

# Alternative Waste Treatment Could Influence Ohio's Development

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Small communities and subdivisions may no longer have to contract with a nearby municipality to connect to its sewage system for waste treatment.

Alternative waste treatment that relies on constructed wetlands and other natural methods could show developing communities to manage their own sewage, said Michael Ogden, a registered professional engineer and president of South West Wetlands Group, a company that specializes in designing alternative waste water treatment systems.

"This is a hot political issue because it causes debate over who's going to control development surrounding a city, either the municipality with its centralized sewage system or the surrounding townships using alternative systems,"

Ogden said.

Ogden is one of several participants who will discuss the pros and cons of small community waste-water treatment technology and centralized versus decentralized sewage treatment at the upcoming statewide conference, "Better Ways to Develop Ohio," June 24-25, at the Columbus Athenaeum in Columbus. He will speak at a breakout session from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. on June 25. The conference will address issues such as how Ohio should grow, where it should grow, and who pays for that growth.

Traditionally, waste-water treatment and disposal for small communities and subdivisions have been handled by running sewer interceptors out from a nearby municipality. This caused the growth of these areas to be dic-

tated by where the sewer line went, Ogden said. Choosing an alternative system would give the surrounding areas more control over their growth.

"It doesn't have to be the way it has been. Now communities have a choice," he said. "With a small community waste-water treatment system, you need not rely on the big city's ability to fund and establish sewer lines, and the operating costs of the alternative systems are only about 10 percent of the cost of municipal treatment."

With alternative waste treatment systems, sewage is initially collected at each home or building in what's called an interceptor tank. The tanks filter most of the organic solids and all other trash from the waste water. Water goes to the treatment system via a small

diameter sewer system. The waste water then flows through a constructed wetland or some other natural filter where the remaining organic solids are removed. The treated water, which only contains a small amount of nitrogen, is then applied to golf courses, farmland, prairies, woodlands or some other land area for final treatment.

But the alternative systems do raise some concerns.

The new systems could allow major urban-type development to occur in rural areas that don't have the services to support them, said Bill Habig, executive director of

the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and the session's moderator.

Conference registration is \$85 for both days if you register before June 18 and \$100 if you register after that date. Breaks and lunch are included in the registration cost. For more information, contact Molly Bean at (614) 292-6962. Or you can obtain conference information over the Internet (<http://www2.ag.ohio-state.edu/landuse/conference/>).

## Penn State Extension

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The drawbacks, he says, include bigger travel budgets, and a more urgent need for good communication

"With staff members spending

a high portion of their time out in the field," he adds, "communication links and being able to reach people is critical and tough

"It's no longer a one-phone-call or one-stop-shopping relationship. Farmers have to get to know more than one person "

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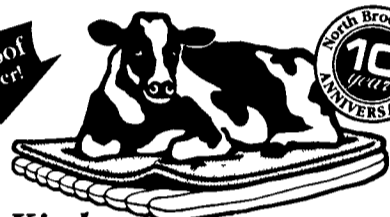
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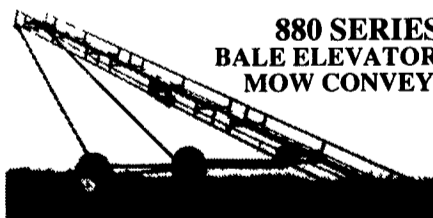
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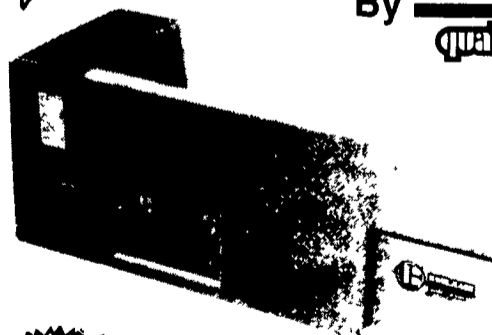
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