

County will own sewer system

Enstrom's not so sure: 'I'm just afraid of buying pig in poke'

By Gary ...
Sentinel Staff Writer

... the debate is over.

... which began late last ... through the fall ... the arrival of ... County Commission- ... they will assume ownership of the new valleywide sewer system.

... responsibility, the county will assume operation of the entire sewer system—most likely some time in 1980.

... made the committee's breakfast work session ... Junction City Council ...

... Rick Enstrom, whose ... November fol- ... of preliminary work ... of the \$18

million facility, said after the meeting he has reservations about the county accepting a project design which the city primarily was responsible for developing.

Enstrom said he favors county ownership and operation of the new plant. However, he maintained the situation puts the county in the position of accepting the largest governmental project undertaken in the Grand Valley without adequate county input.

"I'm just afraid of buying a pig-in-the-poke," Enstrom said.

The commissioners have yet to formalize their positions through an official vote.

Enstrom hedged when queried whether his position included a feeling that the county re-evaluate the project to insure its interests are adequately represented.

Enstrom and every other official associated with construction of the new

treatment facility are aware they don't have the luxury of time. Projections indicate the city's existing treatment plant will reach its capacity sometime next year.

On peak days, the existing plant's treatment capability is stretched to capacity.

While outlining the county's position, County Commissioner Chairwoman Maxine Albert said she admitted Mesa County is in a better position to handle a capable sewer system.

"All I can say at this time is that the county is prepared to do that (enter the sewer business). We haven't investigated anything on how we can accomplish this," Mrs. Albert said.

The county commission chairman repeated that he sees the county's financial advantage in the private over ownership of the new treatment plant. "I'm just going for accountability," she said.

The valleywide sewer plan would serve areas outside the existing municipal limits. Because of the revenue question, the county has tentatively maintained its opposition to the plan if it means the loss of the city's sewer system. A compromise that would provide for the joint ownership of the facility earlier was rejected by a 4-3 majority of the city council.

City officials urged the commissioners immediately to hire trained personnel who can begin the transition work necessary for the county to assume area-wide sewer operations.

Council members have indicated they intend to remain in the sewer business for only two more years—a period in which the city feels the county can develop the necessary technical expertise to operate the area sewer system.

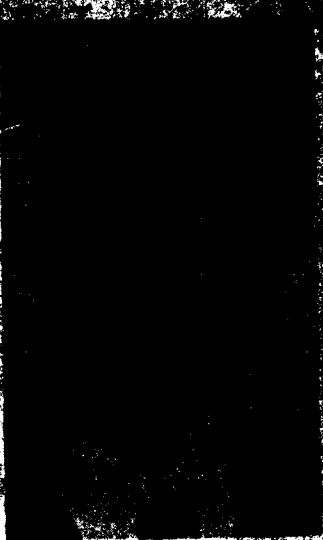
An early priority for the county is to develop a funding formula which

will allow the project can be financed. Federal grant money will cover 75 percent of the project cost, while local revenue is needed for the remainder. If an unrelated action, the committee has internally agreed to adopt a unified city-county development fee schedule.

The new fee schedule will reflect portions of what the city has determined to be the development review cost of other departments involved in reviewing development plans. The new fee schedule is intended to cover approximately 25 percent of the review costs of other departments.

Additionally, the new fee schedule also will eliminate a large disparity between the costs of a county development proposal compared to the

For example, a rezoning petition within the city limits currently costs \$100 in the county, a rezoning peti-



Rick Enstrom

... voices reservations ... has costs a developer 75% of ... tentative fee schedule, both ... and the county would charge