

Shenandoah sees chance at sewer

Village qualifies to seek grant to pay for innovative pollution-control system

By Linda Martz
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MANSFIELD — Shenandoah took a giant step toward building an innovative community sewer that could be a model for other rural hamlets in Ohio.

Richland County commissioners learned Friday morning enough residents finally responded to a survey to ensure the unincorporated rural hamlet qualifies to apply for a state block grant of \$200,000.

With that final piece of the funding puzzle in place, the county might be able to build the \$934,000 sewer project without assessing residents at all, Commissioner Dan Hardwick said.

Commissioner Dave Swartz said a Shenandoah resident, Dave Enzor, visited his farm recently, concerned that efforts to get enough residents to share income information with the state had stalled.

"He was real concerned about not getting this grant," Swartz said.

That put the wheels in motion. Swartz and a health department official went to Shenandoah on Monday to speak to three of the seven property owners who reportedly hadn't responded to the survey. Enzor contacted the remaining four.

Roberta Acosta of the Ohio Rural Communities Assistance Program told local officials this week the

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Dan Hardwick
county commissioner



Shenandoah system, designed by K.E. McCartney and Associates, is much less expensive, Hardwick said. It uses smaller lines, trapping

sludge in a community collection system to be purified in a peat filtration system then a large leach field, he said.

It's a system that works only with smaller volumes, he said.

Swartz said the design will save Shenandoah residents considerable money. "When we started this out, we were looking at assessments greater than the values of the homes," he said.

If Shenandoah receives the grant and other proposed funding, residents still would pay a service fee of \$42.50 per month — close to Richland County's existing flat rate for sewer projects, commissioners said.

"There will be a tap-in fee. They're going to have to run a line from their house to a collection tank out at the right-of-way," Hardwick said.

State officials told project planners Shenandoah stands a good chance of receiving the grant, Hardwick said. "It is cutting-edge technology not being used anywhere in Ohio."

state had received enough responses.

Shenandoah, with a median household income of \$34,000 and 58 percent of residents at low to moderate incomes, qualifies for the grant, she told commissioners.

"It just comes together when you've got the right people and they realize how close it was," Swartz said. "This is a great step forward."

Commissioners have been criticized by some county residents who paid large assessments for sewer projects and believe Shenandoah residents should have to pay, too.

But Shenandoah is unique, Hardwick said. State officials see it as a possible state pilot project that could demonstrate how to deal with pollution problems in hamlets far from municipalities.

Standard sanitary sewer systems built for larger communities consist of pipes leading from houses to a large sewer plant, which processes sludge for release to a stream, Hardwick said.

But the proposed