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Burton Drinking Water Recognized With Award

BURTON-- On Oct. 23, the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (GCMPC) hosted its 10th annual Planning Forum, showcasing the theme Connect – Engage – Grow: Fostering the New Economy and the Next Generation. During the forum, three awards were given in order to recognize deserving innovative projects in Genesee County.

“These community-led projects are only a handful of great work being completed in Genesee County and it is important that we share these efforts across the area,” said Derek Bradshaw, director and coordinator of the GCMPC.

The City of Burton’s five-year project to replace its aging drinking water system was recognized with the 2015 Innovation in Infrastructure and Technology award from the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission. Burton Mayor Paula Zelenko and Utilities Superintendent Dave Marshke were on hand to receive the award.

Marshke was appreciative for the recognition and the opportunity to bring this topic to the forefront. He stressed the importance of projects like this as clean, affordable water is a necessity for all communities.

“Providing safe drinking water is a top priority for my administration,” Zelenko said. “Residents and businesses should feel comfortable knowing they have access to clean and safe drinking water every time they turn on the faucet.

“I am gratified to be recognized for our forward thinking approach and would like to especially credit Water and Sewer Superintendent Dave Marshke for his vision in this effort, as well as DPW Director (Robert) Slattery for his overall work since coming on board.”

Using the State of Michigan’s low-interest Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRP), the City has undertaken an ambitious project to replace its aging and rusty 1930s-era ductile iron watermain infrastructure within the City’s Water Tower district with safer, more cost-effective and environmentally friendly PVC pipes. The old iron pipe, which is falling victim to corrosive soils, has outlived its maximum life expectancy of 75 years. The City is looking to the future using PVC watermain pipe, which is manufactured as a “green” product, requires less energy and fewer resources and has a conservative life expectancy of at least 100 years. It is much lighter, making it cheaper to install and maintain. Most importantly, because PVC pipe is non-corrosive, the quality of the water delivered to the residents is healthier than water carried by ductile iron.

The use of PVC will also allow the City to increase water pressure to the residents by an average of 25 lbs., further improving quality of life and increasing fire-fighting safety. The quality of the pipe and the expected longevity will also result in fewer interruptions in service. Not only that, but the use of PVC is saving the taxpayers of Burton \$651,000.

“PVC is clearly the better choice, for the positive impact it will have on the environment and the residents of the City of Burton, as well as for the cost savings it will bring,” Zelenko said. “The project, which began in June 2014 will, when completed in 2019, have replaced over 19 miles of corroded, dilapidated cast iron pipe with high quality, healthy, low cost PVC pipe-- benefitting the residents of the City of Burton in many ways for decades to come.” – **B.P.**