

# **Leisure Lake Sewer Project**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **EIRUSS**

#### **1. What is EIRUSS?**

The Eastern Iowa Regional Utility Service Systems, commonly referred to as EIRUSS, is a 5-county public organization created under Chapter 28E of the Iowa Code which permits local governments in Iowa to provide joint services such as utilities. The counties of Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Jackson, and Jones created EIRUSS in 2005. Each county appoints a County Supervisor to serve on the Board of Directors that governs EIRUSS.

#### **2. Why was EIRUSS created?**

EIRUSS was created because very small cities and unincorporated areas in counties lacked sewer systems and were in violation of Iowa Department of Natural Resources rules concerning discharge from failing septic systems. These areas find it difficult to finance and manage new sewer systems. EIRUSS currently operates sewer systems in Center Junction and Fairview, both in Jones County, and the water system in Andover, which is in Clinton County.

#### **3. How is EIRUSS funded?**

EIRUSS is funded as part of the construction costs, a grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and user fees that fund the operation and maintenance of the systems. EIRUSS staffing is provided by the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) located in Dubuque, Iowa.

#### **4. Why is EIRUSS, in cooperation with Jackson County, doing this project?**

There are many failing septic systems in Leisure Lake. Exposure to improperly treated sewage can result in illness caused by bacteria or viruses. The sewage may also reach groundwater and pollute drinking wells. These conditions violate the rules of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). EIRUSS, in cooperation with Jackson County, is constructing the sewer system to make sure Leisure Lake has healthy living conditions and to comply with the IDNR rules.

# CONNECTION TO THE SYSTEM

## 1. Must I connect to the sewer system?

Yes. County regulations require that any property with a building(s) that is within 200 feet of the sewer line must connect to the system. A building is defined as follows:

“Building” shall mean all houses, buildings, commercial buildings, recreational facilities, or properties used for human occupancy, employment, recreation, or other similar purposes that are located on or occupying a lot. Building shall include structures commonly described as houses, manufactured homes, mobile homes, travel trailers, and campers. Any structure having **any** of the following characteristics may be considered a “Building” under this ordinance:

- a. A structure used for human occupancy, employment, or recreation
- b. A structure showing no evidence of having been removed from the lot in the previous 90-day period
- c. A structure without a current license plate attached to the structure
- d. A structure without a hitch to allow for movement
- e. A structure without tires, with uninflated tires, or one that is sunk into the ground
- f. A structure that has amenities attached to it or located nearby including but not limited to decks, antennas or satellite dishes
- g. A structure with tall grass and vegetation, such as bushes, growing around or located near the structure
- h. A structure showing evidence of a permanent foundation or skirting.
- i. A structure on a property that is being used as a permanent address by the owner or resident
- j. A structure that has an electric service, water supply, and/or receives US Post Office mail delivery.

## 2. Is there a cost to connect to the system?

There is no “connection fee” during the construction period. The service line will be brought to a point near building where the service line will be connected to a “grinder pump”. The pump will be used to pump the sewage from the building. However, the property owner will be responsible for costs from that point on. Any internal plumbing is the responsibility of the property owner. The property owner will be responsible for providing electricity and water on the site so the system can operate. The monthly electric bill is also the property owner’s responsibility. *If you need to make changes to your electrical service you may contract with an electrician of your choice. (You will need a 220 volt, single phase connection) An electrician is under contract to work on this project. He can assist you with electrical work on your house, however, you will be responsible for the cost. All work requires a permit and inspection by a State inspector. If you have any questions please contact EIRUSS. Contact information is shown at the end of this document.*

Also, existing septic tanks, according to State and County regulations, must be pumped and filled with sand or soil. These costs are the responsibility of the property owner. It is possible that septic tanks may be disabled by the contractor during the construction process, on a case by case basis. EIRUSS will work with the contractor and homeowner to facilitate this process. Otherwise, the property owner can contract to have them pumped and filled. This can only be done by a licensed contractor. EIRUSS will maintain a list of licensed contractors. You may contact EIRUSS for that information at the telephone number and website shown on the last page of this document.

**3. What if a property has more than one living unit on it? Must each one be connected?**

If the building or property is discharged sewage or “gray water” it must be connected to the system and will receive a monthly bill for that building. Gray water includes bath water and water from such uses as doing dishes and laundry. It does not include water used for gardening or washing cars.

**4. Must auxiliary units connect to the sewer system? Example: 1) Several large storage sheds that have bathrooms, 2) Mobile home with a travel trailer for guests.**

If the unit has a bathroom (or any plumbing fixture that discharges water) or is used for human habitation it must connect to the system and pay a monthly bill.

