



Where Life is Sweet

Mayor and Members of the City Council
STAFF REPORT
For the Meeting of October 9, 2023

Title/Subject

Recognizing the dedicated men and women in the Recycled Water Department for their role in protecting the public health, economy, and environment.

Summary and Background

The City of Hermiston's Recycled Water Department performs a critical function in protecting public health and the environment while providing a bedrock service which supports all aspects of our growing local and regional economy. For such an important service, we are proud of the fact that because of the hard work of our staff, most people never have to think twice about this system.

This system collects all household, commercial, and industrial waste which mixes with water and goes down the drain anywhere within the city. From there, that waste travels through more than 77 miles of publicly maintained sewer main spread across 37 basins serving more than 3,300 acres and more than 20,000 residents and businesses. Our staff works daily to ensure that all of the fats, oils, greases, and other inappropriate items which make their way in to the system, like tree roots, don't cause blockages which could back up in to homes, businesses, streets, or local streams.

In addition to cleaning and maintaining lines, our staff works every day to maintain the nine lift stations spread throughout the community. These crucial pumps and motors require constant attention to move the waste through the collection system to the Recycled Water Treatment Plant.

Once the waste reaches the treatment plant, we are proud of the fact that our staff performs a still highly unique, complex, and important process to transform the more than 1.2 million gallons which come to it every day from "waste water," which could otherwise cause harm to people, plants, animals, and property who may come in to contact with it, in to "Recycled Water." Our innovative treatment process requires the focus of our highly skilled staff in performing dozens of chemical, biological, and mechanical treatment functions which results in "Class-A" recycled water which is then beneficially supplied to local irrigators to support our agricultural economy in the summer time, and discharged to the Umatilla River in the wintertime in a form clean enough for human consumption.

Our staff have always performed these functions day in and day out, rain or shine, whether it's 118 degrees, or minus 18 degrees, and now even through a global pandemic. Our operators were among 40 wastewater utilities across Oregon to partner with the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon State University to collect more than 15,000 influent wastewater samples throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

We want to recognize and thank:

- Ron Bert, Lab Technician
- Robert Curry, Operator
- Donald Dutcher, Chief Operator
- James Hankinson III, Operator
- Roberto Herrera, Operator
- Donna Landreth-Phillips, General Clerical
- Rachel Muniz, Operator
- Jesus "Chuy" Perches, Operator
- Kent Schnell, Operator
- Bill Schmittle, Superintendent
- Tom Wiley, Operator

Tie-In to Council Goals

Focus Area- Wellness: a Healthy Community

Fiscal Information

N/a

Alternatives and Recommendation

Alternatives

Recommended Action/Motion

Submitted By:

Mark Morgan, Assistant City Manager