

# The Daily Mail

Serving Greene County since 1792

## NEWS

### **Old project in new start on Main Street**

*Long-awaited, badly needed sewer system restoration underway at last*

**By W. T. Eckert**  
**Hudson-Catskill Newspapers**

Published: Friday, May 11, 2012 2:08 AM EDT

CAIRO — It's been a lot of years coming, but Main Street, Cairo, is getting its upgrade.

In 2007, the town of Cairo took on a major updating of its sewer system, a project with two major components and work is well underway.

American Evergreen Construction, the company installing the new force main and pump station, is working on the first of the two components.

Alan Tavenner of Delaware Engineering said the two main components to the project include replacing the undersized piping that pumps waste water from the east end of Main Street by the plaza to the sewer plant on the west end of town.

"That is upgrading that from a two inch to a six inch pipe for current and future expansion in town," Tavenner said, "along with a new pump station, located on Lake Mills Road, to support the influx of water."

The second part of the project involves the expansion of the treatment capacity of the plant itself for future expansion by adding a third treatment unit to the plant.

The overall cost of the project is \$2.9 million with a grant from the state Environmental Facilities Corp. for \$1.9.

The remainder of the payment not covered by the grant will be on a 30 year, zero percent interest loan from the town.

"It's unfortunate that when they built this sewer plant back 10 - 12 years ago, it should have lasted for a while without any additional work," Tavenner said, "but this should get them up to snuff so they are not continuing to spend money and being under consent order with DEC perpetually."

The New York State Department of Conservation has a compliance order with Cairo because of past violations due to the plant being undersized and not having treatment capacity, Tavenner said.

Over the last few years, operational changes had been applied to the plant, bringing Cairo into compliance with DEC, including the addition of a functional filter system which Tavenner said was a big compliance problem with the state agency.

"The town had bought a used filter that was in very good condition from Ski Windham," Tavenner said, "which saved the tax payers several hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Print Page



New sewer lines are going in through Cairo's business and residential district, upgraded from the smaller piping originally installed over 10 years ago. The improvements will help solve problems experienced over the years due to undersized lines that affected service. Here, new lines await installation on Grove Street. Photo by Claude Haton

Treatment plant operator Joe Myers has been accredited with helping the plant function within state compliance and has been doing so since he took over the plant in 2006-07.

J. Myers Water Services, Inc. was chosen to continue managing, supervising, operating and maintaining the Town of Cairo Waste Water Treatment Facility for the next three years at \$40,417 a year for a total of \$121,251 during Wednesday's monthly town board work meeting.

Cairo has been compliant for approximately two years but are at nearly maximum capacity at the plant for intake.

Tavenner said it can't really handle a lot more on a reliable basis.

"The Slater's being replaced by the Hannaford is not so much of a problem," Tavenner said, "because you are replacing one grocery store with another grocery store, but if somebody wants to come in and do something else, then it is going to be extra flow and then it is going to be a restriction for the people that are going to develop there. This is to give them the capacity to handle that."

The improvements to the system and plant should add 50 percent of their treatment capacity.

Currently, the two treatment unit facilities treat approximately 70,000 gallons of water. With the installation of the third, the intake will be total over 100,000 gallons a day.

Schoenecker Construction is installing the third waste water unit and is doing the concrete pour Friday for its base. Completion of that unit should be in a month, Tavenner said.

To date, piping from the high school bus garage on Bross Street to Grove Street have been laid. A connection to Jerome Avenue still has to be made. That will be completed over the next few weeks.

In the original design of the sewer system, all the waste water went from the plaza and all of the new developments on the east end of town and went down through the small pipes going down Main Street. The new force main is basically bypassing all of that, Tavenner said.

The improvements will prevent future flooding due to the system backing up during heavy rains.

Currently there is a moratorium on the project and Tavenner said that DEC does this with any new connections to the system because of past problems to the plant.

The intention of the improvements is to get into compliance with DEC requirements and have the moratorium lifted so that new projects with proper planning can be added and connected to the sewer system.

The moratorium is kept in place for six to eight months and Tavenner said there is no formula as to when the agency decides to lift it.

"DEC typically wants to see six to eight months of operational data after changes to confirm that the plant is stable and operates well," Tavenner said. "There is no set in stone deadline because, quite frankly, we have been in compliance with their permit for two years now. So I'm hoping that toward the end of the year we'll have this stuff in place and the town will be in the position to ask DEC to lift it."

The completion of the work is expected to be completed by late summer.

To reach reporter W. T. Eckert, call 518-943-2100, ext. 3325, or e-mail [wteckert@thedailymail.net](mailto:wteckert@thedailymail.net).

Copyright © 2012 - The Daily Mail

[x] Close Window

## Town strains to lift DEC ban

By Kyle Adams Hudson-Catskill Newspapers | Posted: Thursday, December 13, 2012 2:11 am

CAIRO — Expansive work on the town of Cairo's sewage and septic systems has town officials feeling confident that a Department of Environmental Conservation moratorium on new sewer connections may soon be lifted.

