

ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2011

TOWN OF HAMBURG-ECWA COMPLETE WATER SYSTEM MERGER ***Town to save \$1,000,000 annually, stabilize rate structure***

HAMBURG, NY – Hamburg Supervisor Steven Walters and Erie County Water Authority (ECWA) officials today formally announced the completion of the town water system merger with the ECWA at a ceremony at the Seaway Trail Visitors Center, formerly the Wanakah Water Works plant, on Lake Shore Road.

The town began the merger process in 2008 after signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the ECWA that identified system improvements necessary to meet ECWA's system standards. Since that time, the town completed more than \$4.5 million in infrastructure upgrades to the town's aging water system, including the installation of 32,000 linear feet of higher capacity water mains, the replacement of 230 fire hydrants and various other water system improvements. Funding for the merger's implementation was also provided through a \$400,000 grant jointly obtained by the town and ECWA from New York State's Local Government Efficiency grant program, which promotes the sharing and consolidation of municipal services, and \$126,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"This is a great day for the Town of Hamburg and most importantly for town taxpayers", said Hamburg Supervisor Steven Walters. "Merging the town's water system with the ECWA will result in \$1,000,000 in annual savings for the town, which equates to up to \$200 in savings per year for every taxpayer in the affected water districts. I want to commend and thank our town council and ECWA's commissioners and management for being instrumental in making this public service consolidation a reality, which is a significant benefit to Hamburg taxpayers."

As a result of the merger, 38 town water districts were dissolved. The ECWA now owns the town system and is fully responsible for all operations, maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.

"The Erie County Water Authority is very proud to have partnered with the Town of Hamburg on this successful system merger that will result in immediate and significant savings for town taxpayers," said ECWA acting Chairman Francis Warthling. "Supervisor Walters and the town council provided the necessary leadership to actively pursue this project, which was a very progressive decision for the future of Hamburg. The ECWA looks forward to continuing our efforts to further assist local governments that want to lessen the burden on their ratepayers by merging their water systems with ECWA, which as the region's largest and best equipped public water utility, is most often able to provide more cost-effective service delivery."

Warthling concluded that Hamburg joins a growing list of communities that in recent years have realized that ECWA provides the best value for ratepayers and have decided to merger their systems with ECWA, including: the city of Tonawanda; the towns of Clarence, Orchard Park, Hamburg and Evans; and the villages of Depew, Lancaster and just recently Blasdell.

-30-



295 Main Street
350 Ellicott Square Building
Buffalo, New York 14203
(716) 849-8484
www.ecwa.org