

Pipelines

sanitary.mahoningcountyoh.gov

SUMMER
2018



Commissioners
Anthony Traficanti,
Carol Rimedio-Righetti,
David Ditzler
Sanitary Engineer
Patrick T. Ginnetti

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE MAHONING COUNTY SANITARY ENGINEERING DEPT.

Aging System, Increased Demand, Limited Financial Resources

THE CHALLENGES OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Though wastewater treatment continues to take place beyond the view of our customers, it has become more challenging and more costly in our area — for several reasons:

1. An aging system. Mahoning County's sewer system was built in 1922. While MCSE regularly maintains and replaces sewer lines, there are over 800 miles of pipe in the system. Many of these are still the original 1922 lines. There is no way to know which lines will fail and will need to be immediately replaced, or when this will happen. But when it does, replacement costs are added to an already-tight budget.

2. Increased demand. Adding new customers to the MCSE system is good business, but also means increased wastewater flows. This in turn puts greater demands on our pipes, pumping stations and treatment plants. Whether it's maintaining or adding to the capacity of existing systems, or extending service into new areas, there are significant costs involved — costs that rise even higher when more stringent government regulations require further investment in the treatment process.

3. Limited financial resources. There was a time when county and publicly owned treatment systems could rely on financial assistance from state and federal government to fund improvement projects. That time has largely passed. MCSE receives a limited number of U.S. and State of Ohio grants, but they represent only a small percentage of our overall resources. Any other help from above comes in the form of loans, which we must pay back over time. The majority of our funds must be generated from within, via the customers of the Metropolitan Sewer District.

Looming over each of these considerations is an issue we must deal with on a daily basis — the infiltration of clear water into the wastewater treatment system.

WASTEWATER vs. CLEARWATER

Mahoning County has two separate systems — one to handle wastewater, another to handle clearwater. The problem arises when clearwater enters the wastewater treatment system. This can occur because some older homes, particularly those constructed prior to 1970, have footer drains and downspouts connected to the sanitary sewers. (In the 1970s regulations were enacted to require footer drains and downspouts not be connected to sanitary sewers.) Older footer drains and downspouts in homes also contribute to this problem. During heavy rain events, flooded streets and highways and overflowing creeks and streams can make it even worse. The result is clear water entering the sanitary sewer system, which is not designed to handle these increased flows.

THE IMPACT ON WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Achieving the proper levels of the elements necessary to treat wastewater and return purified effluent to waterways of the community can be particularly challenging during these events. MCSE operators must carefully monitor the inflow to our treatment plants at all times to look for harmful elements released accidentally or by occurrences within the course of operations.

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Your Wastewater Dollar at Work

We are presently in the fourth year of a five-year MCSE rate plan that determines what our customers pay for sewer service. This plan went into effect in 2015.

Your monthly wastewater treatment charge consists of two components:

