



**PIMA COUNTY
REGIONAL WASTEWATER RECLAMATION DEPARTMENT
201 NORTH STONE AVENUE
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85701-1207**

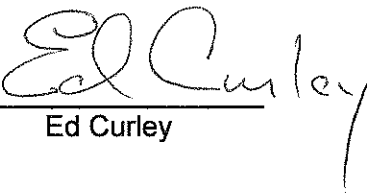
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January 11, 2012

TO: Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory Committee
FROM: Ed Curley, Manager
Strategic Planning Section
SUBJECT: Media Coverage

Attached for your information are copies of articles that appeared in the print media about wastewater related issues since the last Committee meeting.


Ed Curley

Attachments

Mandated lower fees for developers will impact Glendale

by **Rebekah L. Sanders** - Dec. 1, 2011 01:09 PM
The Arizona Republic

Glendale will charge developers lower fees to build in the city in order to abide by a new state law, the City Council agreed at a recent council meeting.

The changes to impact fees under Senate Bill 1525 mean cities across Arizona are bracing for steep financial losses.

Public Works Executive Director Stuart Kent estimated Glendale could lose as much as 80 percent of the money that goes to pay for roads, parks and libraries in new neighborhoods. He said the city's \$2.2 million impact-fee collection last fiscal year could decline to about \$450,000 under the new fee schedule.

Homebuilder advocates say the changes will help the state's battered housing sector, spurring economic benefit for cities.

"Our industry is hopeful that these proposed fee reductions could actually have the impact of jumpstarting new development, creating much needed jobs for the construction industry and generating new revenue for the city," Jake Hinman of Capitol Consulting, a lobbyist for the Arizona Multihousing Association, wrote to Glendale in a letter supporting the fee changes.

Another item council voted on Nov. 22 was a new restaurant at Glendale Municipal Airport.

Ron and Karen Zamenski will move and rename their breakfast-and-lunch restaurant Left Seat from a location at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport that entertained diners with prime views of the runway to the Glendale airport terminal.

Left Seat West was the only bid Glendale received for the restaurant lease. The five-year lease, with options to renew for nine years, includes rent to Glendale of \$800 to \$1,200 per month.

The new eatery replaces the Flying Skillet Café, which closed almost a year ago after air traffic to the Glendale airport dropped.

DECEMBER 20, 2011, 5:00 PM

Oh Danny Boy, the Pipes, the Pipes Are Failing

By FELICITY BARRINGER

C.M. Glover for The New York Times Repairing a water main break in Norwich, Conn.

A new report by the American Society of Civil Engineers takes a dim view of the state of the country's 54,000 community-based drinking-water systems and its 15,000 public wastewater treatment facilities. The systems are rusty, aging and seriously inadequate for meeting future needs, the study warns.

The drinking-water systems, just under half of which are publicly owned, supply 264 million people. The wastewater treatment facilities supply about 225 million people, but they are so prone to failure that 900 billion gallons of untreated sewage are discharged each year, the Environmental Protection Agency estimated in 2004.

The E.P.A.'s 2010 estimate of the capital cost of modernizing this infrastructure was \$91 billion, the report said, but financing for that purpose amounted to only \$35 million. If systemic neglect continues, it adds, that shortfall will only increase.

"The growing gap between capital needs to maintain drinking water and wastewater treatment infrastructure and investments to meet those needs will likely result in unreliable water service and inadequate wastewater treatment," the study said.

It also predicted higher water rates, a consumer shift toward home buying in areas with good water infrastructure, just as people now seek homes in good school districts, and private and corporate investment in independent systems — wells, septic systems and the like — where possible.

The need for capital investment in such systems rose significantly from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, increasing 94 percent for drinking-water delivery systems and 115 percent for wastewater treatment, the E.P.A. has reported. But the actual capital investment for the same period rose just 64 percent for drinking-water systems and 43 percent for wastewater treatment.

The capital investment gap and the resulting deterioration of water infrastructure could also lead to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in water-intensive industries, like wineries, paint manufacturers and chemical plants, the engineers' report said.

The report cites three possible sources of capital investment: federal grants, municipal and state money, often generated through bond issues, and private investment. About 10

percent of the water systems serving the public are privately run.

