

Upgrading of sewer to aid in river cleanup

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Long-planned \$48.5 million improvements to the deteriorating Evergreen-Farmington sanitary sewer system represent Farmington Hills' commitment to cleaning up the heavily polluted Rouge River.

Farmington Hills is among the communities in Oakland and Wayne counties targeted to pay shares of removing raw sewage and toxic pollutants from the Rouge, according to a report from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

The SEMCOG report is a "worst case" scenario, estimating it could cost approximately \$1.8 billion for Oakland County and Wayne County communities to clean up the river if state and federal grants are unavailable.

The SEMCOG Rouge Remedial Action Plan estimates that under the "worst case" scenario, Farmington Hills

would pay more than \$2 million annually and \$41.8 million over a 20-year payment period to help remove raw sewage and toxic pollutants from the river.

What saves Farmington Hills from higher estimated costs for the river's cleanup is that the city does not have combined sanitary and storm sewers like Farmington, said Thomas Blasell, Farmington Hills department of public services director.

FARMINGTON HILLS ranks 14th on the list of 45 communities in order of how much they would have to pay. Farmington is ranked third with an estimated \$4.8 million annually and \$97.5 million over 20 years.

"That's why we are going after the Evergreen-Farmington. We are doing everything we possibly can to get it (a 55-percent federal matching grant). That is our response to the Rouge River cleanup. We are willing to make that commitment to cleaning up the river," Blasell said.

Farmington Hills' estimated \$11.2 million share for improving the Evergreen-Farmington system is included in SEMCOG's estimates, Blasell said.

The public services director said he believes an improved Evergreen-Farmington system, as recommended by SEMCOG, will clear up much of Farmington Hills' contribution of the overall polluted condition of the river.

For the last five years, Farmington Hills and Southfield officials have been pushing the Evergreen-Farmington project. The state Department of Natural Resources ranked the project as number one in priority for federal financing.

Improvements, particularly increased capacity in the sewage lines that carry the waste to Detroit for treatment, will solve problems with flooded basements in the two cities. But more important, the improvements will do much to prevent the usual sewage overflow into the Rouge River.

WHETHER THE cities receive federal financing or not, the project is required to be completed under the federal Clean Water Act, Blasell said.

Though the cities met an April 1 application deadline, the DNR has once again extended the deadline and asked for more information.

"Now they are saying they want something a little different," Blasell said. DNR officials want more engineering data, he said.

"They've extended the deadline indefinitely because they are willing to work with us," Blasell said.

Blasell said, as far as he knows, the city does not have sewer lines running directly into the Rouge. It is illegal to combine sump pumps and sanitary sewers and to have lines leading directly to the river or elsewhere.

"If and when they're found, they are turned over to the health department, which has the authority to put some teeth into this," Blasell said.

Monti, Putt named officers of year

Officers Patrick Monti of Farmington Hills and Maria Putt of Farmington have been named "Police Officers of the Year" for their outstanding community service.

They were honored at the Farmington/Farmington Hills Optimist Club "Respect for Law Day" breakfast May 11.

Monti, a seven-year veteran of the Farmington Hills Police Department, was recognized for his "continuing professional effort and dedication to the city," Chief William Dwyer said.

Assigned to the Detective Section, Monti last year investigated 377 cases, made 28 arrests and obtained 93 criminal warrants. One major case involved a murder and three suspects.

Monti's most important work has been in the area of drug law enforcement. He represented Farmington Hills on Oakland County's Narcotics Enforcement Team for 4 1/2 years.

SINCE JOINING the Detective Section in 1986, Monti has been the officer on call for all narcotic complaints in Farmington Hills. His investigations have led to the identification of several major narcotics dealers and local places of distribution.

They were honored at the Farmington/Farmington Hills Optimist Club "Respect for Law Day" breakfast.

He has worked undercover on many occasions and has bought many large quantities of drugs with street values running into the thousands of dollars.

"As a result of Monti's efforts, thousands of dollars in drug forfeiture money has been surrendered to the city," Dwyer said.

Before coming to Farmington Hills in 1980, Monti was a police offi-

cer in West Bloomfield Township and Highland Park. He has worked in law enforcement for 15 years. Monti and his wife, Paula, have four children. He is active in the Cub Scouts.

PUTT, A five-year veteran of the Farmington Department of Public Safety, was recognized for her overall law enforcement activities, including her work in the detective bureau. She handled cases from larcenies to assaults and became involved with narcotics investigations. She worked undercover many times, and dealt with other local and state law enforcement agencies.

"At times these situations presented a risk to you, but in each, you handled yourself with confidence and in

a most professional manner," public safety director Frank Lauffoff said to Putt.

Putt also did her part for community education, including involvement in Babysitter Safety, Home Security and Business Watch programs.

"Your enthusiasm and dedication to your work is truly commendable and an asset to the profession and to the reputation of the public safety department," Lauffoff added.

A veteran Farmington reserve officer, Daniel Waker, was also awarded a certificate of appreciation for his 13 years of service to the department. He recently retired from service.



Patrick Monti
Farmington Hills



Maria Putt
Farmington

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