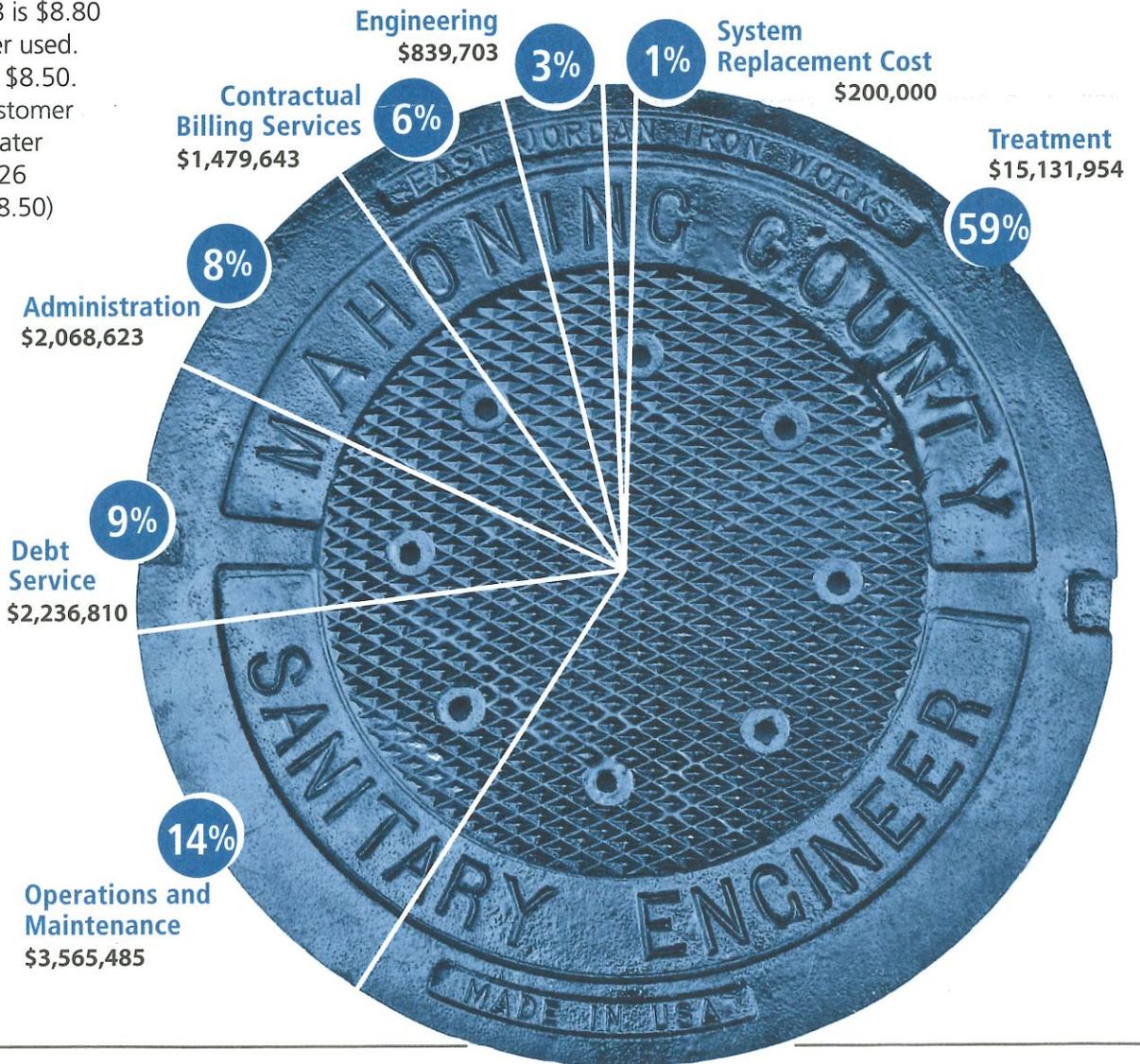
- The user charge: the charge for every 1,000 gallons of the water used, conveyed through the sewer system for regulated treatment and returned to the environment.
- **The fixed monthly rate:** a monthly charge to all customers not related to the user charge, for mandatory improvements to the wastewater system — including sanitary sewer lines, pumping stations and treatment plants.

The user charge for 2018 is \$8.80 per 1000 gallons of water used. The fixed monthly rate is \$8.50. So the average MCSE customer using 5,200 gallons of water per month (5.2 x \$8.80 + \$8.50) under the 2018 rate. The Sewer Rates provide the necessary revenues for the continuing operation of the Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department.

Here is a breakdown of how your wastewater dollar was spent in 2017, as well as an analysis of MCSE revenues and where they came from:

| OPERATING REVENUES | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----|
| User Charge | \$25,270,970 | 98% |
| Fees/Permits | \$395,389 | 2% |
| Rental Income | \$17,532 | <1% |
| Proceeds from Sale of Assets | \$10,844 | <1% |
| Misc | \$16,406 | <1% |
| Operating Revenue | \$25,711,140 | |

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE/DEBT SERVICE: \$25,522,219



Anthony Traficanti
President



Carol Rimedio-Righetti
Vice President



David Ditzler
Commissioner



Patrick T. Ginnetti, P.E., P.S.
Sanitary Engineer

Questions? Comments

Call MCSE at (330) 793-5514
Monday — Friday,
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Or visit our website at
sanitary.mahoningcountyoh.gov

Awareness, Proper Use of Wastewater System Will Save You \$\$\$

Your wastewater system is designed to treat organic wastes and a small number of other items whose composition allows them to break down in the treatment process. To be clear, this is confined to human waste, toilet tissue, the water you use to wash dishes or clothing, and water you bathe in.

The list of foreign objects ending up in our wastewater treatment plants is long and surprising — for example, a baseball, various sizes of batteries, a variety of children's toys, etc. Use your wildest imagination; chances are, we've seen it! These objects get caught in our processing equipment and must be physically removed in order for the wastewater treatment process to continue.

Added to this are substances that upset the balance of the healthy organisms and natural enzymes used in the process of purifying wastewater as it flows through the plant.

