

## **Purpose and Need to Improve the City of Portland's Wastewater Infrastructure**

*Cities and towns across America rely on one basic resource – water!*

Water infrastructure consists of three complex, interconnected systems: drinking water, wastewater and stormwater. Historically, communities across the United States, including the City of Portland, developed combined sewer systems to collect rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe. However, there are instances that these systems exceed capacity resulting in a combined sewer overflow (CSO). The excess wastewater overflow is then discharged directly into nearby streams, rivers, or other water bodies.

There are 772 US cities and towns with combined sewer systems and 108 of those are located in Indiana. To meet Clean Water Act goals through the US Environmental Protection Agency, CSO communities are being mandated to improve their wastewater collection systems. The City of Portland developed a Long-Term Control Plan as required through a State Agreed Order with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). The City is in the process of implementing several projects over the next 20 years as established in the Agreed Order in order to eliminate CSOs within the wastewater collection system.

The City of Portland is completing sewer separation throughout the wastewater infrastructure in the community. Benefits of sewer separation include:

- Meeting compliance with IDEM and avoiding costly penalties
- Reducing pollution to our waterways and providing a healthier community
- Addressing water quality for residents and our families well into the future
- Economic development can occur with an adequate wastewater system
- Minimizing overflows, basement flooding, or sewer backups
- Better quality of life

A utility rate study has recently been completed. This study recommends increasing the sewer rates in order to pay for the mandated projects. The City of Portland will hold meetings and provide educational materials regarding the sewer separation projects and potential rate increases to ensure all residents are informed. Additional information can be found on the City's website at [www.thecityofportland.net/wastewater](http://www.thecityofportland.net/wastewater). Please feel free to contact the Mayor's Office with any questions at 260-726-9395.

*Through our treatment process, we strive to make tomorrow's water quality,  
the best possible for our future generations.*