

Oakland, Wayne pull together

By TIM RICHARD

Two old political adversaries have kissed and made up.

Western Oakland County communities are willing to deal with Wayne County's public works department to participate in the so-called Super Sewer project.

The Oakland communities—Commerce Township and the City of Novi—last week told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that they oppose expansion of the Walled Lake sewage treatment plant to serve part of their expanding populations.

"Enlargement of the Walled Lake treatment plant is unsound from economic, engineering and environmental standpoints," said Harry D. Mosher, Novi city engineer, summing it up in a public hearing.

TIME WAS when Oakland communities—particularly the City of Walled Lake—were fighting the Super Sewer idea, which then was the baby of

Wayne County.

In public hearings in 1976, Oakland forces asked to be dropped from the Super Sewer plan. They saw it as empire-building by the Wayne County Road Commission, which then was in charge of public works.

The original Super Sewer idea was a giant sewage treatment plant at the mouth of the Huron River, 84 miles of interceptor, and a service area that included the western range of Wayne County townships, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti in Washtenaw County and a row of townships from White Lake south through Novi in Oakland County.

The Michigan Natural Resources Department split off Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti from the project after their vehement and articulate fight against Super Sewer.

analysis

That left the thinly settled but fast growing portions of Wayne and Oakland counties to deal with.

THE CURRENT version of Super Sewer calls for 50 miles of sewer interceptor serving those portions of Wayne and Oakland Counties and a treatment plant at the mouth of the Huron River.

If you want to be technical, call it Alternative A-1. The communities, the Wayne County DPW and the Oakland County DPW now support it.

The EPA came up with an Alternative D. It would serve Wayne County from Canton Township south. It calls for some expansion of the Walled Lake treatment plant. It contemplates continued use of septic tanks by many residences in Plymouth Township, Northville Township and Commerce Township, in particular. It would put western Wayne sewage in the Rouge interceptor, to be treated by Detroit's plant.

EPA says it's in line with the Carter Administration's new urban policy. It would halt out-migration from Detroit by restricting suburban sprawl.

Roads and sewers are two essential factors for suburban growth. Thus, Alternative D and a decision to cancel the M-75 freeway project through western Oakland County seem to dovetail.

THE SUBURBAN alliance gained a

new friend when the City of Livonia supported their cause.

Although Livonia isn't part of any alternative, City Engineer Ed Siemert testified, "Our primary concern is the impact of Walled Lake plant expansion on our city."

The Walled Lake plant, Siemert said, discharges into a branch of the Middle Rouge River which eventually flows through Livonia on its way to Dearborn and the Detroit River.

In low flow, if there were a "malfunction" in the Walled Lake plant, nearly half the Middle Rouge could be sewage, he said.

Glenn Brown, director of environmental health for Wayne County, and Plymouth City Engineer Kenneth West echoed that argument. Said West: "Alternative D adversely affects use of Hines Parkway. The Middle Rouge runs right down Hines Parkway."

THE REAL argument, said some local officials, is not whether to permit continued deterioration of Detroit and suburban sprawl.

"The national urban policy won't halt out-migration from Detroit. It will only shift growth to other states, as the Ford plant case," said Patricia Cullin, supervisor of Van Buren Township. Former Northville Township Supervisor Wilson C. Grier said the issue is "survivability of the region." States such as Ohio are "stealing industrial tax base from southeast Michigan." If industrial and commercial expansion can't continue in the suburbs, said Grier, it won't go to Detroit; it will head for Ohio or the Sun Belt.

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There are few experiences more enjoyable than sitting before a crackling fire on a bone-chilling winter's evening. The Better Business Bureau has a few tips that can help make this experience safe as well as pleasant.

Before lighting a match, make sure the fireplace was constructed to be used as such and not only for decoration. Have it inspected to determine whether it has all necessary linings.

Have the chimney cleaned if this has not been done recently. Be sure the flue is clear and that there are no loose bricks or mortar joints.

Check outside for trees or tall structures near the chimney opening which may send whirlpools of air down the chimney and cause smoking. Be sure to equip the fireplace with a well-fitting screen and the chimney with guards to prevent entrance of squirrels and birds.

Before shopping for firewood, become familiar with commonly used terms and dimensions. The most common measure of firewood volume is the cord.

This is a well-stacked pile of logs measuring four feet in width, four feet in height and eight feet in length. A "rick" or half cord is four feet high, eight feet long and only two feet wide. A "face cord" is again four feet high

and eight feet long but is cut into desired lengths. A "face cord" of 16 inch pieces is approximately one-third of a standard cord.

To determine volume, stack the wood properly, then measure the dimensions of the stack in feet. Multiply width by height by length to obtain the total cubic feet of the pile. Then divide this figure by 128 (the number of cubic feet in a standard cord) to get the cord-volume.

Each wood species can offer something different in use, aroma and heat value, since they differ in composition.

Hardwood, softwood, "seasoned" (dry) and green wood all have benefits and drawbacks. Unless you know about types of wood, one way to be sure of buying wood that will suit your purposes best is to deal with established firewood sales outlets.

When buying firewood, ask several dealers what the normal going price for wood is.

A practice of some firewood companies is to deliver and stack the wood, charging a fee to stack if the wood is to be carried more than twenty feet from the truck. It is important that wood be stacked correctly. A rick of wood can weigh between 900 and 1,800 pounds. If stacked improperly it can become a hazard to children.

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