Reversing these negative effects on wastewater treatment takes time, energy, and of course money. Collectively, all consumers need to take seriously the damage caused by improper items being tossed into the wastewater treatment system. If we can reverse this continuing problem, it will be a big step toward controlling wastewater treatment costs to you as a customer.

Ignoring this issue causes very real problems in your home, business or school — and has a negative impact on the environment.

So please...do NOT put any of the following items in your drains or toilet:



- Any paper products other than toilet tissue
- Facial tissues
- Baby wipes
- Disposable or cloth diapers
- Swiffers
- Shop towels and disinfected towels
- Medical bandages
- Food items, especially bones or fibrous items like celery
- Cleaning products
- Paints
- Chemicals
- Pharmaceuticals (pills or liquids)
- Contraceptives
- Syringes or needles



Rags and accumulated debris removed from the MCSE system. This adds significantly to the cost of treatment.

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Certain chemicals and dyes, large amounts of grease, and non-treatable solids all pose a threat to a wastewater system. These elements have the potential to interfere with the treatment process by destroying the healthy organisms that need to be present for treatment to occur. For all of these reasons, operation of the sanitary sewer system, pumping stations and treatment plants requires careful attention to details.

ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL

It also requires new investment in the wastewater treatment system as a whole in order to continuously maintain and improve it. Failing to address the need for infrastructure improvements could result in disruption of essential services to residents, and have a significant impact on their quality of life. For the Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department, infrastructure improvements are a current and ongoing reality.

As we noted, the MCSE system has 800+ miles of sanitary sewer lines (from 8-inch to 72-inch) — roughly the distance from here to New York City and back. We also have seven wastewater treatment plants and 85 pumping stations.

Each and every day, all of this infrastructure must work at the highest levels. Because of this, the Board of Mahoning County Commissioners has committed to capital improvements in all areas of the wastewater system, implementing an aggressive and comprehensive upgrade and replacement of infrastructure program valued at over \$30 million. These funds, to be expended over the next five years, will ensure the continued performance of the wastewater system to meet the demands of the residents of Mahoning County.

SUCCESS IN FINANCING FOR MCSE PROJECTS

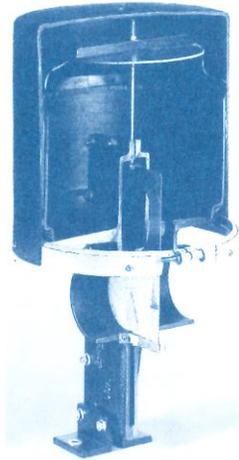
The Mahoning County Commissioners garnered an Aa3 rating in 2017 from nationally recognized Moody's Investor Service. \$19.4 million in new and refunding of financial obligations pursued for infrastructure were judged to be high quality and subject to very low credit risk. Both of these factors made Mahoning County's obligations attractive to investors.

How to SAVE MONEY on Sewer Services



Homestead/Disability Fixed Sewer Rate Reduction

- **Eligible:** Customers at least 65 years of age (or permanently handicapped of any age) who own their own home AND are served by MCSE.
- **The program offers:** A reduction on your monthly sewer bill. Call 330-793-5514 for the current rate.



Gate Valve Program

- **Eligible:** Customers, particularly those with older homes, who experience basement flooding during heavy rain events because their storm water and sewer systems are interconnected.
- **The program offers:** Financial assistance to offset some of the costs of installing a backflow control device (gate valve) to separate these systems. In some cases the work may also involve the installation of a sump pump. You can receive up to \$2,500 in assistance for this work.

Visit Us at the
Canfield Fair

Look for our booth located in
the Government Building
at this year's Canfield Fair.
MCSE personnel will be
on hand to answer all of your
questions about wastewater
treatment services.

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How to SAVE MONEY on Sewer Services



Tap-In Fund

- **Eligible:** Customers in areas that have recently received sanitary sewer service for the first time and are required to tap into the system.
- **The program offers:** Up to \$9,000 to help defray the costs of mandatory tap-ins for any single household. The Mahoning County Commissioners established the Water and Sewer Tap-in Fund to make these funds available to county residents.

Second/Deduct Meter Program

- **Eligible:** Customers who frequently water their lawns, wash their cars and/or have gardens using a high volume of water not returned to the sewer system.
- **The program offers:** A second water meter, which allows water used outside of the home to be metered separately. In this way, your sewer bill will be based solely on the water that actually enters the wastewater treatment system.

Call (330) 793-5514 between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm weekdays
to learn more about any of these programs.