



MEDIA ADVISORY

Regional Utility Consolidation Sought – Jefferson County Public Sewer District offers to buy Festus-Crystal City Sewer Facilities

JEFFERSON COUNTY, MISSOURI (June 15, 2023) – The Jefferson County Sewer District, a non-profit regional government entity, has presented the cities of Festus and Crystal City a Letter of Interest (LOI) to acquire their respective sewer collection systems and combined treatment plant. The Jefferson County Public Sewer District has offered five million dollars (\$5,000,000) for both Festus and Crystal City’s sewer system and sewer treatment plant. If the sale is approved, it would compensate both cities for the infrastructure they maintain and pave the way for new development in the region. The Jefferson County Sewer District has a history of taking older systems and refurbishing them. “We are proud of our track record, fixing broken systems and getting them back on track,” said Doug Bjornstad, Jeffco Public Sewer District Manager/Engineer. The Festus – Crystal City Sewer Commission has been working towards retooling and improving the 20-year-old jointly owned treatment plant. If the LOI is authorized Jefferson County Public Sewer district will continue to make the necessary improvements to protect the region’s sensitive ecology whilst correcting and improving treatment plant operations. “We have been working hard these last few years to modernize the facility, but the regulations just keep changing,” said Matt Unrein, Chairman of the Sewer Commission. Sewer rates are capped in the LOI until after 2025. “Both cities are concerned about maintaining the same level of service to residents and keeping the sewer fees as low as possible,” stated City Administrator Jason Eisenbeis. A third-party rate study was recently completed, and rates appear to follow historic trend lines. The Festus – Crystal City Sewer Commission has been using a for-profit operator for many years. Greg Camp, City Administrator of Festus stated, “the Jefferson County Sewer District has the qualified and professional staff to run the treatment plant, we wouldn’t need to contract our operations anymore.” No jobs are forecasted to be lost; all staff would be absorbed into new roles.

Authorizing the LOI is a first step in the sale process. To that end all four effected public bodies will hold public meetings to solicit public comments and weigh the merits of the sale as per the schedule below. Effected residents and rate payers may attend any of the meetings. Copies of the LOI are available on each entity's website.

Public Meetings:

Festus – Crystal City Sewer Commission Meeting on June 21st at 2pm – 950 N. 5th Street, Festus MO

Crystal City Council Meeting on June 26th at 5pm– 130 Mississippi Avenue, Crystal City MO

Festus City Council Meeting on June 26th at 6pm–711 W. Main Street, Festus MO

Jefferson County Public Sewer District Meeting on June 28th at 6pm -- 4629 Yeager Road, Hillsboro, MO