

# City builds new waste water plant

A new three-lagoon waste water treatment plant started holding sewage from the City of Oberlin last May.

Construction started in June 2006, the plant cost about \$2 million to build, nearly \$500,000 under the original estimate.

The Oberlin City Council received \$1,580,175 through a state revolving loan fund to be paid off over the next 20 years, said City Administrator Gary Shike.

The city also received a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration that doesn't have to be paid back.

The loan, he said, will be repaid with higher user rates.

Mr. Shike said the city had to put the plant in because the old one wasn't meeting the state and federal clean-water requirements on the amount of ammonia in discharge water.

The plant also needed to be replaced because of age, he said.

At the beginning of May 2007 the city crew started to prepare the plant by pumping water from wells south of town into each of the three lagoons.

There are two 10-acre lagoons and one four-acre pond, said Mr. Shike.

The sewage is piped under the railroad tracks south of town, through a lift station pumped across Sappa Creek to the first lagoon. After treatment there, it flows into the second and finally to the third and smallest one. Waste is held in the ponds for a total of 160 days, said Mr. Shike. That means every gallon going through the waste water treatment plant is contained for 160 days before any of it is discharged into the creek.

During that time, the water is cleaned up and sludge settled out so it can be discharged.

At first, said Mr. Shike, the amount of evaporation and what comes in daily was about equal, which means the plant didn't discharge anything into the creek for the first three to four months. Engineers told the City Council up front this would happen during the summer months.

The three-cell "continuous discharge" wastewater treatment plant can hold 40 million gallons, said Mr. Shike.



AT THE CITY'S OLD waste water treatment plant, a worker holding pond while (below) another spread the sludge (above) with Liquid Waste Management cleaned out the old on a nearby city-owned field.

— Herald file photos



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