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(Boston, Mass. - Aug. 30, 2011) - A team of senior environmental officials from federal and state agencies today highlighted coordinated work that is resulting in the Greater Limestone Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility achieving significant environmental and economic benefits for Aroostook County.

With approximately \$9.3 million of funding from the federal Recovery Act, allocated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, USDA Rural Development and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Limestone Water and Sewer District has completed a major \$21 million upgrade effort at the former Loring wastewater facility and effluent pump station. The project has closed the former Limestone wastewater facility. The Loring facility has been renamed to the "Greater Limestone Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility" and is owned and operated by the Limestone Water and Sewer District.

In addition to substantial environmental benefits from the upgraded facility, the project has put in place the infrastructure integral to attracting new industries and investment to the Loring Commerce Center, a 3800-acre commercial, industrial and aviation park in Limestone where the upgraded treatment facility is located. The ongoing 16-month construction project has already created nearly 300 jobs and the Loring Development Authority, which manages the commerce center, expects hundreds of permanent jobs to be created now that wet industry - such as potato processing plants - can utilize the business park, which currently is home to 20 businesses and 1300 employees.

This project is part of a larger \$21 million project that regionalizes two aging wastewater treatment facilities (Loring and Limestone) into one newly upgraded facility at Loring, and in the process will provide significant environmental and economic benefits to the local area. The larger project will eliminate the current wastewater treatment facilities' outfall discharges to two low-flow waterbodies, Limestone Stream and the Little Madawaska River, as well as an emergency bypass to Greenlaw Brook. The treated effluent from the newly combined facilities will be conveyed through the upgraded effluent pump station and a newly installed outfall pipe 18,000 feet further to the Aroostook River.

Funding for the project has come from a \$11.3 million loan and grant from USDA Rural Development, \$5.3 million Maine DEP grant, and over \$4 million from US EPA (which includes low-interest loans and loan forgiveness).

In part, EPA funds provided over \$1 million for improvements to sludge dewatering and sludge digestion, energy efficiency improvements to the administration and

process control buildings, new effluent pumps and associated instrumentation and electrical upgrades, an addition to the pump station building and construction of a new generator building with a new photovoltaic electrical system.

The plant's upgrades include energy efficient pumps, motors, controls, building improvements and photovoltaic panels. EPA estimates that the energy-efficiency upgrades to the plant will provide water and electrical efficiency savings in approximately \$2,000 - \$3,000 per year in electrical, heating, laboratory testing and chemical costs for the District.

"EPA is very proud of the work done here to upgrade Limestone's wastewater treatment facility. This is a great example of how a well-coordinated partnership of federal and state efforts is helping local communities all across Maine and New England to position themselves for robust economic growth with stable and sustainable infrastructure," said Curt Spalding, regional administrator of EPA's New England office.

"The Greater Limestone Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility is proof positive that the right thing to do for our health and our environment is also the right thing to do for our economy," said Maine Department of Environmental Protection Acting Commissioner Pattie Aho. "This project protects public health, improves the water quality of sensitive area streams and puts in place the infrastructure integral to attracting the industries and investment of Aroostook County's thriving tomorrow."

USDA Rural Development State Director Virginia Manuel said, "I am pleased that USDA Rural Development has been a key contributor in this project, having provided \$11.35 million of the nearly \$20 million project cost to assist in the implementation of the wastewater infrastructure necessary to support businesses and job creation in Limestone and Loring as well as ensure that the Little Madawaska Stream remains a viable source for trout fishing."

EPA's top official for all New England states, Curt Spalding, visited the Limestone facility as part of a three-day tour to Aroostook County to view first-hand projects that are boosting the local economy, creating jobs and helping Northern Maine and its population.

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