
- Brief listing of benefits project will bring to the community.

Public Notice
New Main Street Elevated Storage Tank in Austen

The City of Austen, Illinois recently constructed a new 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank. The new tank replaces an undersized, antiquated, 80-year old tank on Main Street. Funding for this project was provided by a low interest loan from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Public Water Supply Loan Program (PWSLP). The PWSLP is funded by both state and federal sources. The $1,500,000 loan has an interest rate of 1.90% and will be repaid over 20 years. The new tank will meet the recommended water storage standards based on our water usage. For more information contact the Austen Water Department.

Option 2: Insert in Water and/or Sewer Bill

Any utility or municipality that sends a water or sewer bill has the option to include a single page insert attached to the bill that describes the project that is being constructed. This approach would effectively publicize the project to those individuals directly benefiting from it. Communities choosing this option will need to have the following included in their insert:

- Name of facility, project, and community served;
- The loan program that is being used for the project;
- The project is being funded either wholly or partially by the Agency;
- Brief description of project; and
- Brief listing of benefits project will bring to the community.

Attention Customers

You may have noticed some construction activity around our City! We are currently making improvements to the Austenburg Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 100 Perry Drive. Improvements include the installation of several new pumps and clarifiers. These improvements are being made so that we can continue to treat Austenburg's wastewater and maintain the quality of the water that is discharged into the Illinois River. Funding for this project was provided by a low interest loan from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Water Pollution Control Loan Program (WPCLP). The WPCLP is funded by both state and federal sources. The $10,500,000 loan has an interest rate of 1.85% and will be repaid over 20 years. For more information, contact Mr. Waterman at the Austenburg Water & Sewer Department.

Option 3: Online

The online approach may be the most cost-effective approach of informing residents. If the online approach is used, the information should be posted on a reliable source which is well-known by the community such as the municipality's own website. If this option is selected, the following must be posted on a website for the duration of the construction activity:

- Name of facility, project, and community served;
- The loan program that is being used for the project;
- The project is being funded either wholly or partially by the Agency;
- Brief description of project; and
- Brief listing of benefits project will bring to the community.

Below is sample language that may be used in any of the above options

Construction of [**insert brief description of upgrades**] to the [**name of facility, project location**] were financed by the [**Clean Water or Drinking Water**] State Revolving Fund (SRF). The SRF program is administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and receives a portion of its money to fund these types of projects from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This project includes [**briefly describe project**]. Once complete, it will improve water quality for area residents and businesses in [**city, or watershed**] by [**details of benefits**]. SRF programs operate in each state to provide communities the resources necessary to build, maintain, and improve the infrastructure that protects one of our most valuable resources: water.

Option 4 Standard Signage

This is the recommended option for large projects that involve significant expansion or construction of a new facility. This option should only be selected if the sign is placed by a major road or project site where it will be visible to large number of residents. Communities selecting this option will need to include the following requirements on the sign:

- The name of the facility, project, and community served;
- Project cost;
- State agency and loan program that was used;
- The IEPA and USEPA logos (see attached).

Loan recipients are required to comply with the sign specifications provided by the EPA Office of Public Affairs (OPA). Please only use these files to meet your SRF signage requirements. All other uses are not permitted. USEPA's logo may only be used on a sign.

If the USEPA logo is displayed along with logos of other participating entities, the USEPA logo must **not** be displayed in a manner that implies that USEPA itself is conducting the project. Instead the USEPA logo must be accompanied with a statement indicating that the recipient received financial assistance for the project.

Further information about USEPA's logo specifications is available at:
http://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-logo-seal-specifications-signage-produce-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients.

If you have general questions about the new requirements, please call IEPA's Infrastructure Financial Assistance Section at 217-782-2027.