

Evans officials break ground for city's new wastewater plant

EVANS — Evans city officials broke ground Tuesday morning for the city's new \$43.1 million wastewater treatment plant, located on the east side of 35th Avenue on 49th Street.

The wastewater facility will combine the two Evans uses now — one where the new project will sit, and one on 37th Street and 1st Avenue — to meet regulatory requirements and provide for the projected growth of the city.

The plant on 37th Street and 1st Avenue was damaged by the 2013 floods, and after determining that updating both wastewater facilities would cost as much as building a new one, the Evans City Council opted to build one outside of the flood plain.

The facility will raise the city's treatment capacity to 3 million gallons per day and will provide for the community of Evans, portions of southwest Greeley and surrounding areas of Weld County. The system's capacity today is at 2 million gallons per day.

The project will take about 22 months to finish, City Project Manager Keith Meyer said, but it will be usable immediately after completion. Residents will have a tiered increase of wastewater rates over 2.5 years, which was effective July 1. Through Jan. 1, 2019, the waste water rate will increase from \$25.48 to \$41.35.

It also is the largest infrastructure project the city has ever taken on, according to Mayor John Morris, who spoke at the groundbreaking.

"After weighing in all of the factors, we came to the realization that the only practical solution is to construct one new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility that combines the needs for our entire city," Morris said. "While the cost for this very much needed utility is very high, the cost of doing nothing was even greater than that."

Deputy City Manager Jessica Gonifas said moving from the old to the new facility will be seamless, without interruption to resident service.

The first main course of the project is about 3.5 miles long, so there will be traffic impacts on 49th Street and 42nd Street, as well as on 37th Street, near the other existing plant, according to Meyer. There will be small lane closures, intermittent into winter months and into next year.

"It's really exciting to see the city work this hard to get to this point," said Keith McLaughlin, CWRPDA Finance Director and Assistant Secretary to the Board. "This project is a very large project for this community."