



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Sewer Overflow Tanks stop overflows into Lake Superior

BY: Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator

Sewer Overflow Tanks stop overflows into Lake Superior

[Duluth, MN – The City of Duluth completed the 8 million gallon Lake Place sanitary sewer overflow tank in January, and just in the nick of time. Yesterday’s 3 plus inches hit the Northland hard causing flooding on some streets and raging creeks. Despite the heavy rains which resulted in wet basements and sump pumps working overtime, Lake Superior was spared contact with any sewage overflow thanks to the City’s strategic investments.

The City’s five sanitary sewer overflow tanks and basins were working in full force capturing over 7.8 million gallons of overflow yesterday which is being pumped to WLSSD for treatment. None of it reached Lake Superior and there were no sewer overflows identified in the city elsewhere.

"We should celebrate the fact that not a single gallon of untreated sewage entered Lake Superior in the past week. Just a few years ago, a storm like we had this week would have sent millions of gallons of sewage pouring into the Lake," said Mayor Don Ness. "Our community has stepped up and made the necessary investments to protect Lake Superior. This is an accomplishment that was not easy to come by, but we should all be proud of our stewardship of the greatest of the Great Lakes."

The City has been aggressively working to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows in accordance with a consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The city is well ahead of the 2016 schedule with its plan to stop inflow and infiltration at the source through lateral line replacements, sump pump installations, capital infrastructure projects, and taking the added step of lining sewer mains.

Lining sewer mains provides additional benefits towards the greater cause. The Public Works & Utilities Department recently applied for and scored well enough to get priority consideration for a Public Facilities Authority grant totaling \$2.8 million to line 60,000 feet of sewer line in the West Duluth/Lincoln Park neighborhood. Lining sewer mains through a process called “cured in place pipe” helps seal off small cracks in a main that could potentially cause greater financial and environmental damage if left to persist. Lining sewer mains is an economical and proactive approach with good results. To date, the city has lined approximately 70,000 feet of sewer main.

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