One of those private companies, American Water in New Jersey, seized on the report to make the case that private investment was the surest remedy to the problem of rusting pipes. Its chief executive, Jeff Sterba, keeps a piece of wooden pipe, 10 inches in diameter and with a hole in its side, on his desk that he said was unearthed during repairs on an Iowa system only three years ago. Until then, it was in use, although it probably dated back to the 19th century.

“That’s what’s scary,” he said of the water lines. “It’s out of sight, out of mind. It’s a crumbling infrastructure that you don’t see.”

“When you have a main break, service to that area is disrupted, but damage is done to other public infrastructure;” Mr. Sterba added.

In Washington, traffic on River Road, a major connector to western suburbs, was hobbled for weeks by repairs after a water main break a few years ago.

Mr. Sterba said his company had the advantage of having its own equity capital and a credit rating that could allow it to borrow at lower interest rates than strapped municipal and state governments.

Local communities are often averse to privatizing municipal infrastructure. The question is whether that opposition might recede if people recognized that the taps might one day stop running for days or weeks at a time.

Scottsdale expects 3% hike in sewer rate

by Beth Duckett - Dec. 21, 2011 08:40 AM
The Republic | azcentral.com

Scottsdale residents and businesses could see their sewer rate go up in the next few years to help account for increasing system costs.

The city is expecting a 3 percent hike in the sewer rate next year, which would add less than \$1 onto the typical monthly utility bill for residents. Proposals to change the way water rates are calculated could also impact bills, with higher-use consumers digging deeper into their pockets and lower-use consumers paying less.

Marshall Brown, Scottsdale's water resources executive director, said wastewater revenues are projected to fall short of costs, which are expected to grow.

If the sewer rate rises by 3 percent next year, the average single-family water customer with a 5/8-inch meter, using a typical amount of water and wastewater, would see their monthly utility bill increase by 67 cents. Typical single-family usage is 11,500 gallons of water and 8,000 gallons of wastewater.

"We're looking at moderate sewer-rate increases in probably the next five-year period," Brown said.

Proposed changes in how the sewer rate is calculated would further impact customers whose sewer discharge "strength" is high. This largely affects restaurants and businesses whose outpouring of fats, oils

and grease drive costs in the system, water officials said.

Sewer-rate changes would take effect in July.

Overall water-rate revenues are expected to remain unchanged next year, but the city could consider an increase in the water rate as early as 2013.

Upcoming meetings

The city will present information on water and sewer changes.

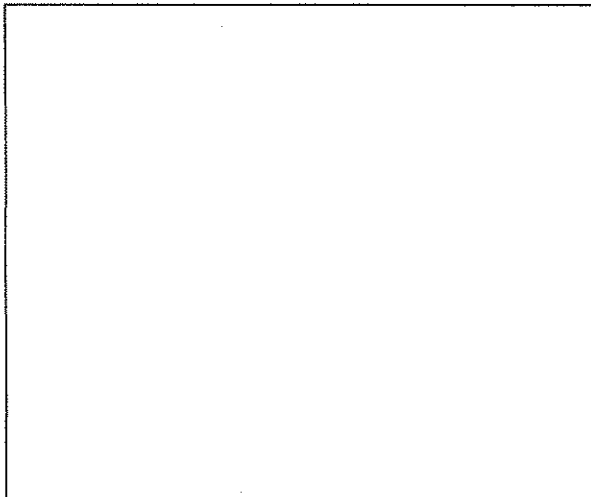
Jan. 9. 5-7 p.m. at the Via Linda Senior Center, 10440 E. Via Linda.

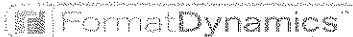
Jan. 11. 4-6 p.m. at the Civic Center Library auditorium, 3839 N. Drinkwater Blvd.

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Glendale City Council debates forming water, sewer task force

by Cecilia Chan - Dec. 23, 2011 12:59 PM
The Arizona Republic

Glendale aims to have candidates by mid-February to serve on a citizens task force on water and sewer systems.

The City Council in Tuesday's workshop made suggestions about forming the group, which will advise the council on rates.

"I suspect there will be a high level of interest," Mayor Elaine Scruggs said.

Scruggs first suggested a task force last fall after the city instituted a 12 percent increase in water and sewer rates, the sixth increase in as many years. City officials said the increase was needed to help pay for improvements and upkeep of city water and sewer systems.

The typical Glendale household pays about \$76 a month for water and sewer.

This fiscal year, which began July 1, residents and businesses received a respite from an increase. Staff members attributed that to slower growth and more efficient operations.

