

LANSGING COMMUNITY NEWS

Serving the Town and Village of Lansing, Cayuga Heights, King Ferry & Genoa

"Not quite paradise, but a nice place to live."

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South Lansing Sewer District Update

By Matthew Shulman

Nine months after the Town Board established its South Lansing Sewer District Committee to research wastewater treatment options for high-density residential and industrial sections of our town, the committee anticipates holding a public informational meeting in January to update residents on its findings and to answer questions.

The committee is made up of town, county, state, federal and private sector representatives including Jeff Clark (chair), Larry Sharpsteen (vice-chair), Larry Tvaroha, Kevin Kauffman, John Kaminsky, Jeff Overstrom, Alan Buddle, Stephen Farkas, Chris Nill, Dave Herrick, Tammi Aiken, John Andersson and Dawn Czajka. Together, they've examined needs, looked at several technical alternatives and developed a sewage management proposal. The proposal would see construction of a sewage treatment plant near Portland Point and envisages a multistage expansion of sewage collection and wastewater treatment.

First, it has identified a 6,000 acre "planning area" and is developing projected 20-year wastewater flows according to various population growth scenarios. This area is roughly bounded on the north by Tompkins County Ag District No. 1, on the east by the town's easterly boundary, on the south by Cherry Road and on the west by Cayuga Lake. It includes the hamlets of Myers, Ludlowville and South Lansing as well as expanding neighborhoods around Lansing Heights, Bean Hill and Warren Road.

Within the planning area, the committee traced an 1,155 acre "initial service area." The boundaries of this service area (see map on page 5) reflect existing land use, current septic service failures, environmental threats to groundwater, future anticipated zoning, future development, ecological concerns for Cayuga Lake (and its tributary creeks and streams), educational and industrial needs.

It is expected that the homes and businesses within the initial service area will contribute 1/4 of a million gallons of waste water daily when the system first comes on line. By the end of the 20-year planning period, the initial service area's daily wastewater flow is expected to increase to 1 1/2

million gallons a day.

"Everything hinges pretty much on the costs," said Town Engineer David Herrick, of T.G. Miller. Though the preliminary cost estimate for the sewage treatment plant and collection system design under consideration comes to \$7.7 million, "The committee's approach is to reduce, if not eliminate, debt retirement by the users," concluded Herrick.

History

For more than 40 years Lansing has been aware of the problems of on-site septic systems throughout much of the initial service area due to impervious soils and the nearness of bedrock (or the lake shore) to the ground service. Tompkins County's Health Department noted, for example, that the Ladoga Park area has "severe limitations for on-site sewage systems due to flooding and inadequate separation distance to surface waters."

Lansing and neighboring municipalities first looked at sewage treatment alternatives in the mid-1960s when attempts to form a sewer district for the Northeast portion of Tompkins County failed. In 1976, a comprehensive study considered the county's sewage needs for the next 50 years. It looked at Myers and Ludlowville but concluded that while the technical need for wastewater treatment was clear, the cost of pollution control facilities for these areas could not be supported by the 1976 population demographics.

In 1983, the town prepared a Wastewater Facilities Plan that took another look at solutions to the problems in the Ludlowville-Myers-South Lansing portion of town. Again, direct user costs were considered prohibitive and the town deferred action until additional cost recovery sources could be found.

Though parts of the Village of Lansing are connected to the Cayuga Heights sewer treatment plant, there's only one sewer district within the town limits. Constructed in 1984 in anticipation of the Horizons subdivision, it extends along Bush Lane from the Village to the Borg-Warner facility and the Horizons and Horizons estates subdivisions.

After Cayuga Heights instituted a sewer connection



SANTA STOPPED IN LANSING last Sunday to have a bite to eat at Pyramid Mall with Zachary & Jonathan Hubbell and Lansing kids John Fuller, Sarah Fuller, Rachel Miller, Jessica Uhrovic, Mitchell Randall, Lillian Fuller and Kiefer Wright.

moratorium outside its village limits, the Village and Town of Lansing have separately and jointly studied alternatives to (1) expand the Village of Cayuga Heights sewer plant, (2) convey sewage to the Ithaca wastewater plant, or (3) construct a new treatment plant on Cayuga Lake. Their 1990 and 1993 studies also founded.

