

## No decision made on sewer owner

If the outcome of a breakfast meeting today between the Grand Junction City Council and the Mesa County Commissioners is any indication, the new valley-wide sewer treatment plant likely will be owned and operated by the county.

Although no "hard-and-fast" positions were adopted during the morning meeting, the commissioners made it clear they are reluctant to accept city ownership of the new facility.

City officials, on the other hand, indicated they would not operate the treatment plant unless the city owned it.

The informal positions, if no modifications occur, are expected to force the county into the sewer business by 1980—a situation which county officials would clearly like to avoid.

County Commission Chairman Errol Snider said the county would prefer to own the plant and have the city operate the facility on a contractual basis.

"Our second position is that it should be owned and operated by the county," said Snider.

The county's position was prompted primarily by a philosophical concern over representation. "We just really feel that we are the only elected officials who are responsible to both the city and the county," Snider said.

The city's position stemmed not from philosophical considerations, but from the practical issue of what governmental entity is in a better position to operate the new treatment plant.

Grand Junction Mayor Karl Johnson said, "I wonder if the county is

geared up to provide the operation ... the billing."

The commissioners acknowledged that the city, which currently provides sewer service to both in-city and out-of-city residents, is in a far better position to operate the plant.

However, they made it clear they would be willing to assume all the city's sewer service responsibilities if forced to do so.

Councilman Larry Brown, like the majority of council, said he would prefer to have the city both own and operate the plant. Brown added, however, that the accountability issue raised by the commissioners has merit.

He said, "Based on that, I want to get the hell out of the sewer business as soon as possible."

Brown's position was echoed by Councilman Larry Kozisek.

Johnson suggested both the city and county refrain from adopting absolute positions until all the ramifications of ownership and operation are addressed by both governmental entities.

"I think the final determination should be made on what is best for the most people," Johnson said.

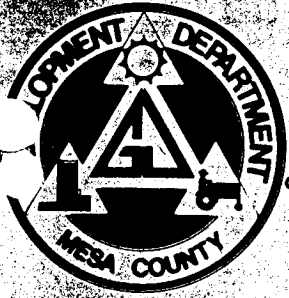
Several issues must be resolved before the valley-wide treatment plant becomes operational in the early 80s.

Primary among them are probable shifts of personnel from the city to the county, decisions on new hiring and possible lay-offs, a division of responsibilities between the city and county before the plant goes on line and the future of the city's interim sewer expansion plant.

**CITY - COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENT DEPT.**

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**MEMO TO JIM PATTERSON FROM BOB KETTLE  
REGARDING THE NEW CITY/COUNTY SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT**

Last night at a joint County Commissioner/County Planning Commission workshop, the subject of the new plant came up. I don't know if you recall, but the County Commissioners' motion to recommend approval to the State (7/20/77) included a stipulation that the design include flexibility for possible land application at a future date. Perhaps such a design would mean that the tertiary aspect could be disconnected, and secondarily-treated effluent then routed to a canal network - but certainly you have a better notion than I.

My question is whether such flexibility is in fact being incorporated into the design? Will you assume responsibility to insure that this is accomplished? If such a design is particularly costly, or impossible, the County Commissioners should be immediately apprised so that they can reevaluate their recommendation.