



CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT MARCH 2012

Jeff Gates, City Administrator

The City's contractor has recently begun the installation of new sewer pipelines along the west side of Old Highway 51 which will ultimately result in the connection of the City's wastewater system to the regional Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District's (RMMSD) Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The City's current Wastewater Treatment Facility needs to comply with new federal water quality standards (i.e.: ammonia-nitrogen, phosphorus) for the discharge of our treated municipal wastewater into the Wisconsin River. The new discharge standards were established by the federal government under the Clean Water Act and the City's permit to discharge municipal wastewater into the Wisconsin River is issued by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on behalf of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The current Wastewater Treatment Plant was constructed in 1972 and a 2009 Facilities Plan for the facility concluded that "*modifications and improvements were needed to improve treatment efficiency (meet the new discharge standards), provide operations flexibility and upgrade existing infrastructure that has exceeded its anticipated service life.*" The Facilities Plan and facility construction design process identified major improvements that are needed at the current Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility in order to meet the wastewater discharge standards.

In September 2009, the City obtained bids for the improvements that were needed at the existing Wastewater Treatment Facility and the total projected construction cost at that time was \$7,475,000. The City did apply for federal stimulus grant money to offset the cost for completing the necessary improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility, but unfortunately our project was not ranked high enough to receive stimulus funding from the State. Due to the fact that the necessary upgrades to the current Wastewater Treatment Facility would only have a 20-year operational "life" span, the City could only finance the construction costs of the plant rehabilitation project over the same (20-year) time period.

Based on these facts and after much careful deliberation, the Mayor & City Council determined that joining the regional RMMSD facility was the most beneficial **long-term alternative** (in lieu of rehabbing our existing wastewater treatment plant) approach to treating our municipal wastewater. The RMMSD's modern wastewater treatment facility is located on the west side of the Wisconsin River across from the Weston Power Plant.

Therefore, the City petitioned for annexation into the RMMSD in early 2011 and our annexation was approved by the RMMSD Commission in October 2011. The RMMSD (www.ribmountainmetro.org) currently consists of the following five (5) municipalities: the Village of Weston, the Village of Rothschild, the Village of Kronenwetter, the Town of Rib Mountain Sanitary District and now the City of Mosinee.

The major benefit of participating in the regional treatment facility is that the municipal members of the RMMSD **share the cost** of operating and maintaining a single wastewater treatment plant, which is much more economical than each community operating their own facility individually. By sharing in the cost of operating and maintaining a wastewater facility, the City's wastewater treatment operating costs will decrease as a result of joining the RMMSD.

The City will access the RMMSD's wastewater collection system at a site just west of the intersection of I-39 and Business 51 in the Village of Rothschild. As indicated above, the City is currently in the process of installing two 10" sewer forcemains that will extend from a new pumping station that will be constructed at the southeast corner of Old Highway 51 at Edison Street to the RMMSD system connection point in Rothschild. A new pumping station will also be installed at the existing Fremont Street Wastewater Facility and a sewer forcemain will be installed from the treatment plant to the Wisconsin River Bridge. In anticipation of the Rib Mountain project, a new sewer forcemain was previously installed on the Wisconsin River Bridge and also within the roundabout intersection, during the State of Wisconsin's road reconstruction projects in both of these areas.

The estimated construction cost for the Rib Mountain Forcemain and related facilities is \$6,130,940. Therefore the construction cost for the forcemain is actually -\$1,344,060 less than the estimated construction cost for rehabbing the City's wastewater plant. As part of joining the RMMSD, the City did have to pay a Capital Facility Fee of \$3,406,060 for the City's pro-rated share of the current value of the RMMSD facility.

Fortunately, the City was able to able obtain long-term (40-year) loan financing for the sewer project. Therefore, future residents and future businesses will also equally "share the burden" (with current city residents & businesses) of helping to pay for the improvements that will provide a safe and reliable wastewater treatment system to our community for the next 20 years and beyond. The City was also able to obtain a federal grant of \$1,605,000 from the USDA-Rural Development to assist with paying the project cost.

Unfortunately, in order to pay the debt service for the Rib Mountain Sewer Forcemain project it is necessary to increase the City's sewer service rates. As a result, the City's sewer service charge will generally increase by \$0.50 per month and the sewer volume rates will increase from \$3.70 per 1,000 gallons to \$7.40 per 1,000 gallons. For a 3-Person Household that uses 4,700 gallons of water per month, the total monthly sewer charges will increase approximately \$17.89. It is important to note that this is the first sewer service rate increase since 2004. I would also like to confirm that the water rates will not be increasing due to this project and that the City's water rates have not increased since 1998.

As you may have read in the Utility News bulletin that was included with the March water & sewer bills, the City will now be sending out a monthly utility bill beginning in April (for the month of March). Utility customers can take advantage of having their water & sewer bills directly deducted from their checking or savings accounts on the due date of each billing. Customers will still receive a bill from the City, but it will be marked with the words "Direct Payment" under the Amount Due. The ACH – Payment Authorization form is available on our website at www.mosinee.wi.us or at City Hall.

I would encourage all residents and businesses to play an active role in your community by discussing any matter you feel should be addressed by your local government, with the Mayor, a City Council member or myself. Don't forget to also visit your local government web site at www.mosinee.wi.us for additional information and updates. Please feel welcome to stop by my office, call (715.693.2275) or e-mail me (cityadm@mosinee.wi.us) at any time!