

Commissioners approve nutrient credit agreement

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The Lycoming County commissioners have agreed to buy nutrient credits on behalf of the West Branch Regional Authority.

On Thursday, the commissioners approved an agreement with the authority, which is planning to build a new sewage treatment facility to serve Muncy and Montgomery boroughs.

The nutrient credits will allow the Montgomery treatment plant, which is in disrepair and eventually will be replaced by the regional plant, to become compliant with pollution discharge limits for the 2012 "water year," which is a 12-month period beginning Oct. 1 and ending Sept. 30, according to Megan Lehman, county environmental planner.

The authority will reimburse the county for the credits, which will be sold at auction on Wednesday, Lehman said.

The nutrient credit trading program is designed to give pollution generators such as sewage treatment plants, power plants and developers a potentially less expensive alternative to brick and mortar improvements as a way of becoming compliant with pollution discharge regulations.

The credits are created by farmers who use pollution-reducing practices and are sold during an auction administered by the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, or PennVest.

The commissioners also approved a professional services agreement with the SEDA-Council of Governments for administrative services associated with the county's 2011 Community Development Block Grant program.

The county has been allocated about \$295,000 for the program by the state Department of Community and Economic Development.

The cost of administering the funds is about \$46,000, said William Lowthert, agency senior program analyst. Included in the costs are two environmental reviews associated with projects approved for the 2011 block grant year.

Lowthert also briefed the commissioners on project applications for this year. About \$251,000 is available for projects, though that amount could be increased depending on whether any money is left over from an allocation given last year to Old Lycoming Township for a sewer lateral replacement program.

The commissioners approved an agreement with AMEC, an engineering and consulting firm that will complete an environmental analysis of a property owned by Brodart.

The cost of the analysis is \$85,000, according to William Kelly, deputy director of the county Department of Planning and Community Development.

A building on the property will be demolished to make room for market-rate housing, as well as some homes built by the Greater Lycoming Habitat for Humanity.

Environmental testing already has been performed on the site, but the state Department of Environmental Protection has requested more testing, Kelly said.

Once the analysis is completed, the firm will complete a cleanup plan for the site. It then will be sold to the city, which will oversee the demolition and cleanup, he said.