

LCDU stepping up waterline replacements

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LAKE COUNTY – Randy Rothlisberger, sanitary engineer for the Lake County Department of Utilities addressed the department's capital improvements plan for this year following approval of two new projects by the Lake County Board of Commissioners' Nov. 5.

Three waterline projects were completed this year, three are in progress, and three more will be started soon.

"We've been talking over the last couple years about the need for these infra-

structure improvements, replacing waterlines at a little bit higher rate," Rothlisberger said. "We maintain about 550 miles of pipe in our system—both east and west. And, just doing the math, with the expected age of those pipes being about 75 years, we need to replace about 1.5 percent a year which equates to about eight or nine miles of replacement every year."

By comparison, in 2006, less than a mile of pipe was replaced and a bit less than two miles in 2007 and 2008.

The projects this year are replacing about seven miles of pipe at a cost of more than

\$1 million per mile for about \$8 million total. The cost has been offset by about \$1 million in OPWC grants.

Design work has been completed for about six miles of pipe next year already.

Board President Dan Troy asked if LCDU's revenues could sustain that level of replacement and was told it was.

"A lot of people are recognizing that underground infrastructure, whether it's water or sewer is really getting aged in this state," Troy said. "There have been some discussions in the legislature about a water and sewer infrastructure issue similar

to the Ohio Public Works issue which has primarily been used for roads and bridges..."

The idea was first presented by Senate Minority Leader Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) and was supported by Senator Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green).

Troy said Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina), however, was concerned about increasing the state's debt service.

Troy said as long as there was revenue to retire the debt, it could be managed.

The first bid contract awarded by the commissioners was in the amount

of \$846,500 to Rudzik Excavating, Inc. for Fairport-Nursery Road Watermain Improvement Project 359-W.

The project concerns installation of 6,500 feet of new eight-inch waterline. The current line is 65 years old and has had numerous breaks. Since the line is under pavement it is a costly project.

The highest bid was \$1,201,455. The engineer's estimate was \$960,000.

"We've had numerous breaks in that area and sometimes it's hard to find; they kind of get lost in the creeks down there and it tends travel far away from

the breaks," said Randy Rothlisberger, sanitary engineer.

The second bid contract awarded was in the amount of \$1,041,231.30 to Terrace Construction Company, Inc. for Beidler Road Waterline Replacement Project.

The new waterline will link two dead-end water mains and replace an old eight-inch waterline along Beidler Road between the railroad tracks and Euclid Avenue.

The highest bid was \$1,231,845.63. The engineer's estimate was \$1.25 million.