

Around Town

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**By Billy Ray McKelvy**

**De Queen Mayor**

After months of preparation, the City of De Queen is now soliciting bids to construct a new waste water treatment plant.

The city's existing sewer plant, which was built in the early 1980's, has been unable to meet discharge limits for several years now. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality has fined the City of De Queen for violations. The city has signed a consent order agreeing to remedy the problem in order to avoid further fines from ADEQ.

The biggest problem is meeting limits on water discharged into Bear Creek. During cold weather the biological process slows down and the discharge water contains too much ammonia.

In addition to helping the waste water plant meet limits, the new plant will be much more efficient to operate. At the present plant, the power bill runs approximately \$250,000 per year. The cost of chemicals is another \$250,000 annually.

The new plant has been designed by Vaughn Engineering of Mena. It will use activated sludge technology to treat water and remove ammonia. A new feature will allow the sludge to be reintroduced into the system so that it is digested in the treatment process.

Advertisements for bids are being published now. Bids will be opened on Feb. 23 at De Queen City Hall. If there is a bid within the budget limits, construction should begin this spring and will take approximately 18 months to complete.

Copies of the plans and specifications for the plant are available at De Queen City Hall. They may be viewed during business hours.