"Protecting Public Health and the Environment"

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PVSC Installs Rain Collection Systems At Two District Schools

Cisterns Reduce Pollution and Flooding Issues

Newark, NJ –Newark, NJ – The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) partnered with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program four years ago to pilot a Green Infrastructure outreach and technical assistance program. The program is designed to provide guidance and direction to the 48 municipalities in the PVSC service area regarding the benefits and opportunities of implementing green infrastructure practices. One of these efforts is the management of storm water, a major cause of water pollution. When rain falls on grass or other vegetation, the water is absorbed and filtered by soil and plants. However, when rain falls on paved streets and surfaces, the rain water cannot soak into the ground and must be properly managed to prevent flooding and remove pollution that the stormwater may have picked up from streets, driveways, or other paved surfaces. At many local schools rain drains from rooftops only to settle on the asphalt or cement playgrounds and driveways next to the schools.

Over the last four years, PVSC and RCE have worked with various municipalities to develop Green Infrastructure feasibility studies to identify rain-harvesting projects. This past fall, PVSC and RCE addressed this concern at Watsessing Elementary School in Bloomfield and Hawkins Street Elementary School in Newark. The PVSC Carpenter Shop and River Restoration Program teamed to install cisterns at both schools. Both will collect rainwater from the rooftops and provide water to adjacent rain gardens. It will also reduce pollution in local waterways. The rainwater that collects on driveways and in playgrounds would otherwise make it to the nearby sewers, where it may pick up additional pollutants, such as motor oil, fertilizer, or litter along the way before it enters a nearby waterway.

"At PVSC, we have always taken pride in our mission to protect the public health and the environment," said PVSC Chairman Thomas Tucci, Jr. "Our commitment to that mission is reflected in the partnership we forged with the Rutgers Cooperation Extension Water Resources Program. Together, we have worked with several communities and schools to showcase how rainwater harvesting systems can reduce flooding and other hazards in our local waterways."

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