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Oakwood sewer system to get national exposure

City manager to speak at a Denver meeting

A national audience will learn later this year about Oakwood's unique sewer system.

City Manager Stan Brown is scheduled to talk about the operation — a network of lines through the South Hall town without a city-run treatment plant — at the annual meeting of American Public Works Association in Denver.

Brown will speak at the International Public Works Congress & Exposition, set for Sept. 18-21.

"I was in a committee meeting last year describing how we do sewer here in Oakwood and how we partner with (other governments)," he said. "And it sparked some interest in some of the other smaller communities. So, (the organization) invited me to speak."

Oakwood has agreements with Gainesville, Flowery Branch and Hall County on providing sewer to different parts of the town, particularly along the commercially rich Mundy Mill Road, one of the town's main arteries.

Also, in a \$2.1 million project, Oakwood is installing a force main line on Ga. 53/Winder Highway to Jackson County, connecting with the Braselton sewer system.

In a separate job related to the same project, work is under way on a \$1.1 million pump station on Martin Road, off Winder Highway.

Ultimately, as part of an agreement between the two cities, Oakwood would receive as much as 2.5 million gallons per day in sewer capacity from Braselton.

"We're well under construction with the force main and we expect that to be completed by late summer," Brown has said. "Braselton is in the process to bid out their (part of) the project. Probably, it'll be sometime in 2012 when we'll be diverting flows to Braselton."

Braselton City Manager Jennifer Dees has said Oakwood will pay \$3,550 for every 300 gallons treated per day as well as a proportional share of any plant upgrades that are required.

Oakwood's sewer system "is not a very common model," Brown said.

"I think that, based on geography, the fact that we lie at the ridge line of the separation of the Chattahoochee basin and the Oconee basin and that (surrounding governments) already have wastewater facilities, it was a natural for us to form those partnerships," he said.

The city's education and training fund, which has \$3,000 this fiscal year, will pay for the trip.

The American Public Works Association, with about 28,000 members, is an educational and professional organization of public agencies, private sector companies and others concerned with public works goods and services, according to its website.