



HISTORY OF THE SEWER DISTRICTS

In 1967, the Chautauqua County Legislature hired an engineering firm to conduct a comprehensive sewerage study for the County. The study recommended a regional plan for a public collection system and treatment facility for numerous areas within Chautauqua County in order to protect the public health and to preserve the County's water resources. This led to the formation of the South & Center Chautauqua Lake Sewer Districts in 1970. The Center District serves the areas of Maple Springs, Bemus Point, Oriental Park, Arnold Bay, and Colburns all in the Town of Ellery. The South District serves portions of the Town of Ellery, the Fluvanna area in the Town of Ellicott, West Ellicott, Celoron, Lakewood, Vukote, the Loomises, and Ashville Bay.

Federal grants were awarded to Chautauqua County and construction was initiated in the late 1970's. On March 10, 1980, the present treatment plant went online serving Celoron and Lakewood displacing those former treatment plants. Additionally, five major interceptor pumping stations were constructed on both the north and south sides of the lake. They remained unused for four years because key interceptors linking them to the treatment plant were not constructed due to escalating costs for various reasons.

In early 1982 the County made one final effort to complete the halted project with public backing by adopting a new engineering plan to complete the regional collection system and to serve all the areas originally proposed based on information discovered during the original plan analysis. During the summer of 1982, an environmental health study was conducted which identified private well contamination, and failed septic systems discharging to nearby streams, ditches, ground surface and to the lake itself. The reevaluation recommended in part a change in sewer technology from the original plans, using vacuum sewers and low pressure sewers in order to lessen high construction costs and environmental problems associated with gravity in certain areas. It also recommended that the original scope of the collection system be reduced to cover only those areas deemed the most critical public health concerns and population densities to make it affordable to the users at the time. They went on to further state that upon completion, the County should reevaluate the need for sewers in the remaining areas based on health requirements, population densities, alternate means of financing and the resulting unit costs. Since then we have added portions of the Town of Busti to include industrial areas and new development, and would like to see even more unsewered areas added in the future.

HISTORY OF BILLING RATES

Existing system New User rate in 1988	\$310 per year
Inflation from 1988 to 2020	117.9%
Existing system New User rate in 1988, 2020 equivalent	\$675 per year

The West Side Extension user rate of \$1,000 or less per year is based on having received \$8 million in NYS grants, amounting to 47.4% of project costs. The remaining 52.6% of the project cost will be paid for by the extension customers over a 30-year, 0.0% interest loan.

A similar sewer extension project took place in the 1980's when the Center District was constructed. The Center District Extension (on the east side of the lake) construction was primarily funded by Federal grant money that assisted in project costs in the amount of 75% and New York State also assisted with a 12.5% grant. The existing system New User rate in 1988 (\$310 per year) was based on having received Federal grants and NYS grants. It is important to realize that federal grants are no longer available.

However, for comparative purposes, if the West Side Extension had similarly received grants for 87.5% of project costs the established user rate would be \$507 per year rather than \$1,000 per year. This would be less than the existing system New User rate in 1988, (2020 equivalent of \$675 per year) because the West Side Extension utilizes the treatment plant and transmission system installed and paid for in the existing system project.

The 1988 existing system New User rate 2020 equivalent of \$675 per year is greater than the current existing system user rate of \$354 per year because the existing system debt is fully retired, and the existing system has been exceptionally well run, maintained, and fiscally managed.