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Tour city treatment facility Oct. 25

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ATTLEBORO - Flushing the toilet is a common daily event, but does anybody ever think about where IT goes?

Probably not, and that may or may not be a good thing, but city residents are going to get their chance to find out not only where it goes, but what happens to it when it gets there. On Saturday, Oct. 25, tours of the renovated wastewater treatment plant will be available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The \$30 million job, which was complicated by the need to keep the plant running 24 hours-a-day as equipment was replaced piecemeal, was completed earlier this year.

Engineers from Camp Dresser & McKee Inc. planned the job and Methuen Construction, a company from Salem, N.H. carried out the work.

Both companies performed flawlessly and the job came in on budget and on time, said Mayor Kevin Dumas.

"The project went extremely smoothly," Dumas said. "There were no problems."

He said there was a little under \$100,000 left in the project's contingency fund.

Work on the 24-year-old, rapidly failing plant began in November of 2004.

The plant, located off Pond Street near the animal shelter, was built in 1980 and had a life expectancy of 20 years.

In April of 2004 residents had an opportunity to tour the plant to see what needed to be done. Now they will get a chance to see the finished product that will not only keep city waste flowing freely for at least the next 20 years, but will help the city meet increasingly tough state and federal clean water rules, the mayor said.

Dumas is encouraging residents to take the tour and see what their \$30 million

bought.

"It's an amazing process," he said. "It's a great opportunity to see what happens at the wastewater treatment plant."

But while the new plant is state-of-the art, the city will be under constant pressure to keep it that way because of continual upgrades in standards issued by state and federal governments, Dumas said.

"New permits are going to be ever more stringent which will require us to add processes," the mayor said.

That will likely cost millions of dollars more in the future unless the city and other municipalities can find a way to delay the rules or coax some cash out of state and federal officials.

While new rules flow down, money to implement them doesn't, Dumas said.

"It's something the state and federal governments are putting on the backs of all of us," he said.

And Attleboro rate payers are well aware of that.

Sewer rates have gone from to \$2.72 to \$8.65 per 100 cubic feet since 2004, mostly to meet debt service for the plant.

But in the meantime, ratepayers have a chance to observe the complicated process of cleaning wastewater- up close and personal.

"Hopefully people will take advantage of it," Dumas said.