

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SOUTHWEST ERIE COUNTY REGIONAL WATER PROJECT (SWECRWP) – INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Profiles

The Southwest Erie County Regional Water Project (SWECRWP) is a collaborative initiative among the Towns of Eden, Brant, North Collins and Collins, and the Villages of Angola and North Collins, to address their immediate and long-term water supply needs.

Background

Existing municipal systems are plagued by aging waterlines nearing 100 years and in need of major, costly upgrades. Increasingly stringent government water quality standards require expensive testing and treatment, placing a tremendous fiscal burden on the communities. Additionally, growth in some communities has been restricted due to the limited availability of safe and adequate water supplies, in effect serving as a residential development moratorium. Increasingly stringent water quality standards set by the state health department place significant cost burdens upon small municipalities operating their own systems. Many simply cannot afford the expensive testing and treatment procedures. Instead, they may have to face regular fines from the health departments until they are in compliance. Fractured governance is especially problematic for these municipalities. Separate water departments exist in four of the six participating municipalities leading to complicated supply arrangements, often at higher costs to some customers. Moreover, the fragmented governing structure has hampered opportunities to seek water improvement funding collaboratively, thus failing to maximize the potential of state and federal grant funds available for these purposes.

In March, 2005 the six municipalities signed a Memorandum of Understanding acknowledging that they were considering a water project that would provide service to each municipality.

Funding

SWECRWP applied and was approved for a Shared Municipal Services (SMSI) grant in the amount of \$571,000 to support the consortium's continued work with their consultant team to carry out the remaining planning and legal steps before construction of the actual water system can begin.

Outcome

The SMSI grant will be applied towards obtaining public approval of the water districts in the six municipalities and the creation of an intermunicipal agreement, which will outline how the project is to be financed and administered by the communities. Implementation of the project will be carried out by the inter-municipal water board, the Erie County Water Authority and related civil engineering firms.