

Centralia Looks to Test Catch Basin Technology

RUN-OFF: *Ecology Grant of \$250,000 Will Help City Identify What Pollutants Make it to the Chehalis River, China Creek*

By Eric Schwartz
The Chronicle

Centralia considers itself ahead of the curb on stormwater.

The city council accepted a \$250,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology Tuesday night. The city plans to use the funds to retrofit existing stormwater catch basins with filters to demonstrate how effective the devices can be in removing urban pollution from discharges into China Creek and the Chehalis River.

The state does not require treatment of stormwater, but Centralia Utilities Department director Kahle Jennings said the trend is moving in that direction.

"I think if you look at the history of stormwater, we'll be facing it in 10 to 15 years," Jennings said. "When the time comes that treatment is needed, we'll be ready."

The grant is for a total of

\$250,000 with a \$62,500 matching requirement from the city's own coffers. Stormwater Utility workers plan to clean out existing catch basins on Tower Avenue and Pearl Street, as well as the Logan District, by August. At that point, the city will monitor the sites for the next six to 12 heavy rain events, collecting samples and testing for pollutants.

When it has been determined what pollutants are present — possibilities include oil, grease and phosphorous — the city will begin testing filter technologies to eliminate the discharge from the drainage.

Centralia ranked number one for the grant disbursement out of 13 applicants. The city formed a Storm and Surface Water Utility in 2005, and implemented its Stormwater Management Plan in August of 2006 with a \$75,000 grant from the Department of Ecology. The city received another \$50,000 grant for the stormwater program in February of this year.



Kahle Jennings
Utilities Department Director