

Austin, Scottsburg receive large OCRA grants for infrastructure improvements

Written by Marty Randall

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Christmas came early for the cities of Austin and Scottsburg.

On Tuesday, November 5, officials from both communities were presented with documents awarding each city a grant of \$500,000.

The grants are funded by the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. CDBG is administered by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, which Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann oversees.

Ellspermann was present to announce the grants, two of 24 awarded statewide through the Community Focus Fund and the Main Street Revitalization Program. Those grants totaled \$8,181,059.

In Austin, funds will be spent to improve the community's wastewater collections system. Plans call for installation of two new force mains, one of which will be placed under Interstate 65. That new main will improve flow from residences and businesses on the west side of the interstate.

Noted city engineer Dave Eberenz at a recent Austin City Council meeting, "This is actually Stage 3 of the city's wastewater improvement project that started years ago." Stage 1 improved some lines and replaced old manholes and some lift stations. Stage 2 included the construction of the city's present wastewater treatment plant.

Capacity will also increase through the grant, and several other problems will be addressed throughout the system.

In Scottsburg, officials will concentrate on correcting problems with the city's water treatment plant and its distribution lines.

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The project will replace some original lines and install new hydra-stop valves, diffusers and air piping at the plant. Not only will water quality be improved but also the city plans to meet/exceed the terms of its Agreed Order issued by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). By doing so, the Agreed Order will be lifted.

All of the grants awarded throughout the state support projects that have been identified by local communities as important for continued economic development and quality of life, noted Lt. Gov. Ellspermann.

She stated, "These funds help communities meet the challenges of infrastructure, public safety and library and health care facility costs." Historic preservation is being addressed through one grant, that to the town of Russiaville in Howard County. Preservation of valued old structures "...is an important stabilizing influence on community development," noted the Lt. Governor. Three Main Street grants were awarded as opposed to 21 CFF grants. Those Main Street grants will be spent on improving facades of downtown businesses and a "streetscape" project in Veedersburg in Fountain County.

Little York, a community on Scott County's western edge, also received a CFF grant of \$112,005. Those funds will help offset the cost of a new fire truck.

Other nearby Southern Indiana entities receiving CFF grants include Campbellsburg in Washington County and Orange County.