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## Pocono Mountain School District backs out of sewer system

By **Michael Sadowski**Pocono Record Writer  
May 03, 2012Text Size: **A** | **A** | **A**
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The Pocono Township sewer system was dealt another blow Wednesday night.

The Pocono Mountain School District voted not to hook its East Campus into the system, which has been hit hard in the last month by the loss of projected users.

The campus in Swiftwater — even though it is in Paradise Township — was included in the township's projected flow for the project. It represented less than 1 percent of the total, projected usage in the sewer project, which is scheduled to open fully next spring.

The campus has a fairly new sewage treatment plant built in the 1990s, district officials said, that was just permitted in October by the Department of Environmental Protection for another five years of operation.

There is nothing in that permit requiring the district to hook into the Pocono Township system, district and DEP officials said. Stephen Ferraioli, the district's executive director of support staff services, said the current sewage plant on the East Campus costs about \$49,000 a year to operate.

The district estimated about \$500,000 in costs associated with hooking into the system for the first year of operation.

"This is really a no-brainer," board member Henry Bockelman said before voting not to hook in to the system.

Earlier this spring, Great Wolf Lodge in Scotrun — which was scheduled to be the second-biggest user of the new system behind only Sanofi Pasteur — informed the township it would not be hooking into the system.

Resort officials said it was never their intention to hook into the system. Township officials said the resort always claimed it would be part of the system, and are considering legal action against Great Wolf.

District solicitor John Freund said he was still researching whether there were previous, written agreements to hook into the township's sewer system, but hadn't found any yet.

Earlier this year, the user rates for the sewer system, per equivalent dwelling unit, were estimated between \$1,100 and \$1,200 a year. After surveying the loss of about one-third of its projected use, the projected rates are at about \$1,400 a year now for each equivalent dwelling unit.

Those units are the standard measure for sewer systems. One unit is estimated at how much sewer capacity a household needs per day.

District officials said the current sewer system on the East Campus likely will last another 20 years with minimal financial commitment. The system recently underwent upgrades.

"There isn't much of a decision to be made here," school board member George Strunk said before voting not to hook in to the system.

Bockelman, a board member for more than 20 years, said when the idea was originally proposed, the financial figures were in the range the district "could live with."

Since that time about 10 years ago, the rates have risen, and the district is in the midst of a financial crisis that is projected to cost about 280 jobs this year.

"There is no earthly reason to hook in to this system," he said. "It was a way to get out of the sewage business then."

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R Douglas Olmstead

First I want to say that the Board has an impossible job and given that scenario is trying to do what they feel is the best for the District but I hope this is not a short term fix that is kicking the overall money problem down the road for a future Board to have to deal with.

Last Month Share



Duane K

There is no reason for anyone with a working sewage system to hook into this system and they shouldn't be forced to either.

ron and Edna Crabapple like this.

Last Month Share

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