Under the proposal, the mayor and every council member could each submit up to 10 names of residents to serve on the task force. Residents could still serve if they already participate on a city board or commission.

The citizens committee would be tasked with learning everything that has to do with municipal water, including its purchase, cleaning and distribution, as well as the operations of other water agencies.

Councilwoman Joyce Clark said an ordinance should come to the council in early January for approval to form the task force. The city could then accept applications from residents, she said.

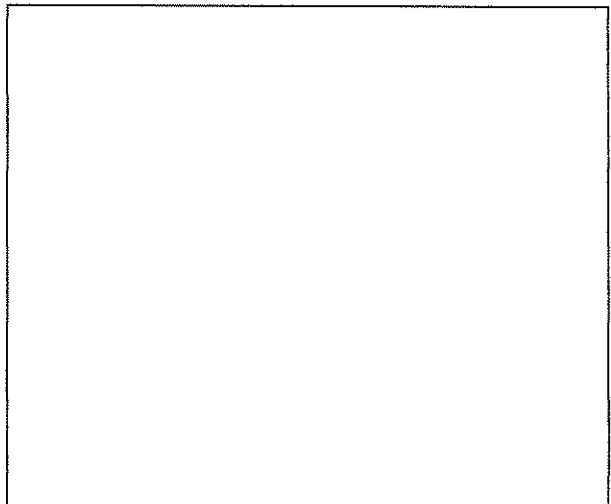
Clark chairs the council's Government Services Subcommittee, which came up with the guidelines.

The city would hire a facilitator to promote consensus building. City staff also will lend a hand in the task force.

Craig Johnson, executive director of water services, said three companies are under consideration to act as a facilitator and that the cost will be known once the scope of service is determined. But, he said, he is pushing for less than \$50,000.

Gary Sherwood, who serves on the seven-member Glendale Planning Commission, questioned the effectiveness of a 70-

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member task force.

"It's such a large number," Sherwood said.

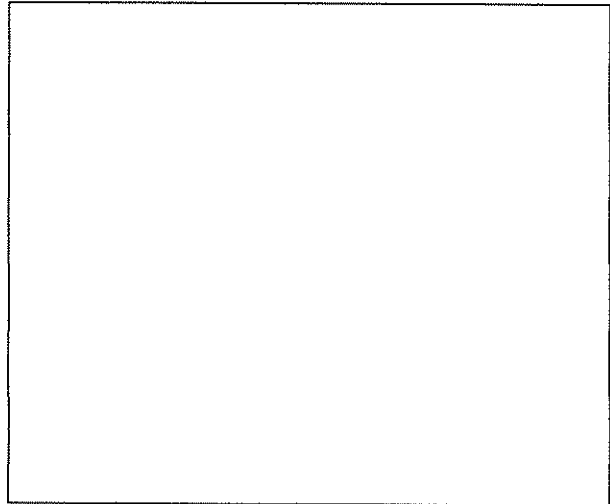
"It's too large a group to do anything."

He said typically boards and commissions have anywhere from five to a dozen members and even then reaching consensus can be hard.

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Federal appeals court upholds Santa Cruz River as 'navigable'

HOWARD FISCHER Capitol Media Services | Posted: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 5:09 am

PHOENIX -- A federal appeals court has slapped down efforts by home builders to overturn a decision that two stretches of the Santa Cruz River are legally "navigable."

In a unanimous ruling, the three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia district sidestepped the question of whether the Environmental Protection Agency made a proper legal determination. Instead, they concluded that the National Association of Home Builders and its two Arizona affiliates lack legal standing to challenge EPA's action.

Judge Karen Henderson said it would be one thing if the lawsuit had been brought by a specific landowner who had to jump through additional regulatory hoops on a project because of the designation. But at this point, she said, that does not exist.

David Godlewski, president of the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, said his organization is looking at what to do now.

"We obviously didn't lose on the merits," he said. Godlewski said a new lawsuit may be filed, one designed to get around the problems the appellate court found.

The fight surrounds two areas of the Santa Cruz designated by the EPA as navigable.

One involves a 20-mile stretch running from Tubac to Continental. The other starts at Pima County's Roger Road sewage treatment plant and runs north to the Pinal County line.

The designation is legally important because once a stream is determined "navigable," it falls within the scope of the federal Clean Water Act. And that law imposes restrictions on any discharges into water that eventually winds up in those streams, covering everything from pollutants to rocks and sand.

