

Academy Water and Sanitation District, Oct. 16

# New permit signals start of big changes for district

By Susan Hindman

While past arrivals of new wastewater discharge permits might not have triggered much concern, the latest one has, because it details the steps the Academy Water and Sanitation District must take to comply with new state regulations that it currently cannot meet. Called a compliance schedule, it sets the dates when the district must meet stricter total residual chlorine (TRC) limits and new total ammonia limits in its effluent.

Dave Frisch of the district's engineering consultant firm GMS Inc. discussed the compliance schedule at the Oct. 16 district board meeting.

New TRC limits must be met starting Oct. 1, 2014. Chlorine is added during the process for treating effluent, but then needs to be removed before the effluent is released into Smith Creek. The district is meeting the current daily requirement of 0.5 milligram per liter (mg/l). Until now, there has been no permit requirement to meet any maximum 30-day average. The new discharged effluent limits dramatically reduce the amount of TRC allowed to a daily maximum of 0.019 mg/l and institute a maximum 30-day average of 0.011 mg/l, numbers that can't even be measured by currently available testing procedures.

"This limit that they've given us is lower than what you can actually detect," Frisch said. "With TRC, the lowest limit you can measure to is 0.5 mg/l. You can't even measure to 0.011 mg/l." The permit allows for this, he said, noting that the district just has to be able to report that the numbers are below 0.5 mg/l.

Meanwhile, new limits on the amount of ammonia in the effluent will have to be met by Oct. 1, 2018. Those numbers can't be attained with the current lagoon system, he said. The district has known about this, and GMS detailed options in its 2012 Preliminary Engineering Report for the district: Either connect with another district for wastewater treatment or build a new treatment facility.

Meeting the TRC limits will be the easier of the two to accomplish. GMS will design and construct a 6-foot-by-6-foot building to house dechlorination equipment and place it near the lower lagoon so that it removes the chlorine before the effluent is released into Smith Creek. The cost of construction is estimated at \$7,000, while the cost of all the required paperwork — including the site approval amendment, plans, specifications, and design report — will be around \$28,000. Treasurer Walt Reiss said the money is available in the draft 2014 budget, but

the board will wait until next month's meeting, when that budget is finalized, before formally approving the expense.

Meeting the ammonia limits has much greater financial repercussions. The 2012 engineering report had noted that the cost for either of the two options would be around \$3.5 million. Frisch said he will be in touch with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) to initiate a discussion about the option of connecting.

Every year for the next five years, according to the permit, specific goals must be met and that progress documented in letters to the state. Central to those goals is assuring the state that the district is actively pursuing and securing funding. The district will look for grants and low-interest loans, but a bond election will be required soon.

The district will ask voters to approve a heftier mill levy than the one it is about to pay off — which will lower property taxes in 2014 for the first time in two decades. Selling the public on an election that is crucial to meeting state requirements will likely require a good PR campaign, said Director Ron Curry. Board members are limited as to how involved they can be in the election. "It's going to take an educated citizen to form a group to get out there and knock on doors and come to meetings," he said.

### One step closer to a website

Curry emailed board members earlier in the month requesting feedback on the district's new website, which is finally operational but not yet public. He is working to get new information on the site and hopes to make it available to customers soon.

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The Academy Water and Sanitation District board meets at 6 p.m. the third Wednesday of every month at the fire station on Gleneagle and Jessie Drives. The next meeting is Nov. 20.

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# FREE Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner

If you are Tri-Lakes or Black Forest resident and will be unable to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with friends or family at home, or if you are a first responder on duty Thanksgiving day, you are invited to enjoy a free Thanksgiving dinner at Rosie's Diner on Thanksgiving Day, November 28!

The meal is served at 11:30 AM and 1 PM. Early reservations are suggested because seating availability is limited. Reservations must be made not later than Friday, November 15. For more questions and to make a reservation, please call Madeline at the Town of Monument: (719) 884-8013.

More information is also available at: [www.TriLakesHAP.org/CCT](http://www.TriLakesHAP.org/CCT)

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