

## HERMITAGE

# City to inspect sanitary, storm water problems

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By Joe Pinchot, *Herald Staff Writer*

Hermitage city officials have begun an investigation of sanitary sewer and storm water problems that residents complained about after the Feb. 28 flooding brought on by rain and melting snow.

Officials responded to every complaint of sewer backups and decided to try to pinpoint the sources of all the problems, said City Manager Gary P. Hinkson.

A report issued to commissioners Thursday listed 18 complaints that officials consider sanitary sewer backups, although there were only seven or eight instances of raw sewage in homes, he said. "Overall, these are a low number of homes in the community, but our goal is this doesn't happen anywhere," Hinkson said.

The area of greatest concern is Woodside, Cohasset and Fairfield drives and Pine Tree Lane, where nine homes reported problems. Two city employees have begun contacting property owners to check basement sump pumps and basement drains, look for points of water infiltrating sanitary sewer lines, and determine if backflow preventers, where installed, are working properly.

City officials also plan to conduct smoke and dye tests to look for improper connections to sanitary sewer lines, such as from down spouts. Main sewer lines and laterals that connect them to homes will be televised to look for blockages and tree roots, and manholes and inspection stacks will be evaluated. City workers also will conduct a similar investigation on the east side of Robertson Road between Whippoorwill Drive and Golden Run Lane, where two homes have problems; and inspect lines and the private collection system in Shenango Park Apartments, Rombold Road. Three homes in the area reported problems.

Officials also investigated isolated complaints and found a French drain connected to the sanitary sewer system on Koonce Avenue; a home in which a resident did not turn on a gate valve on Lamor Road; and a manhole problem on Fairlawn Drive that should be remedied in an upcoming Hermitage Municipal Authority construction project. Officials are looking into a problem on West Clark Street. Hinkson said a more complete report on storm water problems is being readied, but workers have found a number of blocked catch basin grates and culverts, and ditches that need cleaned out, Hinkson said. Two areas that will be more thoroughly investigated are Butterfly Lane and Hickory United Methodist Church on North Hermitage Road, which experienced some flooding in the building.

Hinkson said city officials would have to identify funding sources should any fixes require construction projects to remedy. While the Feb. 28 flooding showed officials where work needs to be done, it also proved that recent fixes have worked, Hinkson said.

A series of improvements along Baker Run handled the excess water, and some residents of Oakdale Avenue reported that they did not have flooding for the first time in decades, Hinkson said. Indian Run, beside Walgreens and the Hermitage middle and elementary schools, never topped its banks, he said.