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## Editorials

### Water report shows need for conservation

2/11/2010

Over the past few years Oswego Village Board members have twice discussed the possibility of lifting the village's water conservation ordinance as means to generate additional revenues for the village's financially stressed water fund.

The reasoning behind these proposals has been that residents who want to water their lawns whenever they want through the hot summer months and are willing to pay for it, ought to be allowed to do so. The village would then stand to gain the much-needed extra revenue from the water sales, help the village to at least partially offset the need for water rate hike.

Fortunately, a majority of the board has rejected the proposals, largely on environmental grounds. Board opponents of the 'open taps' proposals have noted that allowing residents to water unencumbered throughout the summer would not only increase wear and tear on costly village well pumps and increase the village's electric bill to run those pumps, they've expressed concern over the future supply of water to village residents. Over the past few decades as the population in the village and Fox Valley region has grown exponentially, many long-time area residents whose homes receive water from private wells have noted a marked drop in the water level in those wells.

A new report adopted last week by a planning group for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) should serve to further underscore the need for Oswego and all municipalities to continue to promote water conservation efforts.

The report notes that the underground shallow and deep well aquifers from which Oswego and many other area communities now draw their water have been slow to replenish as development has continued in the region.

The report also forecasts that due to the region's growing population, demand for water will rise by 25 percent by 2050. The report also found that demand for water will increase most significantly in outlying counties over the next four decades. The county predicted in the report to see the greatest increase in demand for water? Our own Kendall County at 160 percent.

The plan recommends municipalities implement a host of steps to better manage water demand by emphasizing conservation, including prohibiting practices that waste water. To monitor the water management efforts, the plan recommends that "conservation coordinators" be designated at both the municipal and regional level to oversee the efforts.

We believe the plan should serve as a reminder to officials locally and throughout the Chicagoland region that in providing water to current residents, they also have a responsibility to future generations. In addition, current officials need to begin looking at water conservation efforts on a regional basis since so many communities draw their water from the same shallow and deep aquifers. To have one or more communities allow their residents to water their lawns while other communities drawing their water from the same aquifers are asking their residents to limit their water use would be seriously counter-productive for current and future generations.

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