In their lawsuit, the three home builder groups said the designation defies logic.

Attorneys for the associations say that the river has never been a continuous stream, "normally flowing only in response to significant precipitation and discharges of sewage effluent." They said the ordinary flow is insufficient for the river to be used for commerce by boat.

"At best (the two reaches) are cable of supporting a canoe during exceptional periods of high water," the lawsuit states. And even those flows, the lawyers said, are of "extremely limited duration."

And they said the flow further north is essentially all sewage, with no "natural flow" for most of the year.

They also pointed out that the state's own Navigable Stream Adjudication Commission has concluded the Santa Cruz does not fit the definition. That commission, however, is looking at the issue solely to determine land ownership issues, as property within navigable streams belongs to the state.

In the ruling, Henderson said the U.S. Supreme Court has not reached any consensus on exactly what constitutes a navigable stream. But she said her court did not need to decide that because the home builder groups have no right to bring the challenge.

"To establish organizational standing, National Association of Home Builders must allege such a personal stake in the outcome of the controversy as to warrant the invocation of federal court jurisdiction," she wrote.

"It must demonstrate that it has suffered injury in fact," Henderson continued. That must show a "concrete and demonstrable injury" to the group's activities along with a drain on its resources, "more than simply a setback to the organization's abstract social interests."

She said that has not happened here.

Henderson said it is irrelevant that the home builders have spent money on legal fees over the scope of the reach of the Clean Water Act as well as testifying before Congress and submitting comments to agencies. She said there is nothing showing those expenses are beyond what the organization would normally spend in its advocacy role.

And Henderson said the organizations have no legal right to sue on behalf of its members. She said until there has been some determination that the restrictions apply to a specific property, or that a landowner is charged with discharging without a permit, no one has been injured.

"In the meantime, National Association of Home Builders members face only the possibility of regulation," Henderson wrote.

And she said that was a possibility that existed even before the action of the EPA, it was always understood that stretches of the Santa Cruz could be designated as navigable.

County plans projects in Green Valley area

By Philip Franchine Green Valley News | Posted: Wednesday, December 28, 2011 9:53 am

Pima County departments are planning a variety of construction projects in the Green Valley area in 2012, including some at Canoa Ranch and the Anza Trail.

Canoa Ranch will get new rest rooms, structural repairs to a historic building, and drainage and infrastructure improvements, an official of the county Office of Sustainability and Conservation said. Other departments involved in the project include Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department and Facilities Management.

In addition, the county expects to work with Farmers Investment Co. on building a section of the Anza Trail in Sahuarita on the west bank of the Santa Cruz River near Sahuarita Road, using funds from the Office of Sustainability and Conservation.

In other area projects, the county's Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department is planning minor upgrades to the Green Valley wastewater facility in 2012, Director Jackson Jenkins said.

The county will continue to pursue sites for a permanent Pima County Library building in Sahuarita, but that effort is still in the early stages and no construction is expected to occur in 2012, an official with the Facilities Management Department said.

No projects are planned by the county Department of Transportation or the Department of Environmental Quality, which oversees the Sahuarita Landfill.

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Odors from GV wastewater plant get attention

By Philip Franchine Green Valley News | Posted: Wednesday, January 4, 2012 11:32 am

As growth brings homes closer to the Green Valley wastewater plant, the odors from outdoor sludge-drying pads have generated complaints from neighbors, spurring the county to undertake odor-control operations.

Eric Wieduwilt, deputy director of planning and engineering for the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department, said the county has begun planning and design work for a \$2.5 million upgrade aimed at mitigating odors at the plant.

“We did start receiving some (odor) complaints over the last few years. We had not received any prior to that. As growth is getting closer to the plant, what was an acceptable means of treating wastewater 10 years ago may not be acceptable now,” Wieduwilt said.

Among key steps, the county will enclose some operations at the plant and will start hauling sludge to the Ina Road wastewater treatment facility rather than drying it outdoors. The hauling cost is expected to be \$243,000 a year.

The Green Valley plant is along the Santa Cruz River east of Duval Road, near the newer Sahuarita neighborhoods of La Joya Verde and Rancho Abrego.

Construction will start in July and will entail covering two sludge holding tanks and a gravity belt thickener that are now open-air operations. Also, a new odor control facility will filter the gases emanating from the tanks and the belt and aeration will be enhanced to reduce the formation of odorous gas in the holding tanks. Construction should be finished by mid-2013.

