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316-660-9370 316-383-7946 WWW.SEDGWICKCOUNTY.ORG

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CONTACT

Kate Flavin
316-660-9370
Van Williams
316-660-9370

Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Project Renaming Moves Forward

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill naming the Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Project after an engineer and local hero, Mitch Mitchell. The bill, which would rename the flood-control project “M.S. ‘Mitch’ Mitchell Floodway,” will now go before the Senate for approval.

M.S. Mitch Mitchell, affectionately known as “Big Ditch Mitch,” was the Flood Control and Maintenance Supervisor for the City Council Flood Control Office for Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita from 1958-63. The Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control project, supervised by Mitchell, diverted excess water around the City of Wichita. To honor Mitchell’s leadership on the project, the Sedgwick County Commission and the Wichita City Council issued a joint ordinance and resolution in May of 2017 requesting the project name change.

“Mitch Mitchell was a visionary public servant,” Sedgwick County Commission Chairman David Dennis said. “His diligent and innovative work continues to serve our residents today. I want to thank our partners and especially Congressman Estes for advancing the renaming of the project in Mitch Mitchell’s honor.

Wichita Mayor Jeff Longwell added: “We are proud to honor the legacy of Mitch Mitchell, whose work on the big ditch has helped safeguard lives and property in our city for decades and will continue to benefit the region for generations to come. I want to thank our partners at the county and the House of Representatives in helping us to recognize Mr. Mitchell’s crucial contribution to our community.”

The Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control project is one of the largest diversion projects in the nation. It spans 18 miles long with 50 miles of connecting channels. It contains 100 miles of levees and 150 control structures.

“Citizens and businesses throughout the region benefit today from the diligent efforts undertaken by Mitch Mitchell,” said Rep. Estes. “The reduction of floodwaters within Sedgwick County has saved lives, prevented millions of dollars of property damage, and allowed for expanded growth and opportunities. This bill provides a fitting tribute to ‘Big Ditch Mitch’ and ensures his public service is remembered by future generations.”

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