

PRESS RELEASE

CITY OF BEDFORD COMMITTED TO REPAIRING CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE: THE FOUNDATION TO GROW AND BUILD ON

January 14, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Adequate utility infrastructure is a must for communities that want to prosper and grow. Unfortunately, the City of Bedford is one of many Indiana and United States communities that struggle with aging and deteriorating utility infrastructure. A January 2012 Washington Post Article appropriately articulated that “rapidly deteriorating roads and bridges may stifle America’s economy and turn transportation headaches into nightmares, but if the nation’s water and sewer systems begin to fail, life as we know it will too. Without an ample supply of water, people don’t drink, toilets don’t flush, factories don’t operate, offices shut down, and fires go unchecked. When sewage systems fail, cities can’t function and epidemics break out” (January 2, 2012 - [Billions Needed to Upgrade America’s Leaky Water Infrastructure](#)). Water and sewer infrastructure makes up the foundation of a community but because this resource is out of sight it is all too often out of mind, misunderstood, and taken for granted.

One of the challenges of aging and deteriorating utility infrastructure is sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). These overflows occur when it rains and the sewer system becomes overloaded. The overflows were installed many years ago to prevent backups and property damage. The City of Bedford currently has 15 overflow points listed in their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Seven of these overflow points were identified during the process of assessing the city’s utility infrastructure that was initiated in 2008. Efforts by the utility staff to assess the sewer system became more comprehensive in 2011 when new overflow monitoring equipment was purchased and implemented. This monitoring resulted in a better understanding of the severity of the overflow problem.

Bedford Utilities is required to notify the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) each time an overflow occurs. With better monitoring has come more accurate reporting of overflows to IDEM. As a result, IDEM has asked Bedford to start working toward eliminating these overflows.

In collaboration with utility staff, Bernardin, Lochumeller, and Associates has developed a sewer plan with proposed alternatives for eliminating overflow points. The two main projects are commonly referred to as the East Side Improvements and the West Side Improvements. Many alternatives were investigated, but the “Transport and Treat” method is predicted to be the least cost and most reliable. This method involves installing larger sewer piping, larger pump stations, and a storage basin to prevent overflows.

The probable total project cost to implement the sewer plan that will resolve overflows in Bedford is \$29.5 Million. The next step in the process is to submit the plan to IDEM for review. During that review process a timeline for implementing the plan will be negotiated. It is predicted that the plan will take up to 20 years to fully implement. With a 20 year timeline many funding options will be pursued including grant funds, no-interest loans, debt consolidation and refinancing, as well as others to reduce reliance on utility rates to pay for these vitally necessary infrastructure improvements.