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**ELECTRIC
DISTRICT HEAT
WATER
WASTEWATER
SOLID WASTE**

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For immediate release

BPU Wastewater Collection Crews to Dye-Test Downspouts

Jamestown Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Wastewater Collection crews will be inspecting the sanitary sewer system over the next several months by dye-testing downspouts in an effort to find and remove "illegal" connections to the sanitary sewer system.

Removal of illegal connections is necessary to prevent the back-up of sewers into homes and buildings, especially during heavy rain storms.

A sanitary sewer is a pipe located in the City right-of-way that is designed solely to transport wastewater from sanitary fixtures in your home or business to the BPU Wastewater Treatment Plant. The term "wastewater" applies to water going down a sink, toilet, tub or other drain located inside the house or business facility. Sanitary sewers are operated and maintained by the BPU.

A storm sewer differs from a sanitary sewer in that the storm sewer pipe located in the City right-of-way is designed to carry storm-related water run-off. Storm sewers are normally larger than sanitary sewers because they are designed to carry much larger flows. Storm sewers are owned, operated and maintained by the City of Jamestown Department of Public Works.

An illegal connection to the sanitary sewer is one that permits extraneous storm-related water (water from sources other than sanitary fixtures) to enter the *sanitary* sewer system. The extraneous storm-related water is water that should be going to the storm sewer or allowed to soak into the ground without entering the sanitary sewer.

Illegal connections include roof downspouts, sump pumps and footing/foundation drains tied to the house sanitary sewer lines. Storm run-off should be diverted to storm sewers, front or back yards or ground drainage ditches.

The sanitary sewers have been designed to transfer sanitary waste only. Extraneous storm water flow added to the normal sanitary flow can exceed the capacity of the sanitary sewer. Reducing the extraneous flow will help to reduce sewer back-ups.

To locate illegal connections in the BPU system, crews will begin dye-testing residential houses and commercial building downspouts in high-flow areas. Should the crews discover an illegal connection during the dye testing of downspouts, the property owner will receive a letter advising of the situation and giving the homeowner/business owner a period of time in which to correct the problem.

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“You may not have basement flooding due to surcharged sewers,” says Deputy General Manager for Water Resources Michael Saar, “but if your plumbing pumps or drains storm-related water into the sanitary sewer, you may well be causing flooding in your neighbor’s basement.”

In response to the regulations of the Department of Environmental Conservation, local governments have adopted ordinances or codes prohibiting the intrusion of extraneous storm-related water into sanitary sewers. This situation is not unique to Jamestown, according to Saar.

Dye testing is the first step in identifying illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system. All illegal connections must be identified and removed.