

PRESS RELEASE

Conewago Municipal Authority Receives \$7.2 Million from the State for Sanitary Sewer Construction

More than 350 residents, 15 businesses, and the Conewago Elementary School will connect to the public sewer system

CONEWAGO TOWNSHIP – The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) has approved a financial assistance package to the Conewago Municipal Authority totaling \$7,242,564 for sanitary sewer improvements. The financing package consists of a \$6,623,782 loan and a \$618,782 grant. The loan is repayable over 30 years with an interest rate of 1% per annum. Representative John Payne recommended the project to PENNVEST on behalf of the Authority in order to help eliminate some of the environmental concerns associated with on-lot wastewater disposal and to help keep the annual cost of sewer service reasonable for the estimated 150 homes and 15 businesses and the Conewago Elementary School that will be served by the project.

The project will include the construction of approximately 23,775 linear feet of new sewer line to connect properties with failing on-lot septic systems to the public treatment system. More than 150 homes, 15 businesses, and Conewago Elementary School will be served by these improvements, but the financial impact of the project on these customers will be reduced thanks to the financial assistance from the state.

The project is required by Conewago Township's approved Act 537 Official Sewage Facilities Plan which includes an implementation schedule and enforceable deadlines mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. This project will:

- Improve the areas water quality by eliminating malfunctioning on-lot systems. Approximately 51% of the on-lot disposal systems had malfunctions. Another 43 units were classified as potential malfunctions. Of the 171 dwelling units, approximately 130 are classified with some type of malfunction that will be eliminated by the project.
- Improve the drinking water for residents as 36% of the water sample tested positive for some type of pollution some of which is related to the malfunctioning on-lot disposal system.
- Reduce the amount of nutrients and bacteria entering Hoffer Creek, a tributary of Conewago Creek. In 1998, DEP listed Hoffer Creek as an impaired stream due to excess nutrients, siltation, and habitat alternatives, and developed a Total Maximum Daily Load Plan for the Conewago Creek Watershed.
- Serve the Conewago Elementary School which is currently served by a malfunctioning on-lot disposal system. The availability of the public sewers will allow the school to expand to meet the needs of the existing population. Currently some Conewago Elementary School students are being bused to Londonderry Elementary School. By providing public sewerage service to the School, the on-lot disposal system will be removed enabling the building to be expanded allowing students to attend the neighborhood school.

- Serve the majority of businesses in Conewago Township especially those along PA Route 743 and lands owned by the Hershey Trust Co., Trustee for Milton Hershey School and Hershey Free Church.

The area to be served by this project is the Route 743 corridor beginning near the intersection of 743 and Old Hershey Road and ending in the vicinity of the Conewago Elementary school. The project area will also include properties located along Old Hershey Road and portions of Ridge and Roundtop Roads. Properties for which the principal dwelling is located within 150 feet of the sewer main will be required to connect to the system in accordance with the township's ordinance. The collected wastewater will be conveyed and treated at the Derry Township Municipal Authority's wastewater treatment facility.

Though construction costs have not been finalized and the cost of service has not been established, the authority's goal is to have an annual user charge similar to the one charged in other portions of the township. The fees charged to initially connect to the system are expected to be higher than the \$5,000.00 charged for connection in Laurel Woods, but a deferred payment plan is anticipated, which should make the service more affordable.

Construction is not expected to begin until early 2007, and the day-to-day operation of the system is expected to be provided by the Derry Township Municipal Authority.

The engineering firm of Herbert, Rowland and Grubic, Inc. (HRG) has assisted the authority with project planning, design reviews, and project financing, including preparation of the financial assistance application to PENNVEST.