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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 22, 2011

RUN THROUGH DATE: JANUARY 6, 2012, 2011

**FROM: MCKINLEYVILLE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
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SUBJECT: McKinleyville CSD Board Members take a tour of the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant

McKinleyville, CA – The McKinleyville Community Services District (MCSD) Board of Directors held a Special Board Meeting that included a tour of the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant on Wednesday, December 14, 2011. The Willits facility is very similar to the one that MCSD is considering building on behalf of residents here in McKinleyville. MCSD Board members and district staff participated in the trip. Members of the public were also encouraged to attend.

Norman Shopay, General Manager stated “Since MCSD is considering significant upgrades to our system that will cost the District and ultimately ratepayers a very large amount of money



I wanted our Board members to see a similar facility that is under construction, first hand. This will ultimately be a major decision for our MCSD Board of Directors and I wanted to provide each of them with all the information to help them with their decision. Not only did they have an opportunity to see the facility, first hand, they were also able to determine if any odor or noise issues were a concern. They also had an opportunity to directly talk to the operator of the facility. This trip was very informative and worthwhile.”



Prior to the trip one member of the Public stated, “The Board must reject the recommendation by Norman Shopay that your Board participate in an inspection of the property and tour at the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant.” He did not want MCSD and our Board of Directors to visit this facility.

Shopay further stated, “It would have been a mistake if I did not recommend to the MCSD Board that they visit this facility”.

The inspection and tour was designed so that those present would be able to inspect and tour a sewage treatment plant from the ground up. This facility is currently under construction and there were a lot of activities going on at the site. The new facility includes influent pumping, in-channel screens and a grit removal system, a new operational in-basin extended aeration basin and external clarifier, a new blower building, and a 30-acre enhancement wetlands. The plant is currently under construction with one treatment train in operation and the second train currently being installed.

Dr. Bill Wennerholm, a member of the MCSD Board of Directors attended the field trip and said, “The trip to the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant allowed me to see firsthand and to put into perspective all the different variables with this plan so our Board can make a decision and allow us to have the greatest flexibility to meet the demands of the community and also the Regional Water Board.”

“To actually see it physically gave me an opportunity to see all the components that bring it all together. You can’t smell a video and it was good to see that the plant is relatively odor free. This is extremely important because of our plant’s location and its close proximity to homes, trails, and sports fields.”



“I think this was a great decision on the part of our General Manager, Norman Shopay, for having the insight and plan this trip for the MCSD Board of Directors.”

Helen Edwards, MCSD Board President also attended the field trip and said, “I am grateful to our General Manager, Norman Shopay, for understanding the importance of a site visit and planning this trip for the MCSD Board and Staff. It was very helpful to be able to see how the



process is improved with the sewer upgrade we will be doing.

“The MCSD Board is responsible for such a significant amount of funding as an investment. By seeing what the process does and having a better understanding, we can see how our plant can be improved as needed incrementally in the future. This is important so that we don’t invest the entire project up front but rather understand potential improvements in the future. We want the most flexible plan at a reasonable cost for the ex-

pected needs of the future.”

“To go there physically, it was far more effective to understand the scope of the project, A 2 or 3-dimensional picture doesn’t allow you to understand distances and sizes relative to other components. It was also really helpful to have the design engineers and building engineers on site for us to ask questions. They were right there to address our specific questions.”

Dennis Mayo, Vice President of the MCSD Board of Directors said, “I found the trip to Willits to be amazingly informational, especially the way the one operation works compared to the other. Looking at their wetlands operation was amazing. We can already see that their operation is working and it makes me realize there are other operations close by that we need to look at as well.”

“It’s really difficult to get busy people like many of us Board Members together, and the fact that we took the time out of our busy schedules to attend this tour shows how important our Board and Staff think the trip was.”

“Making this type of connection with other communities is very important in the long scheme of things. This is why we belong to and are involved with organizations like Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and California Special District Association (CSDA), so that we are better prepared when we deal with the Regional Water Quality Control Board.” I am also proud that our General Manager was elected to the CSDA Board of Directors and is able to represent us and other Special Districts in this region.



“As a Special District, we provide important services to our community, and it’s important to communicate with other Districts and understand their operations. I like that we’re being proactive so that we do a better job and stay ahead of regulations.”

“I’m glad we were able to physically visit the site, because when we got there we were able to look around and smell the air quality. You couldn’t appreciate it unless you were there. It was also important for me to be on site and see how their staff functioned and how well they worked together.”

“I feel that the District is going in an outstanding direction. I’m glad that Norman Shopay, our General Manager, and the MCSD Board of Directors are all on the same page.”



David Couch, a member of the MCSD Board of Directors said, “The trip was a good idea because it gave our Board an opportunity to see what type of treatment plant the engineer’s had selected as the preferred option for McKinleyville. I was initially concerned about potential smell and noise problems, but I didn’t notice anything that would be a problem at our site.”

John Corbett, a member of the MCSD Board of Directors said, “This is the largest capital investment this District is going to do, I don’t think it’s unreasonable to go with the engineer’s and look at this system, and I don’t think it’s unreasonable to go and ask how to actually operate this and how to interface this with the regulatory system that we’re going to have to live with for the next twenty years. To me, I’m actually glad the Board wants to make the effort to do their homework, instead of just sitting around, taking a report and making a decision based on that.”

Greg Orsini, Operations Director said, “I thought it was a good Idea to take the Directors to Willits to allow the Board a chance to see an extended aeration plant in operation so they could make an informed decision on the 20-year facility plan and visualize what they are voting on. In my opinion it was invaluable to allow the Board to ask questions of the personnel on site that are about 4 years ahead in the same process we are in right now.”

Another facility tour, featuring a recently completed and fully operational facility will take place early next year. A notice will be posted on the MCSD website shortly.

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(End)