

# **Illicit Discharge Detection in Moecherville Neighborhood**

**Julie Wiegel, LEHP**

**Kane County Health Department**



# Moecherville Information

- Moecherville is an unincorporated area of Kane County located on the southeast side of Aurora.
- The Moecherville Water District supplies public water to all of the homes in the area.
- The Fox Metro Water Reclamation District provides sewer service to all of the homes in the area, or so we thought.

## The Detection

- In late November 2006 the Kane County Health Department began receiving numerous calls regarding sewage discharging to the ground on property to the south owned by Bigelow Farnsworth, LLC.

# Initial Inspection

- At the site inspection numerous depressions containing raw sewage were located.
- Residents of the Moecherville neighborhood stated that their “community septic system” was damaged by work done on the property by Bigelow Farnsworth, LLC.

# Map of the Area



# The Investigation Begins

- Bigelow Homes was contacted and stated they had performed a drain tile survey on the property.
- This survey located two tiles carrying sewage from the Moecherville neighborhood through the Bigelow Farnsworth property and then off site to discharge point.
- As part of the Bigelow Development these tiles would need to be re-routed. These tiles were reported to be in very bad condition.

# Sanitary Problem

- The four homes nearest to the collapsed tile in the Moecherville neighborhood were flooding with sewage and storm water due to drain tile blockage and backup.
- Two homeowners had installed a pump into their septic tank to pump the water to the ground surface. This was stopping the water from backing up into their homes.

## Photos of Site Conditions on 12/6/2006



- Sewage on Bigelow Property
- Sewage backing up through septic tank at private residence



# Working Toward a Solution

- Fox Metro Sanitary District was contacted by the Kane County Health Department to determine where the public sewer lines were located and which homes in the area were currently connected to the sewer.
- It was determined that up to 29 homes did not have a public sewer connection.
- The number of homes was later reduced to 18.

# Working Toward a Solution

- A series of meetings between the Kane County Health Department, Kane County Water Resources Department, Fox Metro Water Reclamation District, City of Aurora, and Bigelow Homes occurred to determine what options were available to correct the drainage and sewage problem.

# Working Toward a Solution

- Due to small lot sizes and drainage issues, new septic systems were not a viable option.
- The existing public sewer did not extend down effected streets or was too shallow to allow for a new sewer connection.

## Temporary Fix

- In late January, Bigelow agrees to repair tile.
- Tile is repaired and sample port is installed to monitor flow through tile. Residents are now able to shower, flush toilets and do laundry.

## Permanent Fix

- For the proposed development, Bigelow Homes had already proposed sewer connection stubs at Kendall and Calhoun.
- To allow for all affected residents to connect to public sewer an additional connection stub is needed at Farnsworth.

## Permanent Fix

- Fox Metro Sanitary District would need to install off-site sewer lines along, Kendall, Calhoun and Farnsworth to provide sewer service to affected homes.
- The new sewer lines were to be installed in summer 2007.

## Meeting with Moecherville Residents

- A town hall style meeting was held in March for the affected residents with representatives from the Kane County Health Department, Kane County Water Resources Department and Fox Metro Water Reclamation District.
- Approximately 17 residents attended this meeting.

# Resident Concerns

- The number one question asked by residents was who was going to pay for connection to public sewer and when would the sewer be available.
- Residents were concerned about damage to their property that may occur during connection to public sewer.



# Funding

- To assist Moecherville homeowners with the cost of connecting to the sanitary sewer the health department provided homeowners information on Kane County's CDBG Loan Program. This program provides assistance in the form of an interest-free deferred payment loan, secured by a second mortgage on the property to income eligible homeowners.

## Waiver of fees

- Fox Metro Water Reclamation District agreed to install the new sewer lines at no cost to the homeowners.
- The Fox Metro Water Reclamation District also, agreed to waive the standard \$1400.00 sewer connection fee to Moecherville homeowners who connected to the sewer within 45 days of the sewers completion.

# Connection

- When the new sanitary sewer lines were completed each of the 18 residences that were found not to have a connection to the public sewer were sent a notice from the health department.
- The notice informed the homeowner that the sewer was completed and that they would have 45 days to connect to the sewer and properly abandon their existing septic tanks.

## A Great Success

- Numerous plumbing companies bid for the sewer connection work for the individual homes. Many companies even went door to door giving bids to residents. This led to better prices for the homeowners.
- During the connection process no problems or complaints were received by the health department.

# Compliance

- To date 15 of the 18 homes have connected to the newly constructed sewer.
- The health department is working with the 3 remaining homeowners to ensure compliance.



**Questions????**

