

“BLUE HERON HOMECOMING” SHOWCASES AKRON’S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Science of Sewage Treatment Is Part Of Family Discovery Day

City of Akron Press Release

From the desk of Stephanie York

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The City of Akron is inviting families to discover how they can contribute to cleaner waterways in Akron through cost-effective, environmentally - conscious wastewater treatment that protects public health while providing water resources for residents.

The “Blue Heron Homecoming” is a day-long Environmental Festival and Open House, Saturday, May 9, at Akron’s Water Reclamation facility on Akron-Peninsula Road in the Cuyahoga Valley.

The event celebrates the accomplishments of Akron’s wastewater treatment plant and the flock of blue herons that for more than a decade has turned the city property into a rookery – a breeding place for heron families.

“Akron has been honored by national organizations for its progressive initiatives in the treatment of wastewater,” says Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic. “Cities from around the world have come to Akron to try and duplicate our innovative methods that make for a cleaner environment. Since 1987, Akron has spent over \$300 million to improve its sewer system including upgrades to its wastewater treatment plant.”

The Open House and Blue Heron Homecoming takes place from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

The program for the day includes:

- Hands-on environmental science demonstrations and activities for children
- Exhibits by local engineering firms and environmental businesses
- A 45-minute riding tour of the Akron Water Reclamation Facility, showing all the steps in the process of treating sewage before it returns to the Cuyahoga River
- A walking tour of the plant’s laboratory that will give visitors the opportunity to learn about tests that are performed regularly. Advanced technology equipment and historic instruments used for analytical research will be displayed
- A guided trolley tour of the Bath Road Blue Heron Rookery
- Up-close views of the high pressure water & vacuum truck that is used to clean sewer lines with video equipment that is used to locate obstructions

Free parking will be available nearby with transportation provided to the plant. Sponsors will offer free refreshments including hot dogs, beverages and snacks between 11am and 1:30pm. Organizers are

trying to make this a “zero-waste” event by using smart sustainable practices that will be instructional as well as functional.

“Water quality is important to Akron and its neighbors,” says Akron City Council president Garry Moneyppenny. “The Akron Water Reclamation Facility contributes to better health, a better environment, improved wildlife habitats, and boosts our economy.”

In addition to the City of Akron, sponsors of the Open House and Blue Heron Homecoming include the CSO Project Management Team and the principal consultants on the project - MWH Global, Hatch Mott and G. Stephens, Inc. of Akron. Other partners include:

Akron Public Schools

Akron Zoo

Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Keep Akron Beautiful

Summit Metro Parks

The Cuyahoga Valley National Park

“The residents of Greater Akron are closely connected with the facility – they use it every day – but it’s a place they’ve never seen,” said John Moore, Director of Public Service. “This open house provides our ratepayers an up-close view of a major investment made over years, and will educate children about good environmental science.”

Akron’s current Consent Decree requires a \$1.4 billion dollar investment in the city’s environmental future, the largest single expenditure in its 189 year history, by remediating its combined sewer overflows. A portion of Akron’s sewers were designed to carry both storm water and sanitary wastes in one pipe, and during a rain event, when the storm water contribution exceeds the capacity of the sewers, sewage overflows to streams or rivers. Akron’s Long Term Control Plan will improve the system by attempting to achieve zero untreated overflows in the typical year, improving water quality.

For more information about AkronWaterways Renewed, go to <http://akronwaterwaysrenewed.com/>

Our Mission :

To invest in Akron’s environmental future by building infrastructure for the next century that will protect public health and maintain water of the highest quality in the most cost-effective manner while providing local jobs.

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