



**Lorain County
Rural Wastewater District**
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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE TOWNSHIPS AND VILLAGES 2009

The Board and Staff of LORCO experienced a monumental year in 2009. LORCO moved from being a conceptual planning organization to reaching its goal of becoming a full service wastewater utility in Lorain County. The construction of thirty-seven miles of collection pipe and transmission pipe began in December of 2009 and is anticipated to be substantially complete by November of 2010.

LORCO began 2009 prepared to move forward with the construction bidding and contract awards for the Eaton and Carlisle Townships Sewer Project. In January the board took action to seek funding assistance through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) by applying for Federal Stimulus Grant Funds. The Ohio EPA approved LORCO and ALMU a principal forgiveness loan of \$5,000,000 to be used for construction costs on the Eaton and Carlisle Township Sewer Project. In February the board authorized the advertisement for construction bids for six contracts. The six contracts consisted of the collection system and pump stations in Eaton and Carlisle Townships. Bids were opened in April and the lowest and best bids for the six contracts totaled \$13,893,849.88. The contracts were awarded in September upon approval of financing through the Ohio Water Development Authority secured by the Avon Lake Municipal Utilities.

The summer was a busy time for LORCO as there were still several obstacles to overcome for permitting. There were permits required for installation of the pipeline along with permits for disturbing wetlands. Multiple meetings occurred throughout the summer and into the fall with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). In October the OEPA issued the final Permit To Install (PTI) allowing the project to move forward with construction. In November a pre-construction meeting was held with the low bid contractors awarded on the project and they were issued notices to proceed with construction.

LORCO also faced a challenge from the City of Elyria concerning LORCO's ability to install a sanitary sewer system. They objected to LORCO installing pipelines within their Facility Planning Area (FPA). This objection escalated into legal action and Elyria filed briefs requesting a halt to construction. LORCO and Elyria attempted to resolve the dispute and bring an end to the legal battles. We are optimistic a settlement will be reached in 2010 and LORCO and Elyria will co-exist.

The challenges of starting the Eaton and Carlisle Township project was further complicated when Fred Alspach, the executive director, took ill during the summer. Much of the administrative work had to be done by board members and consultants

during his absence. Fred did come back to work toward the end of the summer and resumed his responsibilities.

The board began the process in 2009 to search for a new executive director to replace Fred Alspach due to his pending retirement. An executive search consultant was hired in the spring and the executive committee screened and interviewed potential candidates. In November the board voted to hire Rob Berner as the new executive director. He officially began his duties with LORCO on December 1st.

The progress and reality of the Eaton and Carlisle Township project has allowed the board to establish itself as a fully functioning public utility. Future projects for the board in the western areas of the county are under consideration for future construction. LORCO will continue to reach out to our member communities to fulfill our mission and achieve the goals established by the board. It is important to note that any project LORCO may undertake, whether it be the current Phase I project or a future project for a member township or village, is done in complete cooperation with that community. It is also with the recognition that the community, through its land use plan and zoning regulations, maintains absolute control of how best to utilize the options a wastewater collection system provides.

LORCO, by classification, is a not for profit organization under the Ohio Revised Code. Therefore, all considerations designed to produce the absolute lowest cost per household are being exercised. Connection costs and user fees have been calculated to provide for repayment of the funds to construct the project in Eaton and Carlisle Townships. The Board has established an existing home owner's tap fee at \$5,000.00, which is payable within 30-days of connection or applied to the property tax duplicate and payable over a period of up to 20 years. The board believes assessing properties based on a single user tap fee to be more equitable than assessing properties based on front footage or acreage. As future housing is constructed within the system area, the cost will be spread to additional users. These users will then pay the current rate for a tap fee. New developments will also be required to pay for the cost of all infrastructures within their projects. All homeowner user costs are based on an estimate of \$42.00 per month, which includes the first two thousand gallons of flow. All on lot service connections are the responsibility of the homeowner or builder.

Your Board of Trustees remain ever mindful that this project not only addresses pollution issues and provides additional land utilization options for the township, but it creates a cost to the individual homeowners being served. The Board's job is to keep the cost as low as possible and at the same time provide top-level service. As we move forward with completion of the construction and begin the operations of the Eaton and Carlisle Township project LORCO is doing our part to create a better environment for current and future homeowners.

For further information visit our web site www.lorco.org.

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Yours truly,

[James R. McConnell](#)

James R. McConnell, President