Currently, Wieduwilt said, “We dry bio-solids (sludge) outside on pads. That works well and no one complained before, but when it gets wet and doesn’t dry for a while, the odors start picking up.”

Dried sludge now is sent to a landfill.

The county expects to haul the Green Valley bio-solids some 32 miles to the Ina Road plant for at least a decade.

That approach is, Wieduwilt said, “the best option at this time. There are scenarios where the Green Valley plant could expand and there would be a break-even point where hauling would no longer be cost-effective.”

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Pima hands it over under protest; taxpayers stand to lose millions

Disputed treatment plant goes to Marana

Becky Pallack Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Wednesday, January 4, 2012 12:00 am

During a Monday midnight handoff, the town of Marana took control of the disputed Marana wastewater treatment plant and sewer system from Pima County.

The county protested the takeover, saying Marana hasn't paid for the plant, doesn't have the state and federal permits to operate it, and the state law that allowed the takeover is unconstitutional.

Marana has contracted with EUSI LLC to operate the facility at 14393 W. Lockett Road, which serves 1,800 customers on the north side of the town.

Marana Town Manager Gilbert Davidson said the town is operating under the county's permits and working with the state to have new permits issued.

"We don't agree that Marana should be running the plant," said Jackson Jenkins, director of Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Management.

"We're going to obey the law; we're going to do it in protest; and we're going to follow the due recourse that we have," he added.

"It's their choice," Davidson responded. "Marana has set out to operate its own wastewater system to be able to manage its own water resources. That was our goal to begin with, and that's still our goal today."

Taxpayers can expect more lawsuits to come.

SO FAR

In 2007, the town annexed the county plant and tried to claim ownership. When that plan was rejected in Superior Court, the town asked the state Legislature for a law that would allow it to take over the plant by paying only the outstanding debt.

The new state law took effect July 3, and the town gave the county the required six months' notice. The midnight Monday hand-over meeting was scheduled a week ago.

Davidson said the town is only exercising its rights. He said the town can manage its own water resources best. He also said the town wants to issue its own development permits without involving the county.

WHAT'S NEW

When ownership legally changed hands, there was a literal transfer, too, with representatives from both Marana and the county meeting at the plant.

Both sides said the meeting was professional.

Jenkins said he gave town representatives the keys, operating manuals and logbooks.

Four county employees who worked at the plant left the facility in very good condition and were reassigned to vacant county positions, he said.

The employees now running the plant work for EUSI LLC, the contractor. The county offered a quickly scheduled job-shadowing opportunity on Saturday, but only two people met with the lead operator.

Pima County says the contractor can't use the county's state permits to operate the plant, according to a memo from County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality told Davidson in a letter that the state agency wouldn't permit the town to operate the facility before the town and the county sign an agreement for the transfer of four state permits. No agreement is in the works.

Huckelberry and Jenkins said Marana could already be in violation of government rules. But Davidson said ADEQ is OK with operations consistent with the

original permit until new permits are issued.

WHAT'S NEXT

Pima County will bill Marana for \$18 million, which is the principal and interest owed on the facility.

"That number pales in comparison" to the \$27 million that the county paid, Jenkins said. "It doesn't fairly compensate the ratepayers."

Taxpayers and ratepayers can also expect years of lawsuits.

Both the town and the county are appealing a previous Superior Court ruling on the matter: Pima County is suing the state over the constitutionality of the new law, and the county Board of Supervisors may decide to sue the town for operating the plant without the needed permits. There also could be legal actions and appeals around the permits themselves.

"I hope the county eventually sees that we are committed to operating our own system to manage our water resources," Davidson said. "If they want to continue to sue and litigate, I think that's unfortunate."

"We're going to obey the law; we're going to do it in protest; and we're going to follow the due recourse that we have."

Jackson Jenkins,

director of Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Management

Contact reporter *Becky Pallack* at bpallack@azstarnet.com or 573-4346.



Issues order making it legal though town doesn't have permits

Marana can run sewer plant, state says

Becky Pallack Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Thursday, January 5, 2012 12:00 am

The town of Marana does not have state permits to operate the wastewater treatment plant it took control of this week, but the state has issued an order making the operation legal.

The town and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality signed a consent order Tuesday that requires the town to comply with the terms of the four permits held by Pima County - until the town gets its own permits or quits running the plant.

