

County to apply for home sewer treatment grant funds

BY MARIAN MCMAHON

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LAKE COUNTY – The Lake County Board of Commissioners approved applying for grant funds from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund to assist low-income people with replacement of their failing home sewage treatment systems (HSTS) at its Nov. 1 meeting. The Lake County General Health District would administer the program.

"We were able to help 12 families with the 2011 money," said Laura Kuns, supervisor of the Liquid Solid Waste Department at the Lake County General Health District. "The maximum amount of money is \$154,000 and that's what we're asking to go after."

The Health District still has names of people to verify eligibility who applied for assistance last year. People who are at 100 percent of the poverty level would get their new system fully paid for, she said. If they are at 200 percent of poverty level, then they would need to pay 15 percent of the cost.

"They did cut back the amount of funds but we are going after the maximum amount so we'll be able to help more people this time," Kuns said.

There have been some changes by the WPCLF which would not include payment of permits and design fees, which the owners would have to pay, but since many are in opposition, LCGHD is hoping that will be changed before funds are awarded.

Commissioner Bob Aufuldish asked what the average cost per septic system was.

Kuns said costs varied from about a low of \$4,000 to a median of \$10,000 to \$12,000, to one drip system which cost \$19,000.

"The qualifiers here are that you have to live in the home

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and that your system has to be failing and the income qualifications," Kuns said.

LCGHD has staff members who verify the system failures.

Kuns said she wanted the public to understand if someone does not qualify for the grant funds, LCGHD will work with the person to find

help elsewhere.

Last year's funds were used to help people all around the county, not just in a particular area.