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COMMISSION ADOPTS DUAL PLUMBING CODE

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – After a public hearing on plumbing codes yesterday (Oct. 5, 2016) the Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners voted (4-1) to adopt a resolution which allows contractors and property owners the freedom to choose between the 2015 International Plumbing Code (IPC) and 2015 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC). This resolution applies to the unincorporated area of Sedgwick County and second and third class cities which contract with the County for code inspection services.

The safety of Sedgwick County residents remains the top priority of Sedgwick County and both codes are proven to be safe. Both the IPC and UPC are well known and well established model codes; they are nationally developed and recognized codes. Staff would not have recommended adopting dual codes if there were concerns of health and safety with either code.

There are 54 Kansas municipalities, including Derby, Lawrence, Hutchinson, Hillsboro, Arkansas City, Augusta, Winfield, Overland Park, Ottawa, Garden City and many others use IPC exclusively. The U.S. Department of Defense uses the IPC on all construction projects including soldiers' barracks. Additionally, there are 35 states across the U.S.A. under the IPC. Having dual codes could provide an economic development boost, as it allows for more competition. The IPC may be considered simpler and more cost effective without sacrificing safety.

“Every industry evolves as new technologies and best practices are developed,” said Chairman Jim Howell. “Plumbing codes should also be brought into the 21st century. Although both UPC & IPC are considered safe, IPC costs significantly less and still delivers full functionality. IPC is a progressive, proven set of plumbing standards that is sweeping the nation and should be an option in Sedgwick County.”

This resolution which goes into effect on Nov. 1, 2016, will not mandate professionals to use one code in lieu of the other, either code may be selected for the project. Adoption

of the IPC is a pilot program which applies only to sites in the unincorporated area of the county. The program will be monitored and reviewed. If, at any time, inspection staff feels that there is an issue with either code it will be brought before the Board of County Commissioners for a new decision. If there are no issues, the dual codes will be reviewed after one code cycle, three years. Metropolitan Building and Construction Department (MABCD) plumbing code inspectors are proficient in both codes.

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