

Long awaited sewer work under way in Powderhorn area

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IRONWOOD TOWNSHIP —

It's been a long time coming, but a \$7.8 million sanitary sewer collection and transmission system is now under way in the Powderhorn area.

The project was engineered by Wilcox Professional Services of Escanaba. Construction by Snow Country Contracting of Bessemer, at a cost of \$5,708,243, began on Dec. 1, with the cross-country transmission main, according to Powderhorn Area Utility District Administrator Jean Verbos.

Other project costs include

engineering, inspection, legal fees and contingency, Verbos noted.

The Powderhorn area is located in both the Charter Township of Ironwood and Bessemer Township.

Under mandate by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to correct the problem of failed on-site septic systems, the two entities came together and formed the PAUD, a municipal authority, in December 2001, to construct a sanitary sewer collection and transmission system in the Powderhorn Ski Resort area, Verbos said.

PAUD board members

include: Chairman Richard Estola, Ironwood Township supervisor; secretary Gayla Kolehmainen, Ironwood Township clerk and treasurer; and Jeff Randall, Bessemer Township supervisor.

Funding for the project consists of a \$1 million grant from the Clean Michigan Initiative Fund, \$385,000 hardship grant from the Michigan State Revolving Fund; the remainder of the funding is a 40-year loan from USDA Rural Development.

The two townships set up a special assessment district to fund the preliminary expense of system design, administration

and debt service until the system connects users and collects fees to support the operations, Verbos said.

Since this type of utility is a "user-based" system, all the costs associated with the construction, operation and debt service come from charges to the users of the system and not the general public.

The sewage will be treated at the Bessemer Area Sewer Authority plant located on Stone Road in Ironwood Township.

The project is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2006, Verbos noted.