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**Millions in State Grant Funding to Provide Cost Relief For Sanitary Sewer Projects Throughout Allen County**

**New Sanitary Sewers are more affordable for homeowners as the Allen County Regional Water and Sewer District was awarded $2,000,000 in grant funding to support 2017 sanitary sewer construction projects.**

Fort Wayne, IN – Many homes on septic systems in Allen County and throughout the State of Indiana have septic systems that are old, not up to Department of Health code, and are failing or failed. These dated systems can adversely impact the environment by polluting surrounding soil and streams. Many homeowners cannot afford to install a new septic system or their home lot is simply too small for a modern replacement system. New sanitary sewer infrastructure is often the best way to take these failed and failing systems out of service at an affordable cost to residents.

The Allen County Regional Water and Sewer District (District) announced the award of $2,000,000 in grant funding from the State of Indiana for sanitary sewer projects. These projects, which will soon be under construction, will provide sanitary sewer service to more than 250 homes throughout rural Allen County. These projects, requested by homeowners in the respective areas, provide public health and environmental solutions to areas plagued by underperforming systems.

“This grant funding will be a tremendous help for us in bringing much needed relief to hundreds of homeowners in Allen County struggling with failed or failing septic systems.” said Ric Zehr, President of the Allen County Regional Water and Sewer District Board of Trustees. “Today is a great day for families in these communities who will be getting long-sought after sewer service. We are thankful to our state, county and city officials for their ongoing support and assistance with our mission to provide more affordable utility services that improve public health and achieve environmental benefits at the same time.”

Project areas include the community of Poe along the St. Mary’s River, neighborhoods near Carroll and Hand Roads near Huntertown, residential homes along Pion Road, Andar Road, Union Chapel Road and Lynnbrook and several small neighborhoods along Popp Road near Leo-Cedarville.

The District maintains partnerships with many municipal utility providers such as the Cities of Fort Wayne, New Haven and Woodburn and the private utility of Aqua Indiana as well as state organizations such as the Indiana Department of Environmental Management in order to keep project costs and rates more affordable for customers. Without these partnerships, many proposed projects would be cost prohibitive to homeowners who are in need of septic system relief. The State of Indiana, through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and their State Revolving Fund (SRF) has provided more than $12,000,000 in grant funding since 2008 to Allen County along with millions of dollars more in low-interest loans and no-interest loans to help keep customer bills lower and make sanitary sewer projects more affordable for District customers.

The District also announced financial assistance commitments for upcoming projects in the Dupont Road area west of Lima Road, the Lafayette Center Road area, the Marion Center Road area south of Interstate 469 as well as areas in western Madison Township and eastern Marion Township. The District has assembled commitments from the City of Fort Wayne Utilities for more than $1,500,000 in partnering funds and assistance for projects planned for these areas to begin in 2018. “This generous assistance will allow us to do even more for the community and the many homeowners who did not previously have an affordable option for replacement of their outdated septic systems” said Ken Neumeister, Executive Director for the District. “As older homes in rural areas continue to age and environmental regulations are updated, the need for sanitary sewer projects will continue to grow. These projects will benefit all of Allen County, not just the District, with cleaner rivers and streams and better public health. Projects like these help to keep millions of gallons of raw sewage out of our rivers and streams on an annual basis.”

**Additional Information**

The District was organized in 1979 as an independent political entity of the State of Indiana. The general purpose, for which the District exists, is to provide for the collection and disposal of sewage and distribution of water in the unincorporated areas of Allen County. The governance of the District is vested in the Board of Trustees consisting of seven (7) voting members. Three (3) members are appointed by the Allen County Board of Commissioners, two (2) members are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Fort Wayne, one (1) member is a member or designee of the Allen County Council, and one (1) member is a member or designee from the Fort Wayne-Allen County Board of Health. None of the members of the Board of Trustees are paid for their service to the District.

In 2018, the District hopes to begin the construction of sanitary sewers in several additional areas of rural Allen County as well as the extensive overhaul of the sewage treatment works serving areas of western Madison Township and eastern Marion Township in southern Allen County. More than one million dollars of partnering funds have already been committed by the City of Fort Wayne for these improvements and the District hopes to receive similar commitments from county and state agencies to help keep customer rates lower.

In 2017, the District plans to complete projects in the Community of Poe that will provide sewer service to more than fifty homes in southern Allen County along the vulnerable St. Mary’s River. A neighborhood near Carroll and Hand Roads in northern Allen County will include up to forty-five homes near Huntertown. Several neighborhoods along Popp Road near Leo-Cedarville will include much needed septic system relief to more than seventy homes. Other planned project areas to start in 2017 include the Pion/Andar Road area (25 homes) and Union Chapel/Lynnbrook roads (20 homes).

In 2016, the District completed construction in several areas throughout rural areas of Allen County. The Community of Yoder project provided service to more than 140 homes and the St. Aloysius Church and elementary school. In addition, two areas near the Community of Hessen Cassel were completed at Trentman and Thompson Roads (36 homes) and US 27-Maples-Jennifer Drive (26 homes). Other project areas include Berneway Drive (11 homes), Gerdings Woodland Addition - Kroemer- Leesburg Roads (59 homes), Whipporwill Neighborhood (42 homes), Community of Wallen (50 homes), Goshen-Fritz-Cook-Steele Roads (85 homes) and Tonkel-Hursh-Mars-Crawford Roads (75 homes).

In 2013, the District completed septic system relief projects to neighborhood areas near the environmentally sensitive Cedar Creek including Homestead Acres, Forest Canyon, Woodcliff and Windover neighborhoods and several rural neighborhoods near Flutter Road and Wheelock Road in northeastern Allen County. More than 400 homes were provided service.

In 2010, the District completed septic system relief projects to several areas in Allen County including the Winters Road Service Area, the Plantation Park Neighborhood, the Maples Road – Hughes Drive Service Area, Leo Road, the Winchester Road – Kinnerk Road – Allison Avenue – Boggs Avenue Service Area, and the Cedar Canyons and Cedar Shores Neighborhoods. More than 250 homes were provided service.

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