**5. Must I connect to the system if I don’t have water service or a septic system? Examples: Person living in a travel trailer year-round with no water or sewer hook-up; 2) People living in cabin full time with no water or sewer hook-up.**

Yes, as noted in Question #2, on the previous page, “County regulations require that any property with a building(s) that is within 200 feet of the sewer line must connect to the system.” A building includes, “...all houses, buildings, commercial buildings, recreational facilities, or properties used for human occupancy, employment, recreation, or other similar purposes...”

**6. Must a building be connected to the sewer system that appears not to be habitable? Examples: Fold-down camper on cement blocks with wheels removed. Campers or mobile homes being used as storage. Residence with multiple travel trailers, on several lots, that have not moved for over a year.**

If the unit is used for human habitation, or is capable of being used for habitation, it must be connected to the sewer system. If it not used for human habitation it must conform with all Jackson County zoning and nuisance regulations. The County, not EIRUSS, is responsible for enforcing those regulations.

## **7. What happens if a property owner refuses to connect to the sewer system?**

As mentioned in Question #1 on the previous page, a building used for human habitation must connect to the system. According to Iowa Code the administrative authority for the system, in this case Jackson County, will enforce this regulation. Iowa Code allows for a fine of \$750 for the first offense and \$1,000 for a second offense, with each day of non-compliance counting as a new offense.

It is an advantage to connect to the system during this construction period because there is no connection fee. However, there will be a connection fee after construction is complete.

# **CONSTRUCTION**

## **1. What type of sewer system is being constructed?**

The system is a low-pressure collection system with a lift station and a controlled discharge lagoon. Each property will have a “grinder pump” located outside of the building being served. When sewage leaves the building it will go to the “grinder pump” which will process the sewage and then force it under pressure to a lift station located on the east side of 113<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The lift station will then pump the sewage to the lagoon. The lagoon will treat the sewage and clean (treated) water will be discharged twice per year into a nearby creek.

## **2. What is the construction schedule?**

There are four parts to the system: 1) The lagoon, 2) The lift station, 3) the collection system, and 4) the service lines to the house. Work on the lagoon and lift station will have begun by mid-October, 2012. However, activities will likely stop during the winter. Work on the collection system will begin in by April, 2013, as weather permits. Work on the service lines to the houses will likely begin by June, 2013. All these times are estimates and are subject to the weather.

## **3. How is the project being funded?**

The project funding is \$4.4 million dollars. It is being funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (\$1.2 million Grant and \$2.7 million Loan) and the State of Iowa through a Watershed Improvement Review Board Grant (\$500,000). The loan will be paid back with user fees.

## **3. Who is the contractor?**

The contractor is Tschiggfrie Construction from Dubuque, Iowa. The total construction contract is \$3,724,117.70

#### **4. How will I know that construction is nearing my house and that I will be connected?**

The contractor will contact you as construction approaches your house.

#### **5. What if I want to have service to the lot with plans to construct a house a later?**

You have three options:

1) EIRUSS can install the service line and a pump station. There will be a monthly user fee starting at the time of installation of the service line and pump station. You must know the exact location where your sanitary line will exit the (future) building. At the time of building construction EIRUSS will provide and install the grinder pump. You will be responsible for the connection of the sewer from the building to the pump station.

2) The second option is for the property owner to pay, at the time of the collection system construction, for a “stub” into the lot. A stub is a line off of the main with a cap on it. There is no grinder station or grinder pump. There is no monthly fee starting at the time of construction. However, when you build on the lot you will pay for the service line, grinder station, and grinder pump, and a monthly user fee.

3) The third option is to not do anything at this time. When you build on the lot an application with permit fee must be made to EIRUSS; and a service line, pump station and grinder pump must be installed entirely at your cost with monthly service fee to begin at the time of installation.

## **OPERATION**

### **1. What is the monthly user fee?**

The exact fee can't be determined until construction is complete and all costs have been incurred. It will also depend upon the total number of users connected to the system. At the time of bidding the estimated monthly fee is approximately \$50.00

### **2. Must I pay a monthly bill even if I'm only there on a seasonal basis?**

Yes. The sewer system is being financed with grants and a loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). EIRUSS must make monthly payments to USDA. In addition, the operating expenses are continuous and not seasonal. The system must be continually maintained so that it is available for your use in the summer.

### **3. Who is responsible for maintaining the grinder pump?**

EIRUSS will be responsible for the routine maintenance and replacement of the grinder pump.

However, it is important that only toilet paper be flushed into the system. Paper towels, diapers, feminine products, and other such items **must not** be flushed into the system. If maintenance is determined to be due to such abuse, the property owner will be responsible for maintenance and repair costs including but not limited to labor, sewer cleaning, bringer pump replacement, etc.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **What if I have questions?**

You may contact Larry Nagle at 563-556-4166 or send an email to [ecia@ecia.org](mailto:ecia@ecia.org). Information is also posted on the EIRUSS website at [www.eiruss.org](http://www.eiruss.org).