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Inglis seeks funds for sewer upgrades

*By Lark Reynolds
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U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis is requesting help from the federal government in funding upgrades to the Maple Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant in Greer.

Inglis, a Republican from Travelers Rest, requested a federal appropriation of \$500,000 for the upgrades to the plant, which is operated by the Greer Commission of Public Works and serves 70 percent of Greer residents.

Jerry Balding, the commission's executive director, said the upgrades comprise the first of three phases that eventually will increase the plant's capacity from 4.5 million gallons per day to 10 million gallons per day.

The first phase will take the capacity to 5 million gallons per day. It also will include a new pump station, new headworks to remove grit as waste water enters the plant, a wet weather storage reservoir for occasions when rain results in extra capacity, a standby power-generating facility and a process control lab, Balding said. The total cost of the first phase is \$13.7 million, he said.

Inglis said in an e-mail to the Greater Greer News that he's supporting a federal appropriation to help with the project because it's important to the region's economic development.

"It's got significant local funding, and the federal government has long been involved in various ways in waste-water treatment," Inglis said.

Balding said the commission received a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency two years ago for the project. Currently, the balance is being funded by a loan from the State Revolving Loan Pool, which provides low-interest loans for waste-water treatment projects.

Inglis also requested federal funding for the project last year -- \$2 million -- but the request was not funded. He said he hopes the request will have more luck this year, and that the added capacity is crucial to helping the commission meet the needs that will arise as a result of the BMW expansion.

Balding said the first phase of the upgrades should be complete by late next spring. He said growth in the city will be the determining factor on when the second and third phases begin.

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