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Survey Shows Positive Awareness of Oneida County Sewer District Operation Ripple Effect™

A survey conducted earlier this year has shown that more than half of residents within the Oneida County Sewer District's Sauquoit Creek Pump Station Basin are aware that illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system contribute to sewage overflows into the Mohawk River.

"These results demonstrate how the hard work put in by representatives of our 15 Oneida County Sewer District municipalities is making an impact on helping to reduce overflows into the Mohawk River," said County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. "This complex, multi-year project is necessary to not only ensure the future health and safety of the Mohawk River, but also to enable future economic growth."

Normally, our sanitary sewer system has enough capacity to operate properly. But heavy rains or snowmelts can cause stormwater to overwhelm the system and result in sewage overflows into the Mohawk River, as well as backups into basements. National studies have shown that as much as 50 percent of the excess stormwater in sanitary sewer systems come from private property.

The two main sources of stormwater entry from private properties are sump pumps and roof gutters, or downspouts, which are connected to a sanitary sewer. Operation Ripple Effect is an Oneida County initiative showing how individual actions can add up to widespread improvements to the system.

- These results come 18 months into the launch of the residential outreach program. Additional survey results include:
- 56% of residents know that sump pumps and downspouts contribute to sewage overflows into the Mohawk River;
- 54% of residents were familiar or somewhat familiar with rain barrel and rain garden solutions to help reduce sanitary sewer overflows;
- 63% of residents were familiar or somewhat familiar with the fact that cooking fats and oils contribute to sewer blockages and backups, while 20% were not familiar at all with this fact;
- Among all respondents, 57% were familiar or somewhat familiar with the fact that flushable wipes can cause clogs, resulting in significant time and financial burdens on the system.

For a full report of survey results, or more information about how individual actions can add up to widespread improvements to the sanitary sewer system, visit RippleEffectOCSD.org.

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