



We Are Columbia

**MEETING DATE:** August 16, 2016

**DEPARTMENT:** City Clerk

**FROM:** *Erika Moore, City Clerk*

**SUBJECT:** **City of Columbia Wastewater Team Wins National Water Heroes Award**

**PRESENTER:** **Mr. David R. Wiman, Superintendent of the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

City of Columbia Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant staff, Ashley Dove, James Foust, Adrian Martin, and Brandon Wilcox, were selected by the Water Environment Federation (WEF) for its national 2016 Water Heroes Award for responding bravely during Columbia's historic October 2015 flood.

The Water Heroes Award recognizes an individual or group who goes beyond the call of duty during an emergency situation to continue protecting the public and the environment and who raises the status of the wastewater industry in the United States. Dove, Foust, Martin, and Wilcox will be honored during WEFTEC®, the Water Environment Federation's Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference September 27, 2016, in New Orleans.

In October 2015, South Carolina was hit by a three-day, 1,000-year rain that caused devastating flooding in the Midlands. Throughout the event, staff calmly managed the wastewater that was surging through the 60 million-gallon-per-day rated plant. At one point, they maintained inflow of 156 million gallons in one day, a level not seen before in the plant's history. Concerns about the reliability of a nearby dike prompted the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control to recommend staff evacuate and shut down the plant. However, Dove, Foust, Martin, and Wilcox placed concern for public wellbeing and other staff above their own safety. They agreed to stay at the plant to maintain the system. Had the plant been evacuated and shut off, raw sewage would have poured into the river, surrounding neighborhoods and city streets, and drastically impacted Columbia's citizens. Throughout the crisis, regulatory compliance was maintained at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, and no sewage was spilled into the river from the plant.

Ashley Dove is the 2002 Water Environment Association of South Carolina (WEASC) Water Operator of the Year. James Foust recently won the 2015 WEASC's Wastewater Operator of the Year.