The moratorium, enacted several years ago, prevents the construction of new sewage connections until the system is brought up to DEC standards, effectively hobbling any new development efforts in the town.

The town will submit a report to the DEC at the end of the the year to "start the discussion about lifting the moratorium and inform them of what we've been doing," said Town Supervisor Ted Banta in a Wednesday meeting of the town board.

"We are exceeding DEC's expectations," he said later in a telephone interview. "So they are very happy with the work we're doing in order to comply with their requests."

Work began in 2007 with an overhaul of the town's sewer and septic system, including repairing or upgrading sewer lines, pump stations and septic tanks. The work was funded by a \$3 million dollar loan from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation that the town plans to repay over a thirty-year period.

One of the most recent components of the work has been to pump out 125 of about 300 septic tanks in the town, an initiative begun in September. To date, well over 80 tanks have been pumped, according to Highway Department Superintendent Robert Hempstead.

As the work has progressed, crews have been finding that many of the tanks are in disrepair, leading to groundwater infiltration "at an alarming rate," said Hempstead.

The town has been taking the opportunity, while the tanks are unearthed, to make repairs and minimize infiltration.

"Any repairs that need to be done because we find that there are leaks in the pipes or in the septic tanks, then we're handling those," said Banta.

Those repairs, based on a sample of 12 tanks, will cost about \$624 per tank for a total of about \$175,000, according to Alan Tavenner of Delaware Engineering. Tavenner estimates that about \$100,000 remains from the original EFC loan that could be used for these repairs, pending EFC approval of the scope of the project.

The town will likely seek an additional bond to cover the remaining \$75,000, said Banta.

In addition to making the repairs, the Highway Department is documenting the location and status of each septic tank. Those records will be submitted to the DEC in the end-of-year report, and enable the town to maintain the system better in the future.

“There was poor documentation of the system in the past,” said Banta. “So we’re looking to diagram the whole system.”

Detailed documentation is important, said Town Attorney Tal Rappleyea, because “even if we can’t get the moratorium lifted entirely, they (the DEC) are definitely going to allow us, as we show them how much infiltration we’ve gotten rid of, to give us a corresponding level of new hook-ups.”

Since few development projects can proceed without new sewer connections, the town is eager to see the moratorium lifted.

“For the future growth of Cairo,” said Hempstead. “Here it is.”

\*\*\*

To reach reporter Kyle Adams, call 518-943-2100, ext. 3323, or e-mail [kadams@thedailymail.net](mailto:kadams@thedailymail.net)

## Water means business in Cairo

By Kyle Adams

Hudson-Catskill Newspapers | Posted: Monday, March 18, 2013 12:30 am

CAIRO - The town of Cairo is moving forward with plans to drill a new well in the Angelo Canna Town Park that would pave the way for future commercial development.

“When people are looking to do any sort of commercial development in our area, we have to have water for them,” said Town Supervisor Ted Banta. “Our current water source is a shallow well system that does not allow for economic development.”

The project is currently in the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process to determine that it will not present any environmental hazards. Once that’s completed, the town can move forward with construction, said Banta.

An initial estimate puts the project costs at about \$29,000, which the town will seek through a bond from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

“It’s been a long process that we’ve been working on slowly but surely,” said Banta. “Through all of 2012, we have been trying to evaluate our sewer system. We know that the improvements will allow for economic development. Along with that, if we have the ability to improve economically, we need a well water system. So we were trying to evaluate our alternative well sources which would accommodate a new well water source for economic development.”

The town’s current well, also located in Angelo Canna Town Park, is permitted to pump 216,000 gallons per day. Average usage in the town is 120,000 gallons per day and the peak is 230,000. The existing well is backed up by two wells at the reservoir at the Cairo Nature Center on Route 23. One of those wells was approved for 144,000 gallons per day, and the other has not been tested for flow or water quality. A November 2012 letter to the NYS Department of Health from Delaware Engineering, which is handling aspects of the project, states that for both of those wells, “it is anticipated that the more the well is pumped the worse the water quality would become.”

To be used as a significant water source, the town would need to install a filtration system, which would likely cost upwards of \$500,000, based on a similar project undertaken by Delaware Engineering in Greenville, said Banta.

“So it’s either spend a half million dollars or more, or drill a new well at the town park property that we already own,” he said. “That seems to be the cheapest, but also the best resource for water because of the aquifer that runs there. There’s just a lot of water that runs there for us.”

The well would likely be connected to the existing well house at the town park for disinfection and distribution, according to the November Delaware Engineering letter, so that the only new construction would be the well head, a power supply and a starter panel.

“It should be unobtrusive,” said Banta. “It should not be a hindrance, it should not be an impediment to the normal functions of the town park.”

Banta hopes the new well would expand water coverage to commercial areas along Routes 23 and 32 and expand the business district on Main Street.

“It’ll allow for all of that,” he said. “It’ll give us the ability to have an aquifer or water source that will accommodate for improving and developing the system, going farther with the system.”

