


ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

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St. James Parish Completes Years-Old Sewer Project and Saves \$800,000 in Repayment of Grant Funds

In February of 2020, St. James Parish received a sanction for two cycles of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), equating to 6 years of inability to receive funds which provide housing and a suitable living environment as well as expanded economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons or families.

The cause for this sanction was the result of the Molaison Sewer Project located in South Vacherie having lingered on the books for nearly 6 years after receiving CDBG funding. The project design and phase 1 construction began between 2013-2017. Because of administrative and management oversight, the project came to a halt, and no additional progress was made.

Due to the lack of progress on the project, the parish would have been obligated to repay \$800,000 of grant funds to the Office of Community Development.

Parish President, Pete Dufresne and Operations Director, Rick Webre made a request after a month in office in February 2020 to the Office of Community Development asking for the opportunity for the new St. James Parish Government administration to complete the project within one year and eliminate the obligatory repayment of funds.

Since then, the St. James Parish operations division has worked diligently to competitively engineer and bid the project. The Parish contracted with Meyer's Engineering to redesign the discharge system by adding a mechanical sewer treatment system. This new design was permitted by DEQ and construction began in October of 2020. The project is now complete and is expected to be fully functional in the coming days. With the completion of this project, over 30 homes in the Molaison community of South Vacherie will have improved sewerage discharge. In addition, the state of the art sewer treatment facility is designed to allow for expansion and future resident service.

"It was important for us to move quickly to restart this project to prevent both the loss of previously spent grant funds and loss of this improvement in our parish sewer infrastructure", said Parish President Pete Dufresne. He added "I'm proud of my administration for working diligently to see this project to completion."

Parish officials intend to ask for sanctions against St. James Parish to be lifted following project completion.

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PARISH PRESIDENT PETE DUFRESNE

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