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Western Economic Diversification Canada
Ministry of Community Services
Ministry of Economic Development

NEW FUNDING SUPPORTS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN OKANAGAN

OSOYOOS – Canada’s New Government and the Province of British Columbia are providing more than \$4.5 million to enable the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen to connect over 120 rural properties to the Town of Osoyoos’ sewage treatment plant.

The Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, on behalf of the Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen’s Privy Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and Minister of Western Economic Diversification; and Bill Barisoff, MLA for Penticton-Okanagan Valley, on behalf of Community Services Minister Ida Chong; announced the funding from the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF).

“This initiative will provide the community of Osoyoos and surrounding area with an improved sanitary sewage system while helping protect Osoyoos Lake water,” said Day. “Through partnership and collaboration, the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund is helping build healthy, clean and prosperous communities.”

The new sewer infrastructure will help to eliminate groundwater contamination and reduce the environmental impacts on the water quality of Osoyoos Lake, which is the primary water source for the community. This project is conditionally approved pending the completion of an environmental assessment.

“When it comes to our environment and our water quality it’s critical that all levels of government work proactively and not reactively to find solutions,” said Barisoff. “I am pleased that all levels of government have come together and with this funding we will enhance and protect our valuable Lake Osoyoos water basin from the threat of failing septic systems.”

Under the initial CBCMRIF agreement signed in June 2006, the federal and provincial governments each committed \$51 million to the fund, with participating local governments expected to match this amount. This year, Canada’s New Government and the Province of B.C. have each provided an additional \$23.5 million to the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund as part of their commitment to help smaller communities meet their pressing infrastructure needs. This additional funding brings the total federal and provincial investment and matching local government contribution in CBCMRIF projects to over \$220 million.

The majority of the CBCMRIF funding is targeted towards communities of fewer than 250,000 people and at least 60 per cent of the funding will assist with “green projects” such as drinking water supply, treatment and distribution needs as well as wastewater and energy efficiency projects. The remaining funds will be dedicated to other projects like tourism, recreation and other infrastructure.

More details on the program are available through the Canada-British Columbia Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund website, at www.canadabcmrif.ca.

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