

Alpine sewer crisis coming to an end

By Sarah Hale on Oct 4, 2007 in Alpine

Residents asked to be aware of what they send down the drain.

The Town of Alpine is cautiously optimistic this week when it comes to sewer treatment. A special meeting was held last Thursday, Sept. 27 to lift the sewer moratorium that has been in place for months.

"It is a calculated risk," said Mayor Victoria DeCora. "In the grand scheme of things everything is okay, but we do reserve the right to not allow sewer hook-ups in the future if problems start up again."

The sewer hook-up moratorium was placed several months ago in the Town of Alpine, forbidding any new hook-ups to take place. That action was taken by the Alpine Town Council because of health concerns.

"We were out of compliance with our permit and we needed to get things under control," said DeCora.

The water treatment problems were not the result of capacity. When combined, the two water treatment plants have a hydraulic capacity of 88. Even at its peak this summer the hydraulic flows didn't reach points higher than mid 70.

Instead, the problem with the sewer plants came as the result of oxygen levels. There was not enough oxygen in the system to break down the sewage that was coming in.

"We were able to double the number of oxygen defusers in the larger plant," said DeCora. "That helped to get the oxygen levels up to where they needed to be. We can do that same thing with the smaller plant next summer if it is needed."

But the Alpine Town Council is confident that within the next year the new water treatment facility will be online. With that facility Alpine's sewer woes should be a thing of the past.

"What people need to realize is that it is the grease that is the number one violator of our plant," said DeCora. "It is grease that is killing our plant."

The Town of Alpine will be enforcing a grease interceptor ordinance. The ordinance calls for all restaurants within the Town of Alpine to have a certain type of grease interceptor, have that interceptor cleaned and inspected.

However, according to DeCora, it is town residents, themselves, that need to pay more attention to what is going down their drains.

"The town will be sending out a letter to educate residents about the situation," said DeCora. "We are just asking them to be more aware of what is going down the drain."

For more information about the Alpine water treatment plants or what you can do to help prevent any sewer problems in the future, call the Alpine Town Hall at 654-7754.