

## **NEW WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT**

As a result of over a decade of non-compliance with EPA Clean Water Act requirements, the WVDEP recently placed the City under a Consent Order, which includes fines and a schedule for attaining compliance with discharge water quality requirements contained in our NPDES Permit for the treatment plant. After months of negotiating, the City was successful in reducing the fines to \$19,380, in large part due to the City's cooperation and the fact that we were already moving forward with plans for construction of a new wastewater plant. The fines are payable in monthly installments beginning in January in the amount of \$1,615.

The existing lagoons were constructed in 1986, and were initially designed to handle a flow of 155,000 gallons per day. Due to tremendous growth in the area, the City in-creased the permitted flow of the facility to 300,000 gallons per day, with only minor improvements. Therefore, the lagoons are both undersized and overloaded, resulting in the continued violations of our permit requirements.

In 2013, the City engaged Chapman Technical Group to prepare a Preliminary Engineering Report evaluating the our options for attaining compliance, and several options were considered. The report investigated connection to the two nearest existing treatment facilities, neither of which have adequate capacity to handle the City's needs, and both are on the opposite side of the Kanawha River, thus further increasing the cost of these options beyond that required for the City to construct a new treatment plant on its own. That's why the Sanitary Board recom-mended construction of a new plant adjacent to the ex-isting ponds. The report also investigated two different types of treatment plants, and ultimately chose the least costly alternative. The preliminary estimated project cost of a new 500,000 gallons per day treatment plant is \$7.5 million.

We've raised your rates! Where is our new plant? This is definitely the slowest process I have ever been involved with. As of this writing, we are about two months away from completion of the engineering design. Once that is complete, the permitting and funding processes begin, which also is very lengthy. The City had to raise rates early in order to have the funds to pay the \$500,000 re-quired for the design engineering. Please understand that neither the City Council nor the Sanitary Board members wanted to raise your sewer bills, but we had no choice.

In late 2014, the City engaged Chapman Technical Group to design the new treatment plant, and the first order of business was to perform a Phase I Archeological survey for the site. After nearly a year, the City finally obtained clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the location of the new treatment plant, and the City anticipates the design will be complete in early 2016. Due to the numerous required permits and approvals from regulatory agencies for construction of a project of this magnitude, construction of the new plant will not likely begin until late 2016 or early 2017, and it will take 12 months for completion.

***Mayor Randy Barrett***