The next step, once the SEQR is complete, will be to drill test wells. Pending favorable SEQR results, work should be underway in the next few months.

\*\*\*

*To reach reporter Kyle Adams, call 518-943-2100, ext. 3323, or e-mail [kadams@thedailymail.net](mailto:kadams@thedailymail.net)*

## Town seeks end to sewer moratorium

By Jessica Mosier Columbia-Greene Media | Posted: Saturday, August 31, 2013 12:30 am

CAIRO — The Town of Cairo has sent a letter to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to discuss lifting the sewer moratorium and closing the Consent Order.

Alan Tavenner, Senior Engineer for Delaware Engineering, PC, drafted the letter with Town Supervisor Ted Banta and Town Attorney Tal Rappleyea. The four pages explain the wastewater treatment plant's history, the primary issues the town have addressed and a list of the completed upgrades.

“The Town is providing this summary of its progress at this time because the improvements are at or near completion and a moratorium still remains in effect on new sewer connections,” states the letter.

The wastewater collection and treatment system, which according to the letter was built in 1999-2000, had various problems from the beginning. The problems resulted in a DEC Consent Order in 2001. The order was amended in 2005 and 2008.

“The Consent Orders required the Town to develop, submit, and act on plans to reduce infiltration and inflow, manage high wet weather flows, assess the existing filters, and repair or replace them as necessary. Under the last Order, the Town instituted a moratorium on new connections in March 2008,” the letter continued.

The upgrade program that began in 2008 was delayed numerous times due to lack of funding. Eventually an application made under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program was accepted.

The program helped fund various improvements including the primary issues of installation of an operational filtration system, high infiltration and inflow, septic tank maintenance and collection system back-ups and overflows.

“Between 2008 and 2013 a number of improvements were completed with the physical plant, its operations and system maintenance...,” the letter explained.

The letter lists 9 principal improvements which includes the installation of an equalization overflow tank of 150,000-gallons capacity, the addition of intensity monitoring alarms to the original UV units, and the development of a comprehensive list of the septic tanks and a maintenance schedule.

According to the letter, the flows have been reduced to an annual average of 0.049, 0.068 and 0.050 million gallons per day for the past three years - the permit limit is 0.089 MGD.

The last paragraph of the letter explains that the Town “believes that the moratorium which it instituted in 2008 has achieved its purpose” and “is now serving only as a hindrance to the very residents and businesses which the sewer district was originally built to benefit.”



## Wastewater plant punch list fulfilled

By Jessica Mosier Columbia-Greene Media | Posted: Friday, October 4, 2013 1:30 am

CAIRO — The Town of Cairo's decrepit sewer system has been a constant headache for town board members, but after years of hard work and dedication a major issue is nearing its end.

Town Supervisor Ted Banta, Alan Tavenner of Delaware Engineering and Sewer Operator Joe Myers met with two members of the state Department of Environmental Conservation Thursday morning to display the plant's upgrades and discuss lifting the moratorium.

From the beginning the wastewater collection and treatment system, which was built around 14 years ago, had various problems. Those problems resulted in a Department of Environmental Conservation consent orders in 2001, 2005 and 2008.

According to a letter Tavenner sent to the DEC in late August, "The Consent Orders required the Town to develop, submit, and act on plans to reduce infiltration and inflow, manage high wet weather flows, assess the existing filters, and repair or replace them as necessary. Under the last Order, the Town instituted a moratorium on new connections in March 2008."

Tavenner has been overseeing the sewer plant upgrades, which included improvements to four primary issues — installation of an operational filtration system, high infiltration and inflow, septic tank maintenance and collection system back-ups and overflows.

Over the past five years, operational changes have been applied to the plant to bring Cairo in compliance with DEC, including the addition of a functional filter system.

"The original filter, that hadn't worked since 2001, was replaced," he said. The town bought the used filter from Ski Windham for \$40,000 he added.

While standing outside the wastewater treatment plant, Tavenner pointed out other upgrades, including a new tank that was built to equalize high flow during periods of heavy rain.

Other changes included a pumping station by Cumberland Farms, and the replacement of undersized piping that pumps wastewater through the central part of town.

Another major undertaking, largely taken on by the Town Highway Department, was septic tank inventory and repair, said Tavenner.

A list of tanks and maintenance schedule was developed and approximately 120 tanks were pumped in 2012. A large number of tanks were pumped this year as well.

Banta noted that they hope to have all the tanks pumped out by early next year.

“DEC should be happy with that,” said Tavenner.

When the two DEC members arrived they toured the plant and asked Tavenner questions about the upgrades.

Banta explained to the DEC that the town board has been diligently working to bring the plant into compliance so the moratorium can be lifted.

Lifting the 2008 moratorium would allow new connections to be added to the the system, which Banta said would allow for more economic development.

“Whatever we can do, we are happy to do it,” he said.

Though it is not yet official, the DEC members said that they “don’t see why the moratorium can’t be lifted.”

They added that at this point it is just a formality.