



Sewer Rate Increases February 1

The strategic plan for the very unique sewer system in Rock Falls has come to completion! The culmination of four months of intensive study and careful planning came together at the regular city council meeting in January with a public hearing. The hearing was designed to accept input from the citizens of Rock Falls along with a council resolution for increasing the utility rate from \$27 per month to \$30 beginning with the February invoice. There being no objection at the hearing from the public, the resolution passed with a unanimous vote.



In addition, the plan calls for the sewer rate to be increased one dollar each of the following four years. For example, the rate for 2009 will be \$31, the rate for 2010 will be \$32, and so on. However, the council will evaluate the need for a rate increase at the beginning of each year. If actual expenses and improvements are less than expected, the rate will not be increased.

The increase in the sewer rate was necessary because of planned improvements to the system and because of increased costs to the city from the service provider, PeopleService, Inc. It should be noted that PeopleService, Inc. was very helpful to the council and, in fact, led the entire strategic planning process at no cost to the city. The sewer improvements have been budgeted out over a five-year program. A large portion of the cost will be incurred in the first year, the replacement of ten grinder-pumps. The city has about 60 aging grinder pumps that will eventually need to be replaced. Two of the planned replacements have already been installed. A grinder-pump typically sells for about \$2,000.

During the planning process, the city council visited with various vendors of grinder-pumps and was able to negotiate an attractive discount from the Electric Pump Co. in Des Moines for the agreement to purchase ten new units during 2008. In addition, Electric Pump Co. agreed to inventory two pumps in Rock Falls and to accept payment when each pump is installed. This consignment process protects the two-year warranty that begins upon payment by the city. Keeping new pumps in the city negates the need for the service operator to drive to Des Moines when a pump fails. This saves time and restores service to the home much quicker.



In addition to the replacement of grinder-pumps, improvements will also be made to the collection system and to the processing system. For example, the recent lift station inspections have revealed a number of service connections that are no longer operable. These curb-stop valves will

There is a complete listing of the planned sewer improvements within the Strategic Plan. Anyone wishing to inspect the plans and costs is welcome to contact city hall or any council member to view a completed copy of the plan.

It is hoped that the citizens of Rock Falls appreciate the time and effort that the council members have committed to the sewer strategic planning process. The sewer system is probably Rock Falls' most important asset. It is vital that the system be maintained and improved to assure proper operation for many years to come.

Council Committee Appointments for 2008

The January council meeting marks the beginning of the fiscal year and the appointment of committee chairs. Council sub-committees help spread the load of responsibility for city operations. The mayor appointed the following committee chairs for 2008: Mayor pro-tem, Brian Vanderploeg; county emergency disaster representative, Rich Petersen; emergency 911 representative, Lois Fingalsen; Land-fill of North Iowa representative, Mark Brosz; community betterment representative, Doug Heimer; sewers, streets, and parks committee, Jodi Wyborny.

Pancake Breakfast

All You Can Eat

Pancakes, Sausage, Eggs,
Coffee, Juice

Sunday February 3



8-11 AM

Free Will Donation

Community Center