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PRESS RELEASE

City of Akron Press Release

From the desk of Ellen Lander Nischt, Press Secretary

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Ohio Water Environment Association Recognizes Akron AWR! Program – commended for excellence in engineering and community outreach

Akron, Ohio, September 21, 2018 – The Ohio Water Environment Association (OWEA) awarded the City of Akron the 2018 Engineering Excellence Award and the 2018 Facility Image Award at the recent One Water Conference in Columbus. The Akron Water Reclamation Facility's (WRF) Step Feed Phase 1 project won the Engineering Excellence Award. The Akron Waterways Renewed! (AWR!) Public Outreach Program was presented the OWEA's 2018 Facility Image award for their efforts to educate the public about the AWR! Program.

The Step Feed Phase 1 project is one of the City's critical Long Term Control Plan projects required in the Akron Consent Decree to maximize WRF's biological secondary treated flows utilizing the Step Feed process along with final clarification improvements. This project increased the secondary treatment process and served as a pilot project for the Step Feed Phase 2 project currently under construction. The success of these two projects will significantly reduce the size and cost of the upcoming Phase 3 project to provide full biological treatment of all flow entering the facility. Additionally, the team introduced energy efficient turbo blowers that have resulted in a savings of \$16,500 per month.

At a time that the City of Akron is in the middle of a costly and extensive program to control overflows from combined sewers, make wet weather improvements at the Water Reclamation facility, and make improvements throughout their collections system, the AWR! Public Outreach program has been invaluable. The AWR! program outreach includes a variety of highly-publicized elements, including community events and outreach, a rain barrel program, public trolley tours, special events, and much more. "Being recognized by the Ohio Water Environmental Association is an honor and testament to our commitments

to relationship building, cost savings, and transparency to the public,” said Mayor Dan Horrigan.

The public outreach in 2017 included 360 attendees at the Blue Heron Homecoming, over 2,000 people at the Rosie Digs Akron tunnel project event, 1,800 participants in the AWR! Trolley Tours (including over 300 students), 197 people attending Rain Barrel Workshops (receiving free barrels) and 43 high school students participating in the All Akron Student Engineering program (AASEP).

The effective communications strategy has resulted in increased engagement. In 2018 so far, there were more than 1,000 visitors at the Blue Heron Homecoming, 1,000 people at Rosie’s breakthrough event, approximately 1,500 Trolley Tour participants, 500 free rain barrels distributed, and 39 AASEP students. The public outreach also included numerous public meetings, City Ward meetings, presentations to community groups and organizations, newsletters, social media activities, Eco the Mascot events, parades, and specific project events.

“I think it is clear the City’s team is committed to optimizing our projects and properly informing the public, and I want to personally congratulate all those involved and thank them for their dedication to Akron and our residents,” Horrigan said. The Akron Engineering Bureau staff, Water Reclamation Facility staff, design consultant ARCADIS/CH2MHill, general contractor Great Lakes Construction, construction manager HR Gray and the AWR! Public Outreach team, including G. Stephens, Inc., are all involved in the efforts.

To learn more about AWR!’s Public Outreach Program, visit.
www.akronwaterwaysrenewed.com.

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