Objective

Community Impact Measure Project

- Quantify the social, economic, and environmental benefits of ARRA investments to communities and the state (beyond regulatory compliance).

  - What are the impacts of water and wastewater projects to the quality of life of Oklahomans?
Objective
Community Impact Measure Project

Results:
• Maximize the benefits of future investments
• Deepen relationships with client communities
• Demonstrate, with measures, the need for required projects
Community Impact Measure Project

• OWRB Alliances:
  - “Connecting the dots...” - David Boren
  - Northbridge Environmental Management Consultants (through an EPA grant)
  - University of Oklahoma (through Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan match)

• Focus on benefits of CWSRF and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects:
  - Extend results to both water and wastewater projects
Community Impact Measure Project
Methodology & Products

Target 4 representative communities who have received ARRA CWSRF funding:

- Norman
- Piedmont
- Grove
- Ardmore
Community Impact Measure Project
Methodology & Products

- Structured interview and survey of 12 local officials and civic leaders in each community to determine their opinions on the specific values and benefits of their project:
  - Utilize a point-in-time snapshot to assess social, economic, and environmental benefits
  - OU Departments of Sociology and Communications
Community Impact Measure Project

Test Measures (Interview Cards)

- Creates jobs
- Increases construction-related economic activity
- Public’s willingness to pay more for clean water
- Increases property values
- Money saved in operations of water facilities
- Reduce waterborne pathogens and illnesses
- Supports outdoor recreation
- Justifies future projects
- Improves and maintains water bodies
- Protects wildlife
- Reduces dangerous algal blooms
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Meets present and future capacity needs
- Improves desirability to live in community
- Increases public participation in civic affairs
Community Impact Measure Project
Preliminary Findings

• Green = Green:
  – Addressing environmental issues contributes to economic growth and builds a positive community image

• Identity:
  – Infrastructure investments strengthen communities’ positive self image

• Growth and Stability:
  – Infrastructure investments attract new businesses/residents and retain existing businesses/residents

• Community Education:
  – Communities welcome and value education related to water infrastructure, and want more
Community Impact Measure Project
Preliminary Findings & Trends

The economic development door for Piedmont is finally open, and the door knob is the sewer.

– Mike Fina, Mayor

Water triggers everything you do in a city. It’s just that simple.

Don Robinson: Councilman (Piedmont)

Fixing water infrastructure is like going to the dentist. You want preventative care, you don’t want it to break.

– Mark Bruegel, Manager at Michelin (Ardmore)

Good things don’t just happen; somebody has to cause them to happen.

Wes Stuckey (President/CEO, Ardmore Chamber of Commerce)
Next Steps

• In 2010, Ardmore, Grove, Piedmont and Norman acquire measures to support findings.

• Low cost model:
  – working with Oklahoma colleges and universities
  – make available to other SRF and ARRA communities

• National roll-out (working with EPA):
  – make measures and methodology available to other states.