

PRESS RELEASE

Proposed Marshall County Regional Sewage District What it is and Isn't

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As the concept of a Regional Sewage District in Marshall County advances there have been some questions on the purpose, need, and responsibilities of the District. Residents have also wondered how the future District (assuming formation is completed) will affect them in the future.

Under the Law in Indiana, a Regional Sewage District is limited in function by the order issued by IDEM when the District is approved. Once formed, the District **can** only initiate operation of the specific purpose included in the approval. The District in the case of Marshall County, can only initiate projects that provide septic system relief in the specific areas included in the petition.

This means that after formation and the Trustees are appointed, the Trustees will complete their facility plan and activate the first project. This will likely be within the lake community South of Plymouth. It is probable that it will require 18 to 24 months for funding procurement, and design work, and then another 18-months for construction. Beyond initiating that project, the Trustees will need to decide how to prioritize future projects, how they will activate them, and what method of funding will be used. It is believed that full implementation could take up to 20-years or more.

A Regional Sewage District **can**:

- Plan, design and construct sewage systems to serve the at-risk rural neighborhoods or communities identified in the petition and approved by IDEM.
- Procure funding to cover construction and non-construction costs.
- Purchase and own real property.
- Prepare and adopt ordinances that govern the use of the system and implement customer rates and charges to pay for debt and operational expenses.
- Compel connection for all sewage producing structures within the District and or Sub-Districts included in the approved petition.
- Exempt connection to the District sewer for certain properties that meet the exemption criteria (new septic system within last 10-years or a parcel 10-acres in size or larger).

A regional sewage district **cannot**:

- Levy a real property or personal property tax of any kind.
- Bill and collect rates and charges from any property that is outside the District or sub-district unless by contract with a specific landowner.
- Bill **or** collect charges from any property within the District that does not have an available and active District owned sewer system (or a District project under construction) within 300-feet of the owner's property line.

After formation the District is:

- An independent municipal entity that is typically governed by customers of the District appointed to the Board of Trustees
- A local government entity with a narrow mission focused on reducing and eliminating the risks to health from direct or indirect exposure to human waste
- A rural entity that conducts long range initiatives to protect the communities' drinking water wells from cross contamination from residential wastewater.
- A local entity that is indirectly concerned with the sustainability and preservation of the housing stock of the communities it serves.

After formation the District will not be:

- Able to set rates or charges that allow the District to accumulate funds beyond what is required to serve debt and maintain the utility.
- Allowed to conduct any activities it is not authorized for.
- Able to force the sale or otherwise of any property for delinquent charges.
- Capable of independent expansion beyond the Sub-District area authorized in the Formation Order without further approvals.

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