

## SEWER UPDATE

The Sewer Advisory Committee has worked long and hard this year on issues related to the Grattan/Vergennes Irrigation Upgrade, the collection system upgrade and the sewer budget for the fiscal year 2011/2012. Although not a decision making body they do make recommendations to the township board that carry considerable weight since this committee is composed of sewer customers and their opinions are valued by board members.

Following is a synopsis of the major repairs and upgrades performed on the system in the last two years. All costs are approximate.

In September of 2009 (9) main pump stations had pumps that were performing below their designed capacity and had difficulty moving wastewater to the next station. All of these pumps have been replaced or repaired and now perform at or near design capacity. Approximate cost of \$40,000.

2. Three control panels on major pump stations have been replaced and several have undergone complete replacement of key components. Approximate cost of \$100,000.

3. A gently used generator (replacing a 30yr. old unit) was purchased to facilitate movement of wastewater during power outages. Cost of \$20,000.

4. Mission dialers have been installed on (10) pump stations to improve communications during pump station failures, power outages and to monitor pump performance and water flows. Cost of \$11,000.

5. The irrigation system at Grattan has undergone significant upgrades which has resulted in improved lagoon levels and reduced chances of overflows. Although near maximum capacity, this treatment site is now being managed properly and winter storage capacities are available. Some money still needs to be spent on expanding this system to allow for future growth and allow current flexibility.

6. Complete replacement of all components in the valve chamber of PS#5 due to stress fracture of main "T" that collects and discharges wastewater from the pump station. Cost \$17,000.

Total cost of these upgrades is approximately \$188,000 over the last two years. These are your capital investment dollars and do not include normal operation and maintenance costs.

The Grattan/Vergennes Irrigation upgrade is comprised of a major overhaul of the irrigation system as required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Replacement of this system is a condition of the permit renewal for this site. The existing system is over 30 years old and would cost more to repair than to replace.

The plan is to clear the property on both sides of Murray Lake Ave. and install two large center pivot irrigation units to discharge the wastewater from the treatment lagoons. The estimated cost of this project is \$500,000. This cost along with the cost of the collection system upgrade, estimated at \$200,000, will be divided up equally among the sewer customers and appear as a special assessment on a separate billing. Options for repayment of this assessment will be shared with all when the final numbers are received and the loan is in place.

The details of the collection system upgrade can be found in the Assessment of Facilities Report (AOF) on the township website under "sewer".

Due to the increased cost of fuel and equipment costs, the SAC has also recommended to the township board a 4% increase in the O&M sewer rates that you pay every quarter. This will amount to \$5 every three months or about \$1.67 per month. This increase will appear on your April billing for 2011. 20% of this payment is transferred to the Capital Investment account to pay for the improvements similar to the ones mentioned above.

The "sewer" page on the township website has up to date information regarding the sewer system along with monthly reports of the operation and maintenance projects that take place. Meeting minutes of the SAC may also be found on that page as well.