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## **Renovation of Dexter Wastewater Treatment** Plant may cause odor this month

By Erica Hobbs

A \$3.3 million renovation to **Dexter's** Wastewater Treatment Plant may cause some people to crinkle their noses when spending time in the village this month. The village recently posted a notice (http://www.dextermi.gov/news/wastewater-treatment-plant-odor)on its website asking residents for their patience with an "increased odor" that may occur in the next two months.

"Every effort is being made to control the odor, however there will be times over the next two months that it is strong. We appreciate your patience as we complete this major renovation to the plant," the message said.

Dexter is in the process of replacing the lids of its Wastewater Treatment Plant's "digesters," the concrete cylinder tanks that process and store sludge before it is hauled away and disposed of.

The treatment plant contains two digesters, a smaller, primary digester that mixes and heats the sludge to help break it down and a larger digester used mainly for storage, said project manager **Chris Nastally**. He said the primary digester can hold about 110,000 gallons while the larger digester has a volume of about 400,000 gallons.



The Dexter Utilities Department wastewater treatment plant.

Dexter Village Manager Donna Dettling said the current lids date back to the 1970s and

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were not functioning properly, making them very inefficient. Dettling said updated lids could reduce the amount of sludge the digesters hold by up to 40 percent.

"It reduces just a ton of costs, because you're reducing what needs to be removed from the plant and hauling costs," she said.

Construction on the digesters started last fall and is expected to continue until the end of the year, though the odor is not expected to last that long.

Dettling said the lid of the primary digester was removed earlier this month, leaving the sludge exposed to the open air and causing potential odor for the village. The new lid, however, is supposed to be installed in early July.

Dettling said they are sprinkling a deodorizer on top of the digester in the meantime and making extra hauling trips to control the amount of sludge inside. She said the odor should pose no health risks.

"It's just a little offensive to the nose, that's all," she said.

The larger digester, she said, is currently empty for cleaning and inspection. The replacement of the second lid should not cause an odor, because the sludge will be entirely contained in the primary digester during that time, she said.

The village is funding the project with a low-interest loan through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Drinking Water Revolving Fund (http://www.michigan.gov/deq/1,1607,7-135-3307\_3515\_3517---,00.html). The fund provides qualifying municipalities with 2-percent interest loans for the construction of water pollution control facilities.

An explosion (http://annarbor.com/news/dexter/deputies-release-name-of-48-year-old-man-killed-in-dexter-explosion/)during construction on the project in April caused the death of Brooklyn, Mich. resident **Michael Koch**, who was working on one of the lids. The explosion is currently under investigation by the **Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration**.

Dettling declined to comment on the matter until the final report is released.

"Everybody's anxious for that report," she said. "I guarantee you."

Erica Hobbs is a freelance reporter. Contact the AnnArbor.com news desk at news@annarbor.com.

## Comments

aareader

Fri, Jun 21, 2013: 3:04 a.m.

Is a little "stink" now better than a potential big mess later? One be inclined to think so.

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