Marana asked for a transfer of the county permits, but the county will not agree to that, according to the order.

A new state law empowering Marana to take over the plant created the conflict. The new law required Pima County to turn over the plant to the town, but existing state laws also require the town to have permits to operate the plant.

The ADEQ doesn't have a process for Marana to get permits. Its current processes account only for "the orderly and cooperative transfer of permits between willing parties," according to the order.

But Pima County turned over its plant Monday night under protest, and legal actions are pending.

The order signed Tuesday is as binding as a permit, said Michael Fulton, director of the ADEQ Water Quality Division. All the standards, potential penalties, reporting requirements and liabilities that come with the permits also come with the order, he said.

However, Pima County is still the permit holder for the plant, and that "creates enforcement ambiguity for us," Fulton said.

The order also requires the town to demonstrate to the ADEQ its technical and financial capability to run the plant within two weeks.

Contact reporter Becky Pallack at bpallack@azstarnet.com or 573-4346.

The Washington Post

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For cleaner water, cities should go green

Published: January 6

Many cities face expensive challenges in upgrading aging sewers, pipes and water mains to ensure clean water [[“U.S. water and sewer systems tapped out,”](#) front page, Jan. 3]. These cities should look to the District for cost-effective, cutting-edge “green infrastructure” solutions such as putting green roofs on new housing developments, improving management of polluted runoff along major thoroughfares (as the District has done along Georgia and Pennsylvania avenues), removing asphalt and planting grass in school yards, and expanding an incentive program for homeowners to use rain barrels, trees and permeable pavement. In the District, these solutions save money and create jobs while also safeguarding clean water, reducing flooding and beautifying the city.

Congress can promote clean water and healthy communities by prioritizing funding for these green infrastructure solutions.

William Robert Irvin, Washington

The writer is president of American Rivers.

Federal court hears Arizona ski resort wastewater case

Jan. 9, 2012 09:51 PM
Associated Press

A federal appellate court in San Francisco is considering arguments that challenge the planned use of treated wastewater to make snow at an northern Arizona ski resort.

Attorneys for the Save the Peaks Coalition presented their appeal Monday to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. They told the court the U.S. Forest Service needs to do a more thorough analysis of the health risks.

The coalition is appealing a 2010 ruling that says the Forest Service adequately considered the environmental impacts before approving the snowmaking plan at the Arizona Snowbowl resort near Flagstaff.

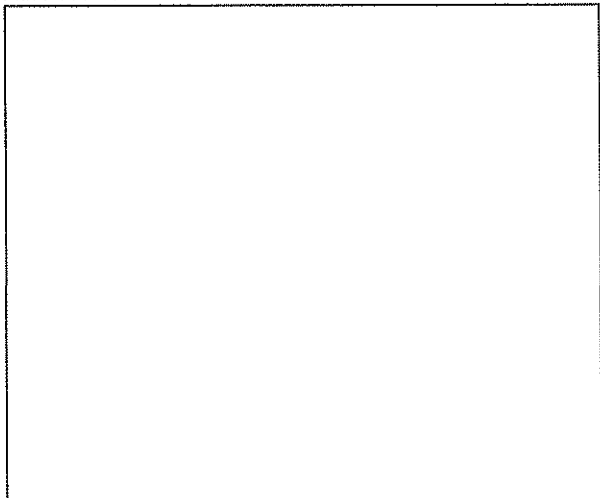
Government attorneys argue that the plaintiffs haven't specified what information they want in the analysis.

More than a dozen tribes consider the mountain sacred and the use of treated effluent on its slopes an affront to their religious beliefs. They argued unsuccessfully that the plan violated religious freedom.

Snowbowl plans to begin making snow in the winter of 2012-13.

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MARANA Weekly NEWS

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E-EDITION LAST UPDATED: Tuesday, January 10, 2012 10:26:30 AM

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Top Stories

Marana takes control of sewage treatment plant

Posted: Wednesday, Jan 11th, 2012
By Chuck Barth

MARANA -- Pima County turned over the north side wastewater treatment plant to Marana at midnight on Jan. 3. This action came as a result of Senate Bill 1171 which guarantees any municipality in the state the right to create its own wastewater utility system. That was not allowed in Pima County under previous law.

The county waited until the afternoon before Christmas to let Marana know about the turnover. That left the town with just four days to get its act together to run the plant.

