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News Release

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City crews to begin annual sewer line smoke testing soon *The monthlong procedure does not involve smoke*

MURPHY (July 21, 2020) The annual review of sanitary sewer lines, commonly called smoke testing, conducted by the City of Murphy starts on Monday, Aug. 3 and continues until Monday, Aug. 31. Crews will utilize a safe, non-toxic vaporized mist to identify any fissures in the system.

“Our crews will be going from neighborhood to neighborhood in a specific part of town to identify defects, fissures, openings, cracks, and any other problems in the sewer lines,” says Public Services Director Tim Rogers. “We’re looking to ensure the structural integrity of the main sewer lines in this year’s target area. If we find any problem areas, we flag them and place them on a work order. Conducting these tests annually helps keep us ahead of any major problems.”

The area targeted for testing is south of FM 544 and east of S. Murphy Road. Testing of the several miles of sewer lines contained in the targeted area starts at 8 a.m. and concludes at 4 p.m. each weekday, unless inclement weather or other factors intercede.

Called “smoke testing,” technicians force a specially-formulated mist that uses moisture from the atmosphere into the lines and observe for the tell-tale wafting of the vapor. If leaks are identified, a work order will be issued to investigate the leaks further and repair them as soon as possible. In addition to repairing leaks, an ancillary goal is to prevent the introduction of rainwater or other substances which may block the lines.

“In some rare cases, residents may see the smoke coming out of infrequently-used sinks, or in worse cases, from sewer service lines from the home to the street connector,” said Rogers. “Smoke from sinks generally means that the gas trap, the u-shaped pipe under the sink, is empty and running a little water is enough. As always, leaks, cracks and fissures on public property are our responsibility, but leaks, cracks and fissures on private property are the responsibility of the property owner.”

A licensed plumber should be contracted if smoke is observed within the home or business. Smoke emanating from overflow pipes on the home’s or business’s roof is normal and not cause for alarm.

Testing of sewer lines using this technique is endorsed by the US Environmental Protection Agency and has been in use for over two decades. The smoke will not harm children, pets, plants or elderly persons, and if detected within the home, a few open windows will dissipate it promptly.

Questions can be directed to the Public Works Department at 972-468-4378.

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ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 20,010, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income well above the state average. With more than 80 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a family-oriented community with a strong sense of place. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.