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PVSC Hosts Students from UMDNJ Summer Program

NEWARK -- Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's Executive Director, Wayne J. Forrest, announced that the PVSC hosted the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey's (UMDNJ) Science, Medicine and Related Topics (SMART) Program for a tour of the PVSC facility. The purpose of the tour was to complement the program's innovative classroom curriculum.

As part of their ongoing educational outreach efforts, the PVSC offers guided tours of the approximate 200 acre facility for area school groups ranging from middle school to college students. PVSC engineers started today's tour with an overview of the wastewater treatment process, followed by an educational tour of the treatment facility. Students had the opportunity to witness wastewater treatment operators working on plant equipment and laboratory scientists and technicians perform analyses in the plant's State-certified laboratory. Students also had the ability to ask PVSC engineers questions about the treatment process. The PVSC facilitated over fifty plant tours for area schools last year alone, and has another tour scheduled for a separate group of students from UMDNJ's Public Health Research Institute on July 22nd.

"Fostering the education of our youth in the field of science is critical to ensuring the future protection and preservation of our environment," said Forrest. "PVSC is thrilled to have the opportunity to invite students to utilize our facility as a field classroom to further strengthen the important science and health curricula studied in their classrooms," said Forrest.

According to Isaura Otero, Program Assistant of the SMART Program, the program's mission is to advance the appreciation, understanding and knowledge of science, research and medicine among minority students who are underrepresented in the fields of science and medicine. The aim is to maximize their potential to become competitive in the pool of applicants who pursue science, research and health related careers. The SMART Program is a precollege program for students in 6th-12th grade.

"It is important for the tenth grade students to visit the PVSC because they are learning about water pollution and contamination," stated Otero. "This trip would make them more aware of where sewage goes and how it is dealt with. Additionally, it will help the students realize the importance of recycling and preserving the environment," said Otero.

"The students not only witnessed the wastewater treatment process first-hand, but they also learned from the PVSC staff how the operation is science-based and helps improve our environment," said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin. "It is my hope these students use the lessons learned today in their future educational endeavors," said Lucianin.

In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission operates one of the country's oldest and largest treatment plants for the wastewaters of northern New Jersey, serving over 1.4 million people in five counties. With many expansions and recent upgrading to secondary treatment, the facility has been striving, since its creation in 1902 and its initial operation in 1924, to improve local water quality in accordance with federal and state water quality standards. Since the creation of the PVSC's River Restoration Program in 1998, which is charged with preserving and protecting over 100 miles of area waterways, the PVSC has removed over 8,000 tons of debris from the Newark Bay, the Passaic River and its tributaries, and sponsored over 700 individual clean-ups along shorelines and in communities, along with educating over 180,000 students on how they can help protect the Passaic River and our environment.

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