Funding Options

A \$7.7 million sewage treatment plant (like other capital-intensive investments) must be paid for. Traditionally, "benefit districts" (as they are called) are financed by the users who receive the services. Annual pay-

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Anonymous \$15,000 Donation Allows Fire District To Purchase Life-Saving Thermal Imaging System

Thanks to \$15,000 received from a local donor, the Lansing Fire District will soon acquire a military infrared imaging technology that allows the user to "see" heat. The equipment, known as the Cairns IRIS, consists of a special helmet equipped with an infrared camera and an "up-against-the-face-shield" video display where images can be seen under conditions where the human eye can't see bright yellow objects at 18 inches distance.

"This piece of equipment is today what the "Jaws of Life" (vehicle extrication tool) was 20 years ago," stated Commission Chairman George Gesslein as the Lansing Fire District appropriated \$10,000 last Tuesday evening to make up the balance of the Cairns IRIS's \$25,000 price tag. "It's a proven technology that's just now finding its way into the fire and rescue field.

Stereotype vs. Reality

In Hollywood movies, firefighting searches are made by intrepid firefighters whose piercing gazes penetrate cloudy smoke to spot and rescue toddlers or beautiful women. The reality of an interior search and firefighting operations is starkly different.

In a typical house fire, a curtain of smoke descends from the ceiling to the floor. The smoke is so thick that firefighters often can't see the gloves on their outstretched hands. Interior searches are literally a matter of crawling around on one's hands and knees "seeing" uniquely by touch. This means that firefighters have to hug the walls when searching for victims or fighting fires.

"Smoke not only blinds, it also disorients," said Lansing Assistant Chief Scott Hollister. The thick smoke impedes the process of "sizing up" a fire to determine where it began, how it's progressing and what steps have to be taken to protect the firefighters as they work through the interior of the involved building.



AT YOUR SERVICE - The Lansing Fire District's all volunteer force will do what needs to be done to protect lives and property. The Cairns Iris infra-red imaging system will help interior search and rescue while protecting these men and women from dangers that are not visible to the naked eye.

How It Works

Infrared imaging systems don't "see" objects; they function by detecting the amount of heat that objects give off. The system offers five major advances over the current technology.

First, the system gives our volunteer firefighters the ability to conduct rapid interior fire rescue searches. Because the infrared system only senses heat, the display moni-

tor "looks through" the smoke to easily detect the heat from people -- even under a darkened bed or hidden under a pile of clothing in a closet.

Second, with the infrared helmet, firefighters can literally see the heat of burning fire behind sheetrock walls or ceilings even if the flames haven't broken through. The ability to scan through potentially weakened surfaces like walls, floors and ceilings is a major step in protecting firefighters from being caught in a structural collapse.

Third, the ability of the infrared helmet to detect temperature variations at 1/2 of 1 degree increments, allows firefighters to "see" the invisible buildup of superheated gases in an enclosed room. By tracking the interior temperatures, firefighters can safely exit a space before the gases ignite into deadly "flashover" and explode the interior room into flame.

Fourth, by observing "hot spots" with the helmet, officers can select the most appropriate point for heat ventilation and reduce firefighting damage to buildings. Fifth, the infrared helmet also has a role in determining whether or not temperatures permit the safe approach to a propane tank or other hazardous material.

Training & Implementation

Once the equipment arrives early next year, all of Lansing's line officers and selected interior firefighters will go through extensive training to receive certification in the use and maintenance of the equipment. "Our intention as chiefs," said Hollister, "is to have the officer using the helmet take charge of search and rescue and fire suppression."

"Twenty years ago, Lansing was the first fire department in the county with the "Jaws of Life," said Gesslein, "and in another twenty years everyone will be equipped with infrared imaging." In the meantime, Lansing is operational.



For the Holidays, give your children the Gift of Knowledge and Discovery. Give them a Computer and the Internet!

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