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Information Update from the Sewer Committee

There have been several more questions concerning the federal government's Economic Recovery Act and the Stimulus Package in relation to the Sewer Project here in Indian River. Presently, we are funded with a loan and the maximum grant available by the United States Department of Agricultural, Rural Development (USDA/RD). We have our money ♦ and the deal we got was as good as any they can offer. What we have at this time is all we will get from the USDA/RD. That is not say there will be no other assistance from other agencies.

Presently the committee is working with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) which is our regional governmental representative agency, to find other sources of grant assistance. There is a possibility we may receive funds to finance the Industrial Park that would lower the overall Residential Equivalent Unit to each of the members of the Sewer District. This, in turn, would lower the Operation and Maintenance cost. This is a separate source from the Stimulus Package.

Our project is on the federal "wish list" and that may also provide extra assistance. There is still some confusion as to how and when that money will become available and as that information comes to the committee we will convey that to the public. Any other means of grant assistance will lower the amount of money we would use from the \$2,600,000 loan, hence, lowering our debt load

The Sewer Committee is still moving forward with plans to submit the petition to the public when two things have occurred. First, we are still waiting for confirmation from Burt Lake State Park. Their participation will potentially lower the REU cost by about 25%. Currently, our project is being reviewed by the State's Department of Management and Budget and we anticipate their decision within the next month.

Secondly, we know we are in the midst of difficult economic times but construction costs will never be lower. The Sewer Committee will issue the petitions when we have the absolute lowest figure possible and by all indications, the economy is headed in the right direction. That may be as early as autumn, 2009 and our goal is to have an overwhelming majority of Sewer District members sign onto the project. It is important to remember that the ballot will be based on land mass, not individual properties. It would be difficult to move forward with a ♦ slim margin of acceptance knowing almost half of the district is unwilling or unable to participate. Conversely, we would not want to have to come back more than once with the petition.

Also, the public must understand and believe that the Tuscarora Township Board fully supports and recognizes the need for wastewater treatment in the downtown district. There may be philosophical differences on how some bills will be paid during this preliminary process but the overall belief and commitment from the board is that this project is paramount, not only to the growth, but to the public health and sustainability of Indian River.

For more information please visit www.resorter.com or www.tuscaroratwp.com. Previous information is posted there, as well.