

Work continues toward establishing sewer district

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Migrant Whole Health Organization (MWHO) is working with the J.D. Community to facilitate the formation of a sewer district.

According to the Missouri Clean Water Act, a community needs to have at least 0.9 acres of land to obtain a regulated septic system. There are a total of ten health issues in the community, according to MWHO coordinator, Sister Louise Benecke. Of these issues the highest priority, according to public health standards, is the waste health hazard. This hazard is a serious threat to the health of individuals living in the community, especially the elderly, children, and child-bearing women, said Benecke.

MWHO made contact with Scott Robbins, an attorney out of Poplar Bluff, MO., who has experience helping communities with pleading to obtain sewer districts.

Women of the community, identifying themselves as leaders, have gone house to house with information about obtaining the sewer district. These women followed up with the residents by obtaining petitions and receiving 56 of the 61 families' signatures, according to Benecke.

Ludy Lopez, MWHO's outreach advocate, attended the Midwest Assistance Program convention two weeks ago in Chicago, Ill. While at the meeting, Lopez had to show a display of the community's ten step process and which process the community was actively involved. This display served as proof to the program of the accomplishments of the community, said Lopez. The community is currently involved in step number eight of the ten total. The display will help the community bid and receive their level two grant, according to Lopez.

The goal of the community is to develop a group that works together to obtain and maintain a beautiful environment, said Sister Louise Benecke. The level two grant will help the community obtain the resources needed for design and implementation of the sewer districts infrastructure.

"We are hoping to bid with Rural USDA and any other supplemental funds so that bond issues will become a minimum in the future," Benecke said.

The minimum monthly cost of the sewer district to residents will be \$20 to \$30 because of the majority of individuals living in the community receiving a salary of minimum wage.

"MWHO's main goal is for the community to sustain what they have accomplished and continue to move forward with progress to provide a better living environment," Lopez noted.