Gov. Walker: Three communities will receive financial assistance to replace lead service lines

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Madison – Governor Scott Walker announced today that Racine, Clintonville, and Florence have completed financial assistance agreements with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) under a new program to replace lead service lines on qualifying private properties.

Together, the agreements total $1,135,000 and will cover work at 496 residential properties as well as two licensed day cares and two schools. The replacements will result in complete removal of the lead service line from the water main to the connection point inside the home or facility.

"Safe drinking water is critical to the health and well-being of everyone in Wisconsin, and our administration is committed to innovative solutions that address community needs," Governor Walker said. "We applaud the work being done in Racine, Clintonville, and Florence to identify the locations of old lead service lines and target replacement efforts to tackle longstanding infrastructure challenges."

DNR initiated the lead service line replacement program following a decision by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to allow the state greater flexibility in allocating loan funds for water infrastructure projects. For state Fiscal Year 2017, DNR has allocated $14.5 million for disadvantaged municipalities to help remove old lead service lines that bring drinking water to homes.

"The lead service line replacement program represents one of the many ways DNR partners with communities to manage our water resources and protect public health," said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. "These cooperative efforts involving the state, local governments and skilled private contractors serve as a model for what we can accomplish together."

The approved replacement projects differ slightly among the communities, reflecting local needs.

• **The City of Racine** will receive $500,000 and anticipates replacing approximately 200 private lead service lines at the same time the city completes its own water infrastructure upgrades. Homeowners in the project area will be able to apply for a rebate of up to $2,500 for work done on their own properties. If funds remain, additional areas of the city may be covered, provided that the work results in full replacement of entire line from the water main to the residence.

• **The City of Clintonville** will receive $310,000 to replace approximately 140 private lead service lines. Homeowners will contract with plumbers from an approved list and upon completion of the work, the city will pay the plumbers directly on behalf of the homeowners for up to $2,000 of the cost.

• **The Town of Florence** will receive $325,000 to replace approximately 156 private lead service lines as well as lines that serve two licensed day cares and two schools. To maximize the reach of the state dollars, the community will replace the lead service lines concurrently with its own water system rehabilitation project, which has funding through USDA Rural Development. Upon completion of the work, the Florence Utility Commission will pay the approved contractors 90 percent of the cost with the homeowner bearing responsibility for the remaining 10 percent.

The Lead Service Line Replacement Funding program reflects the administration's commitment to safe drinking water and addresses the financial barriers facing communities where lead service lines continue to deliver drinking water to residences, schools, and licensed day care centers. These service lines extend from the main street pipes owned by local utilities onto private property and into homes, schools, and day care centers.

To learn more about the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program Intended Use Plan, visit the DNR website here and search environmental loans.