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**City Awards Contract to Build New Pump Station,
Takes Big Step Toward Sewer Service in South Hall
Construction to be funded by user fees at no cost to local taxpayers**

OAKWOOD, Ga. (December 14, 2009) – Taking the first step in its sewer partnership with the City of Braselton, the Oakwood City Council voted tonight to award a contract to build a pump station on Martin Road.

In a unanimous vote, the Council selected low bidder Allsouth Constructors Inc., a construction firm based in Covington, Ga. The bid amount for the project was \$1.122 million.

Construction of the 1,000,000 gallon per day Oakwood Pump Station is scheduled to begin in January with a targeted completion date of October 2010.

The pump station represents the first phase of a major sewer partnership between Oakwood and Braselton formed back in late 2006. Under the agreement, Braselton will provide wastewater treatment for up to 2.5 million gallons a day.

“Our decision tonight fulfills our promise to meeting the long-term sewer needs in the Winder Highway corridor of the Upper Mulberry River area of Oakwood,” said Mayor Lamar Scroggs. “It also signals that the economic recovery, particularly in Hall County, is moving forward.”

Oakwood City Manager Stan Brown said the City currently has requests for over 300,000 gallons per day of sewer capacity over the next five years. In fact, some businesses have purchased options to ensure their ability to tie into the Oakwood Sewage System upon its completion.

“Ironically, one bright side of the slow economy has been the fact that we have not been under pressure to supply this sewer service immediately,” Brown said. “Otherwise, we would not have had sufficient capacity.”

The City of Oakwood's sewer customers in the Winder Highway corridor currently use Oakwood's 100,000 gallons per day sewer capacity, which is treated by the City of Flowery Branch's wastewater plant. But growth projections for this strategic corridor call for upwards of 8 million gallons a day to be needed over the next 15 to 20 years.

"Our partnership with Braselton is beneficial not only to our Oakwood citizens and sewer customers but for all of South Hall," Brown said. "It will relieve a lot of future demand on Flowery Branch's wastewater system – as well as Gainesville's – and allow them to better service their own territory."

Next steps

The City of Oakwood currently is focusing on acquiring land easements for construction of a 7.5 mile, 12-inch force main pipe that will connect to the Braselton wastewater treatment plant in Jackson County. A majority of the easement acquisitions already have been completed.

Construction bids for the force main project will be let in February with an anticipated award date in early March. Construction is scheduled to be completed by the time the new Oakwood Pump Station is completed in October. Meanwhile, the City of Braselton is working toward building its own sewer line, scheduled for completion in February 2011, to connect with the Oakwood system.

"We want to be in position to initiate sewer service immediately upon Braselton's completion of its sewer tie-in," Brown said.

Oakwood already has incurred a \$5 million debt under a GEFA loan (Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority) in building its existing sewer lines. The completion of its sewer partnership with Braselton will allow Oakwood to recoup that expense – as well as future construction costs – while providing much more affordable sewer rates to customers in its Winder Highway service corridor, which lies within the Oconee River Basin.

"In addition, we're pleased that Oakwood will be providing sewer service in South Hall at no cost to our taxpayers. We will not be relying on local sales taxes, our general fund, or any other public funding," Mayor Scroggs said. "All construction and operational costs will be funded through connection and user fees."