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**ENERGY OFFICE AWARDED \$277,330 COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
FOR ENERGY REDUCTION AT MUNICIPAL WASTE WATER PLANTS**

Agency will Partner with University of Nebraska and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Energy Office will establish a groundbreaking partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality with the help of a \$277,330 cooperative agreement from the US Department of Energy (USDOE), to address energy efficiency in local government waste water treatment facilities.

In small and medium sized communities, wastewater plants and local water systems can use 20 to 40 percent of the electricity used by the local government. Managing energy use related to providing water and processing wastewater is a key strategy to minimizing the impacts of electric rate increases and preserving economic security in their community. The first step to capture energy savings is to understand the current energy use and identify opportunities to reduce use.

Many of Nebraska's smaller communities face serious challenges to maintain their financial stability. This project will build off the Assessing Wastewater Infrastructure Needs (AWIN) program to note the percentage of communities that are decreasing in size, aging, and have limited financial capabilities to support their wastewater utilities.

The Energy Office will collect energy use data from wastewater plants in communities with a population of 10,000 or less. These smaller plants make up 531 of the 547 wastewater plants in Nebraska. After evaluation of the data, 60 to 100 of the plants will be selected for more analysis, including an on-site visit. At least 24 of the lowest performing plants will be offered technical and financial assistance to achieve savings of 20% or better.

“At some of these plants, the inefficient energy use is because the operators do not know how much energy these plants use or how much a typical plant uses,” said David Bracht, Director of the Nebraska Energy Office. “Through benchmarking, we can identify those communities and help them address the inefficiencies.”

These inefficiencies will likely be addressed through a combination of equipment replacements such as lights, motors, blowers, pumps, etc., and improvements in operator practices such as more frequent cleaning of diffusers, and addressing inflow and infiltration that can increase the quantity of water that must be treated. In addition, Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC) which connect to sensors to automate processes will be installed. The Energy Office's Dollar and Energy Saving Loan program will offer 1% loans to municipalities undertaking technical assessments and implementing retrofits in their plants to reduce energy usage or minimize waste.

This collaboration will further the Energy Office's mission to “promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy.”

The Nebraska Energy Office was created in 1977 to promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy. It is an authoritative voice and comprehensive resource center for energy issues in the State of Nebraska. In addition, the energy office plays an important role in fostering new growth in our renewable energy industry and helping Nebraska lead the way in the new clean energy economy. For more information, please visit www.neo.ne.gov.