"We have been preparing for this for some time and a number of things had been put in place, but the county waited until the very last minute to let us know," according to Marana Town Manager Gilbert Davidson. "Cities and towns around the state of Arizona operate their own wastewater systems except for here in Pima County where the county was given the authority back in the 1970s. The bill that was passed and signed into law last year clarified and helped further define that, even in this county, a city or town can operate its own wastewater system."

Davidson went on to call this a monumental step in an action that has been going on for many years. He said that now that the town operates the sewer plant thought is being given to ways of making the facility and the system work better.

The action turns over not only the sewer plant but all of the pipes in north Marana that are connected to it. It's the beginning of the first Marana managed sewer treatment system.

For the complete article see the 01-11-2012 issue.

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Marana gets first county bill for disputed treatment plant

Becky Pallack Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Wednesday, January 11, 2012 12:00 am

Pima County has billed the town of Marana for a wastewater treatment plant it turned over to the town under protest last week.

The town must keep Pima County's bond payment schedule and pay the county about \$18.2 million over 15 years, said County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry.

Marana made a \$46,000 monthly interest payment Tuesday "as a demonstration of good faith," according to a letter from Marana Town Manager Gilbert Davidson.

Marana next must pay a \$540,000 principal payment that is due July 1, Huckelberry said in a letter to Davidson. Principal payments will range from \$459,000 to \$1.48 million a year over time.

In his letter to Huckelberry, Davidson demanded financial documents and said the town finance director will review the financial obligations and may request an audit.

In addition to paying off the debt, the town will pay \$124,000 a year for its contract with private plant operator Westland Resources, which subcontracts with EUSI LLC. The town also will have to pay Pima County 14 cents per gallon to treat sewage.

There are also the legal costs associated with lawsuits related to the takeover, which was made possible by a new state law.

The town previously paid nothing to be part of the Pima County regional system.

The county spent about \$23.9 million to build and equip the facility at 14393 W. Lockett Road, which serves 1,800 customers on Marana's north side.

Contact reporter Becky Pallack at bpallack@azstarnet.com or 573-4346.

Marana takes control of waste

By Thelma Grimes, The Explorer | Posted: Wednesday, January 11, 2012 4:00 am

After a long battle with Pima County, the Town of Marana officially took over control of the wastewater treatment plant at midnight on Jan. 2.

Town Manager Gilbert Davidson said the midnight turnover was just another way for Pima County to make things as difficult as possible in the dispute over who has the right to control the town's wastewater services.

Davidson said when Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckleberry sent a letter on Christmas Eve, "We had to scramble to get everything lined up."

To manage the takeover, the Town of Marana has contracted with Westland Resources, with EUSI serving as a subcontractor.

The six-month contract will cost the town \$62,500, plus a 10 percent contingency for project-related expenses, outside services, equipment purchases and allowance.

Town spokesman Rodney Campbell said the contract requires the town to pay Westland the cost plus 10 percent of the subcontractor's fee, which means if EUSI bills Westland \$15,000, the town will have to pay \$16,500.

Davidson said contracting with Westland is the most "expeditious way to have a seamless transfer."

County officials reluctantly turned over control of the north wastewater plan, primarily because of a law passed by the Arizona Legislature last year.

Last April, Gov. Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill 1171 into law, which allows Marana to provide wastewater services to residents by assuming ownership of the small wastewater treatment facility located just outside town boundaries.

The facility serves about 1,800 customers on the north side of town, which includes Continental Ranch and Dove Mountain.

County officials have also disagreed with the price paid for the treatment facility. The Town will be billed \$18 million for the facility, but county officials have estimated it is worth \$27 million.

"The Town of Marana set out on a mission to manage our own wastewater, and that's what we are going to do. Whether the county likes it or not," Davidson said. "It is not up to them, it is up to our elected officials."

County officials have also claimed the Town does not have legal authority to operate the wastewater facility because they do not have the proper permits in place.

Davidson disagreed with the assertion, stating they are working under the county's permit, and will be working with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to secure the required licenses to move forward independently.

There is no timeframe on how long the process with the state will take.

In the meantime, the issue is far from over, as the county and the Town of Marana still have issues to be decided in court. The Town of Marana and Pima County signed an intergovernmental agreement in 1979 that gave the county permission to provide sewer service in Marana. The town exercised its legal right to end that contract in 2007.