



Ten Tips to Help Communities Plan a Successful Water/Wastewater Project

- 1. Communities should coordinate with the Ohio EPA during planning and design of their project as soon as possible. Don't keep the Ohio EPA in the dark, use them as a resource who can 'watch your back' during the project. The more a community keeps Ohio EPA district and state staff involved in the beginning and throughout the project the fewer questions the Ohio EPA will have during plan approval.**
- 2. Communities should designate a local official or local resource person who can review cost estimates, engineering plans, etc. Engineers are human and make mistakes, but if the community designates a person to watch over the project they may be able to catch mistakes sooner rather than later.**
- 3. Communities should use available resources in Ohio who are knowledgeable of financing sources for water and wastewater projects. These resources include the Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP), the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA), the Small Communities Environmental Infrastructure Group (SCEIG), and local development districts in the Appalachian counties.**
- 4. Communities should strive to keep focused on the project they originally began. Don't get in the mind set of trying to do too many activities (projects) at once. Focus on the most important project and complete it before beginning a new one. This includes defining a project service area and sticking to it. You must know exactly what you want to construct before you can construct it.**
- 5. Communities should make sure their engineer is estimating costs based on the year the project will be bid. This will alleviate bids coming in over the allowable 10% and keep communities from obtaining additional financing and raising rates at the last minute.**

- 6. Communities should not be afraid to take a stand against their engineering firm. If your engineer is not listening to you, not meeting deadlines, or changing fees or project costs too often discuss this with them and get the problem resolved. This is your project not the engineers, you will be responsible for it after it is completed so you are the driving force. Question your engineer, get your questions answered, and don't hesitate to make changes as required.**
- 7. Communities need to keep the public involved. Hold regular public meetings, send out newsletters that include project information, have open houses and provide information as it is developed. Present alternatives to them, obtain their input and reactions, listen to what they say, and always remember to ask the question 'how will this impact the community'. Don't surprise the public, keep them involved from the beginning and fewer problems will occur down the road. If the public feels as though they were involved in the decision making they will accept the solution much more readily.**
- 8. Communities should maintain a project schedule with tasks and completion dates clearly listed. Water and wastewater projects are extremely complicated undertakings and it is very difficult to remember each task and deadline without keeping it on paper. Keep a project schedule, update it regularly, and make sure all project parties are meeting the schedule.**
- 9. Communities should be open to new ideas and alternative methods. Don't think that there is only one way to solve a problem, be flexible, and explore all your options. Contact the Ohio EPA, RCAP, SCEIG, local development districts, the Ohio Rural Water Association (ORWA), and other communities in Ohio who were presented with the same problem that you have. Find out how they solved the problem, how the system is operating now, and don't hesitate to schedule a tour for your community officials to visit facilities in other communities.**
- 10. Communities should keep in mind that they will be responsible for operating and maintaining the project they are planning to complete. Therefore, work with your engineer to include adequate operation, maintenance, and replacement costs in the project budget. You want the infrastructure you are constructing to last at least its useful life, and proper operation, maintenance, and repair is essential in assuring that it will do so.**