

Charlestown employees training on new equipment

Written by Administrator

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The City of Charlestown Wastewater Department is training four employees to use a newly arrived piece of equipment.

The Vactor truck, purchased to bring the city's waste water system into compliance with an agreed order with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, is equipped with vacuums and pumps to remove stormwater overflows from intersections and debris from pipes.

"We can clean about anything," said Mike Perry, Wastewater Department Director. "It'll be cleaning out sewer lines, manholes and storm catch basins. We can use it in flooded intersections to drain the water out of there and clear out clogged basins."

The vacuum abilities of the Vactor truck could potentially improve the capacity of the storm water drainage system, Perry said.

Sand and rocks gather at the bottom of pipes, taking up valuable space. An eight-inch pipe can become a six-inch pipe as the debris gathers, Perry said. Instead of flushing debris to other parts of the system, the Vactor truck can remove it, reducing the chances of overflows and lengthening the life of the wastewater system.

Though the purchase of the Vactor truck will certainly save the city millions of dollars as it moves toward compliance with its agreement with IDEM, there are also more immediate costs savings to be realized, Perry said.

"We've got tanks over here (at the wastewater department) that we normally have to contract out for cleaning," Perry said. "We can keep that in-house now."

Perry estimated the tanks must be cleaned out every three weeks on average, at a cost of between \$1,200 and \$1,600 per cleaning.

Add that to contracted-out cleanings of manholes at \$500 to \$1,500 per cleaning, and the Vactor truck, with an annual payment of \$36,000, comes close to paying for itself.

Wastewater department employees could be out in the field putting the new truck to use as early as Thursday, July 30 Perry said.

Still to come is a camera system the wastewater department will use to identify line breaches. They will then be able to prioritize repairs for next year depending on the size of the breaches and the location of the lines.