

City of Marseilles

209 Lincoln Street

Marseilles, IL 61341

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Levee Improvements Pay Quick Dividends for Marseilles

May 20, 2020 – Even as the raging flood waters of the Illinois River quickly surrounded the City of Marseilles' North Wastewater Treatment Facility early this week, an eerie calm fell upon the staff at the City's main treatment facility.

The near record flood event would have been cause for panic and action for the staff and council in the small riverfront community in years past, but thanks to a \$1.6 million Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant from FEMA, there was reason for optimism as the Illinois River jumped its banks.

"Pump mobilization and a call for volunteers to lend a hand in sandbagging the nearly 1,600' perimeter of levee would have been in full force in the past," said Wastewater Superintendent Jason Rix. "Luckily, the Levee Improvement Project was completed last fall, and everything was in place to combat the near record flood level."

In the past, City staff and a wide range of volunteers, from residents, to EMS personnel, to inmates within the Illinois Department of Corrections have been called upon to place approximately 3,000 sandbags along the levee of the treatment facility as a flood protection measure.

Additionally, 30-year old, portable-gas powered pumps were also utilized to pump effluent, that would normally flow to the river by gravity, over the earthen levee. The pumps and river level needed to be monitored around the clock, so a flood event occurring in the spring would

usually guarantee budgeted line items such overtime pay and fuel costs behind the eight-ball for the remainder of the fiscal year.

“During the May 2019 flood our staff put in 85 hours of overtime and the pumps consumed over 630 gallons of fuel. In total, looking at overtime and fuel, the event cost the City – just at a department level – in excess of \$7,000,” Rix said. “With the new floodwall and the addition of an automated pumping system, we’ve only incurred 8 hours of overtime and fuel consumption was non-factor.”

By providing protection from inundation to the City’s North Wastewater Treatment Facility, the Levee Improvement Project not only provides protection to the multimillion-dollar facility but protects the assets of residents within the community.

“If the plant were to take on water from an event like the on this, the financial impact would be immeasurable,” added Rix. “Basements throughout town would be backed-up with sewage, and our facility would not be fully operational for weeks, if not months. Couple that with the environmental impact of untreated waste flowing into our creeks and streams, and the impact could be very damaging to the area.”

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