

# New sewers help avert floods during storm

By TODD FANDELL

The \$9.5 million first phase of Wilmette's massive East Side sewer reconstruction passed its first real test last Friday with remarkable ease, much to the pleasure of those village officials responsible for the project.

The overnight rainfall of last Thursday evening and Friday morning qualified as a storm that can be expected an average of only once in every 10 years, said Richard A. Hansen, director of public works.

The five-phase, \$37.4 million East Side relief sewer project is designed to eliminate any basement or other flooding problems east of Ridge Road resulting from just such a so-called 10-year storm.

Between 9 p.m. Thursday and dawn on Friday, rainfall measured 4.1 inches at the storm water pumping station on the village's western edge, 3.9 inches at Fire Station No. 2 in mid-village, and just under 3.5 inches at the lakefront water treatment plant, Hansen said.

"In the past, with a rainfall of that magnitude, we would have been flooded with complaint calls," he told last Saturday's Sewer Commission meeting.

Instead, village officials received only two home-

owner complaints of property flooding and two reports of street flooding in all of Wilmette in the storm's wake, Hansen said.

## An achievement

The prestorm drought

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**Richard A. Hansen,  
director of  
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conditions enabled dry soil to absorb much of the heavy rain "like a sponge," he acknowledged, "but this is still good news, a significant achievement."

"We can take a certain amount of justified pride and satisfaction that complaints now are few and far between," Village Trustee George Sullivan, chairman of the Sewer Commission, told fellow members.

He referred to their efforts over the last 4½

years in orchestrating the previously completed West Side sewer project, as well as the current East Side work.

"The Greenleaf Avenue sewer was a definite help to the whole system," Hansen told the commission. Running from a link to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's Deep Tunnel near Sheridan Road, west to Poplar Drive, the new Greenleaf sewer, under construction for the past year, is the backbone of the East Side project.

The delayed first phase of the project now is scheduled for completion in early August rather than the previous mid-July estimates, Sullivan reported.

"All of the underground work is completed, connected and working," he said. Remaining to be finished is curb, sidewalk, street and landscape restoration, along with some of Phase I's 165 street berms for temporary storm water ponding.

The village last summer had told residents that Phase I construction would be substantially completed by the end of 1993, with restoration work finished during the past spring. Unanticipated additional

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utility work has been blamed for much of the delay.

### West side

Construction of the \$6 million Phase II of the East Side project is scheduled to start next March. It consists primarily of a new sewer main on 9th Street from Greenleaf Avenue north to Forest Avenue, then west under Forest to 17th Street. It also includes 50 additional street berms.

Officials of RUST Environment & Infrastructure told the Sewer Commission their design work on Phase II, which is 95 percent complete, now indicates the

be open at a time, minimizing traffic disruption, he added.

entire length of the 9th/Forest sewer, with the possible exception of only the two most western blocks on Forest, can be economically constructed by tunneling under the streets rather than open cut.

"The impact on the village and its residents will be considerably less than was the case with the Greenleaf project," said RUST's Dave Talbott. The estimated cost saving will be \$150,000, he said.

The tunneling work will be accessed through 10 open pits along the route, but only one or two pits will