



Summer Village of Grandview

P.O. Box 100 (605 - 2nd Avenue)
Ma-Me-O Beach, Alberta T0C 1X0
Phone: (780) 586-2494 Fax: (780) 586-3567
Email: Information@svofficepl.com
Website: www.grandview.ca

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Letters to the Editor
Wetaskiwin Times

Re: South Pigeon Lake Wastewater System

There is great deal of misinformation about the South Pigeon Lake Wastewater System, and as chair of the South Side Wastewater Committee, I feel compelled to share the following information in order that your readers can gain a balanced perspective on this project. Since 1989, the six municipalities on the south side of Pigeon Lake have been working hard to implement a wastewater collection system for our residents. Although we had several false starts, we now are close to achieving our goal of providing this important service and finally getting rid of the many septic fields, faulty holding tanks and grey water bypasses that still exist in close proximity to the lakeshore. We will be installing a low-pressure system, rather than a gravity system. Residents will pump their wastewater to either the recently completed regional pump station at Westeros or a new facility to be located on the west side of the lake. These low-pressure systems have been used successfully throughout Alberta and North America, so we will be employing proven technology.

Through the diligent work of the administration staff at both the County of Wetaskiwin and the Summer Village office, we have been fortunate to obtain provincial funding to cover the costs of 90 percent the regional lines and federal/provincial funding to cover 67 percent of the local lines. This support will result in a huge reduction in costs for the residents. The local collection lines will be installed with directional drilling techniques, which will minimize disruption to the local property and infrastructure.

Each municipality will operate its own local system and will decide on the methodology and requirements for residential connections. In some municipalities, the service will go only to the property line while other municipalities have chosen to provide the service all the way to each holding tank. To provide information on the system and associated costs, a brochure has been prepared which outlines details of the proposed system and typical connection costs for the residential tie-ins. These range from \$7,000 to \$15,000 or less, depending on the type and condition of the existing holding tank and accessibility. Anyone with a faulty holding tank will need to have it repaired or replaced, but this would be required in any event, so it shouldn't be considered an expense of the new system.

As new information has become available, it has been provided to the residents. It must be recognized that final costs cannot be determined until contractors' bid proposals have been received. To obtain detailed estimates of connection costs for each resident would be a very costly exercise that does not advance the actual installation process, and for planning purposes, the municipalities have chosen to go with the more economical approach of providing estimates for typical installations. An estimating sheet has been prepared to provide more specific detail for installation costs at each lot. Since there are no moving parts or pumps on the municipal system, the

operating costs will be low. The resident's power costs for pumping will be in the order of \$5 per year, far below the amount of \$600 claimed by those opposed to the project.

This is perhaps the only opportunity we will have to finally bring this service to our residents. If this attempt fails, it is doubtful that we would ever again be considered for such a high level of grant funding. The vast majority of residents fully support this project, realizing that construction of a sewer to protect the lake is inevitable at some point. It is truly unfortunate that a small group is spreading misinformation about the costs and the functionality of a proven system. I encourage anyone wanting further clarification on this project to talk to members of the South Side Wastewater Committee, rather than relying on hearsay and rumors. I only hope that the residents of south Pigeon Lake will support the efforts of their councillors who have been working very hard for many years to bring this project to fruition. As residents of a fragile ecological area, we all share the responsibility to preserve our beautiful lake for future generations. The proper management of wastewater is a key component of this responsibility.

Mayor Don Davidson, Summer Village of Grandview
Chair of the South Side Wastewater Committee