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News Release

For Immediate Release

Flooding poses danger and challenges to infrastructure



As multiple rounds of heavy rainfall are expected through tonight, citizens are reminded of dangerous flash flooding potential in area low water crossings, small streams, and low lying areas. Multiple thunderstorm complexes are expected to produce excessive rainfall across extreme southeastern Kansas and the Missouri Ozarks through tonight.

It was a flood in September 1993 that raised the need for improved stormwater management to the forefront of community planning.

Since the 1993 flood, the City of Springfield has invested \$71.8 million in stormwater capital improvement projects to address high priority flooding problems and has also invested over \$10 million in voluntary buyout of flood-prone properties to stop the cycle of repeated flooding.

Stormwater management has evolved to include water quality protection as well due to citizen support for water quality and federal and state regulations. The City has invested approximately \$400,000 annually over the past 10 years on programs to protect water quality.

Infrastructure repair and replacement is the other important piece of stormwater management. The stormwater drainage system is approximately 675 miles in length and is composed of underground pipes and box culverts as well as grass and concrete open channels.

This system does not drain to a treatment plant like the sanitary sewer system does, it drains into local streams, rivers, and lakes. This is why water quality protection is important. Approximately 25% of this system is more than 50 years old, with another 25% between 20-50 years old.

Citizens can report flooding issues or water quality issues by calling the City at 864-1011.

Water quality issues to look for include:

- Dumping of motor oil, chemicals, trash, or yardwaste
- Commercially generated wash waters (i.e. washing of vehicles, equipment, tools, structures, or from services such as carpet cleaning)
- Improper outdoor storage of chemicals and other materials that can pollute the ground or stormwater runoff
- Dirt from construction sites, or other erosion problems
- Drainage ways or waterways with an unusual appearance or odor

Looking to the Future

A 30-member citizen task force was recently convened to study the City and Greene County needs in these three areas of stormwater management – flood risk & damage reduction, water quality protection, and maintaining infrastructure investment. The group narrowed recommendations for what the City and County should consider paying for in the future, and how. The group is anticipated to present recommendations to the City and County in the coming weeks.

The task force is focused on three major components of stormwater – water quality/unfunded mandates, minimizing flood risk and replacing aging infrastructure.

Water Quality/Unfunded Mandates: Current annual operating costs for the City and County to meet federal and state regulations are approximately \$1.5 million and are expected to steadily increase to at least \$2.8 million by fiscal year 2020.

Flood Risk Reduction: Approximately \$6 million per year is needed for capital projects to allow the City and County to mitigate local flooding.

Infrastructure Repair/Replacement: The task force recommends that total annual reinvestment should be \$2.5 million annually, which would place the City and County on a 200-year replacement cycle for the \$500 million in existing infrastructure.

The stormwater funding previously provided to the City and County expired with the Parks Tax in June, 2012. Since that time, neither the City nor the County has a dedicated funding source to address stormwater expenses in any of these three categories.

"Stormwater management and pollution prevention is a public obligation of intrinsic value to every citizen. The task force is working to recommend a funding model for the City and County's

consideration that strives for a practical balance between impractical and the ideal to meet this important obligation," said Dan Hoy, task force co-chair.

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