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Pinetop-Lakeside Sanitary District Joins ADEQ's Small Communities Environmental Compliance Assistance Program

PHOENIX – (Dec. 4, 2009) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced today that the Pinetop-Lakeside Sanitary District in Navajo County is the first wastewater or water district to participate in ADEQ's statewide program to help communities comply with state and federal environmental regulations.

ADEQ began its Small Communities Environmental Compliance Assistance project in 2007 for small towns and special water and wastewater districts to sustain compliance with state and federal environmental laws and reduce the number of violations and enforcement actions. Seven municipalities in the state have joined the program -- Eagar, Willcox, Safford, Springerville, Winslow, Pima and Miami.

As part of the program, the sanitary district, which serves a population of about 7,000 in Pinetop-Lakeside and the unincorporated Wagon Wheel area, agrees to disclose known environmental violations within the district, request compliance assistance before enforcement actions begin, participate in compliance evaluation to identify violations and to promptly correct known violations. In so doing, the town will be eligible for up to a 100 percent penalty reduction if it has future environmental violations.

“We congratulate the Pinetop-Lakeside Sanitary District for leading the way on environmental cooperation and sustainability and hope other water and wastewater districts will join the program,” said ADEQ Director Benjamin H. Grumbles. “Small communities in the state and the rural sanitary and water districts have limited financial resources and we are committed to helping them comply with environmental laws and be good green stewards.”

The project was funded by a \$12,000 grant from the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) for the communities to develop Small Community Environmental Protection Plans (SCEPP) to improve compliance. Guidance materials, including a comprehensive manual, have been prepared to train small communities and water and wastewater districts on environmental requirements and help with SCEPP development.

More information about the program:

<http://www.azdeq.gov/function/compliance/smallcomm.html>

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