

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

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GAFFNEY BPW AWARDED \$50,000,000 GRANT

Gaffney, SC: Gaffney Board of Public Works has been awarded a \$50,000,000 grant for “Project Gateway,” a major infrastructure initiative that will bring sewer service to the eastern part of Cherokee County along Interstate 85. The special economic development grant, designated by the South Carolina Department of Commerce pursuant to Act 244 of 2022, is federally funded through the American Rescue Plan Act. The grant will be administered by the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA).

In a long-range planning study conducted in 2020, Cherokee County identified sanitary sewer service as fundamental to its strategic vision for growth. The study noted that significant expansion along I-85 in the eastern part of the county is not possible without available sewer access. Regardless of the county’s ideal location on I-85, industrial and commercial development are tied to the availability of sewer service, a fact that Cherokee County Development Board Executive Director Jim Cook knows well. “It is virtually impossible to land industrial opportunities without public sewer availability,” said Cook. “The lack of sewer infrastructure is the primary hindrance to economic development in this area of the county.”

At present, there is no major sewer service along I-85 between exit numbers 100 and 106, a fact that is severely limiting the area’s ability to grow alongside the region. Project Gateway will position the communities of Gaffney and Blacksburg, which sit along the section of I-85, for future growth and opportunity.

The project includes multiple components, including installing new sewer lift stations, new gravity sewer and sewer force main, and upgrades to the existing Broad River Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Providence Creek Lift Station. Preliminary engineering for the project is already underway, with construction slated to begin in fall 2023.

Board of Public Works General Manager Donnie Hardin expressed his excitement for the grant award, noting that new areas of the county will be unlocked for growth because of the availability of sewer service. “It is hard to overstate this project’s potential for economic impact,” said Hardin.

Hardin is also quick to point out that the execution of Project Gateway would not be possible without the SCIIP funds, and credits Senator Harvey Peeler supporting Act 244, which designated \$900 million for transformational projects such as Project Gateway. “BPW could never come up with the money required to complete this long-needed project,” said Hardin. “Without Senator Peeler, Project Gateway would be totally impossible.”

About Gaffney Board of Public Works: A customer-owned utility, Gaffney Board of Public Works provides electric, water, and sewer services to over 24,000 customers at some of the lowest rates in the Carolinas. Community-based and locally focused, Gaffney BPW strives to provide the most efficient utility service to Gaffney and the surrounding areas of Cherokee County.