

For Immediate Release
April 5, 2005

Media Contact: Laura Halula
Oakland Planning & Development Corp.
412-621-7863
lahalula@opdc.org

Neighborhood Clean up in South Oakland – Unique Partnership Symbolizing a Creative Way to Help Combat Trash/Litter Issues

Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland) – Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC) is sponsoring a special neighborhood clean up event which is part of their broader community organizing initiative, “Keep It Clean, Oakland!” OPDC, in partnership with many other local and regional entities, will be planting wildflower seeds on four vacant lots in the South Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh on Sunday, April 10th, 2005 at 12:00pm. These four lots are normally a haven for all types of litter and debris ranging from plastic bottles to candy bar wrappers to car batteries and tires. OPDC sees this project as a way to both beautify the neighborhood and prevent litter and debris from accumulating on these four lots.

The wildflowers/vacant lot project would not be possible without the support of many local organizations partnering with OPDC and donating many of their services and products. Partners in this project include Pennsylvania American Water, Valley Landscaping & Cleaning Service, Inc., Soils, Inc., and Mary Sorrells and Harry Blair who are residents of the Schenley Farms neighborhood of Oakland. **Pennsylvania American Water** supplied approximately 80 tons of water treatment residual material, **Valley Landscaping & Cleaning Service Inc.** helped prep the lots for the project and donated rakes, shovels, and wheelbarrows, **Soils, Inc.** delivered the residuals soil to the lots, and Mary Sorrells and Harry Blair donated money to help purchase the wildflower seeds. **American Meadows**, a company based in Vermont, also provided OPDC with a reduced price on their North East Wildflowers Mix, which helped to keep costs down.

In compliance with regulatory standards, the residual material supplied by Pennsylvania American Water for this project is from the company's Hays Mine Water Treatment Facility near Carrick/Baldwin Borough. The residual material is land applied and is used as a topsoil blend. Because of its water treatment residual material program and the beneficial use of the material by community partners, Pennsylvania American Water does not discharge water treatment by-products into natural water resources. The company was honored for its water treatment residual program with the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence and with an EnviroStar Award from the Allegheny County Health Department. OPDC's partnership with Pennsylvania American Water for the vacant lot clean up and wildflowers initiative supports environmentalism and ultimately makes the South Oakland neighborhood a more attractive place to live. If an equivalent amount of topsoil would have been purchased for the project, the cost would have been approximately \$720.

Not only is this project a unique way to deal with neighborhood cleanliness issues, it also symbolizes how organizations whether for-profit, non-profit, or public, can partner to help better the community. Volunteers from the University of Pittsburgh who participate in OPDC's Adopt-a-Block program will be volunteering their time to help plant the wildflower seeds. These groups are Delta Delta Delta sorority, Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, Phi Sigma Pi co-ed fraternity, Sigma Alpha Lambda co-ed service and scholarship organization, Delta Phi Epsilon sorority, and Zeta Phi Beta, Sorority, Inc.

Eventually, OPDC would like to raise enough money to place signs on these lots (similar to signs used to identify other community gardens in the region) to recognize the contribution of their partners and to further inhibit people from littering on these lots.

If you or your organization are interested in volunteering for this event, would like to learn more about it, or would like to donate to OPDC, please call Laura at 412-621-7863, extension 23.

About OPDC

OPDC is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit community-based organization that engages in planning and development activities that contribute to the revitalization of Oakland. OPDC accomplishes this mission through three programmatic areas – real estate development, workforce development, and community organizing. Please check out OPDC's website for more information, www.oaklandplanning.org.

About Pennsylvania American Water

Pennsylvania American Water has 38 water treatment plants. From 30 of those facilities, residual material is produced that can be used for community gardens and other community uses. Transforming raw water from rivers, lakes, and other sources of supply into quality drinking water produces residual materials. These materials may consist of sediment from the raw water, including mud, silt, and other organic and inorganic material as well as harmless by-products from chemicals used during the water treatment process. The fertile nature of the material makes it an excellent medium for revegetation and offers a "green" option for earthwork activities and the reclamation of former industrial sites once considered unusable. Pennsylvania American Water recycled 100% of its solid residual material in 2003 along with 56% of its liquid material. For more information about Pennsylvania American Water, please visit the company's website at www.pawc.com.