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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THREE OKANAGAN COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM GRANTS TO UPGRADE WATER TREATMENT

Kelowna, B.C. – The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) is pleased to announce approval of three major wastewater treatment grants to the Cities of Vernon and Penticton, and the community of Okanagan Falls. The OBWB’s 30-year old grant program gives a local match for provincial infrastructure dollars.

Since the program began there have been dramatic improvements in the water quality of Okanagan Lake, the Okanagan River, and the other major lakes and streams in the valley, noted Anna Warwick Sears, OBWB’s executive director.

“It is hard to believe now, but in the 1960s and ’70s, pollution from poorly-treated sewage was causing major algae blooms and fouling beaches,” explained Warwick Sears. “The OBWB grants have given that extra incentive for communities to invest in water clean-up, and the results have been excellent.” OBWB grants help cover the costs of water treatment in older neighborhoods that were built before communities recouped such expenses with development cost charges.

This week, the City of Vernon was awarded \$118,234 a year for annual debt payments on a 25-year Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) loan for construction costs of their wastewater treatment plant. It also received a lump-sum award of \$236,469 to cover payments for the two previous years.

The City of Penticton was awarded a grant to cover costs of wastewater treatment and collection in their industrial area. The award was \$112,945 for 2009 and \$207,296 for annual debt payments from 2010 until their 20-year MFA loan is retired.

Finally, Okanagan Falls was awarded a grant in principle for construction of a wastewater treatment facility that is still in the design phase. It is estimated that this award will be approximately \$97,000 in annual debt payments, beginning in 2013 for a 20-year MFA loan.

For more information on the Okanagan Basin Water Board please visit www.obwb.ca.

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