

# Capacity of sewer treatment plays major role in area growth

If you're going to talk growth, you're going to have to talk sewers as well—at least in Grand Junction.

City Manager Jim Wysocki predicts the city's sewer capacity will play a major role in determining just how much and how fast the area grows during the next decade.

Wysocki said the new valleywide wastewater treatment plant, approved by the city and county last year, will double treatment capacity when it is completed in 1982.

But that 1982 completion date won't finish out the sewer issue, he said.

"If we're going to talk about what's going to happen in the 1980s, we're going to begin talking about expansion of the new treatment plant," Wysocki said.

He said the city probably will have to begin adding onto the new treatment plant just as soon as it is completed, to double its capacity to 25 million gallons.

In addition, he said, the city also will have to begin working with other entities such as the Ute Water Conservancy District to develop new sources of water and cooperate in building and maintaining a water distribution system.

Grand Junction now is growing at a rate of 15-18 percent each year. At that rate, the city's population could double during the 1980s, Wysocki said.

Such growth could mean a different approach to transportation in the 1980s, with mass transportation possibly being developed in the area, he



Sentinel photo

City Manager Jim Wysocki

... 'playing catch-up'

said.

He said the city also will have to improve its road system, with the widening of Patterson Road and the extension of Horizon Drive designated as two priorities.

Most of the people who come to the area come in part because of the recreation opportunities. Nearby recreation probably will play a larger role in the future, because of the gas shortage, he said.

Wysocki, a Michigan native, began working in the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Department in 1968. He was parks and recreation director

before becoming city manager in 1976.

The city has been acquiring parks land it has been saving to develop at a later date, he said. The city and county also recently approved a parks master plan that sets certain minimum standards for the number of small and large parks desirable in the valley.

But, Wysocki said, "We will always be playing catch-up, I think, in this area."

As the city grows, recreation opportunities also may expand—with construction of such things as ice skating rinks or handball courts to accommodate the additional people, Wysocki said. He said the city also hopes to develop large parks away from Lincoln Park.

The parks program also will have to take into account what happens in the area's schools in the coming years. If School District 51 implemented year-round schools, the city also would have to attempt to accommodate students with year-round activities, he said.

"It's going to put a different complexion on how we approach our programming," he said.

Funding "is a damn big concern of mine," Wysocki said, and he also predicted growth may mean the curtailment of some city services.

He predicted major redevelopment of the core downtown area during the next decade. That area, he said, probably also will have more density so that people can be closer to their jobs.

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# Valleywide sewer on board for '80s

By George Orbanek  
Sentinel staff writer

As public works projects go, Mesa County's \$24 million valleywide sewer treatment plant won't go down as one of history's more glamorous undertakings.

The Greeks, after all, left the world the Parthenon. The Romans, among other things, left the world a coliseum.

As its biggest and most expensive public works project in history, the Grand Valley will have a new sewer plant.

And even though the valleywide sewer treatment plant will be the biggest single public works project ever launched in Mesa County, don't expect it to have a fraction of the half life of the Parthenon or Roman coliseum.

By 1990, the new sewer plant will have reached its treatment capacity. At that time, local officials anticipate doubling its size.

Jim Patterson, Grand Junction's public works director, said, "We're actually building half of it now."

About \$6 million of the \$24 million project will be borne by local users of the sewer system. The other 75 percent of the project cost will be covered by the federal government in Environmental Protection Agency grant money.

Once it becomes operational in late 1982, the new sewer plant will have a treatment capacity of more than 12

million gallons of effluent a day.

At that size, the treatment plant can be expected to accommodate a local population of slightly more than 105,000.

Sometime in the first half of the 21st century, the then-24 million gallon a day valleywide sewer treatment plant at Persigo Wash west of the city will begin to experience the same problems of the city's existing treatment plant.

To many Grand Junction residents, the most obvious shortcoming of the existing plant is its all-too-frequent tendency to emit a sewage odor ranging in intensity from faint to rank.

Patterson said that is one impact problem which local residents will have to endure for at least two more years.

On a less noticeable level, the existing treatment plant no longer has the capacity to treat effectively all the raw effluent which is processed through the plant.

Throughout January of this year, the city's existing plant operated at about 80 percent of its capacity.

However, during the heavy use months of July and August, effluent totals regularly exceed the plant's treatment capacity.

On yet another level, the impact of local population growth on the city's sewer system has been very apparent. Sewer fees were doubled this year to cover the costs of the new valleywide plant.



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