

\$4.1M Wastewater Treatment System For Inlet

By NORTH COUNTRY GAZETTE

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HAMILTON COUNTY—The Town of Inlet broke ground Wednesday for the construction of a \$4.1 million wastewater treatment plant and collection system to protect the environment and permit commercial development in this major Adirondack tourism destination.

Local business leaders, along with environmental advocates for the Adirondacks, attended the groundbreaking at Arrowhead Park along with officials from the Town of Inlet, Hamilton County, the New York State Environmental Facilities Corp., the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Rural Development Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The project is being financed with a \$1.734 million grant from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corp. (EFC) and a \$1.788 million Rural Development grant from the USDA.

The project was in jeopardy last year when construction bids came in far above the anticipated figures. The project was saved when EFC President and CEO Matthew Driscoll announced that Inlet would receive an additional \$1.534 million on top of a \$200,000 grant that EFC had previously committed to the project.

At the groundbreaking, Driscoll said, "Replacing private septic tanks with a modern wastewater treatment system will help protect the environment and public health of this community and the thousands of people who visit Inlet each year. New York State is happy to make this a reality, giving Inlet the opportunity to grow economically and take full advantage of its appeal as a major tourism destination."

The new sewer system will help protect Fourth Lake by collecting and treating wastewater that is now handled by privately-owned septic systems.

The treatment facility will be built near the Hamlet Center at the base of Fern Mountain while a collection system with new pump stations, a force main and gravity sewers will be installed to serve the town's 400 residents, along with the thousands of visitors who come to Inlet and three state campgrounds each year.

"Inlet is 'Open for Business,'" said Inlet Town Supervisor John Frey. "The sewer project has already had an economic impact on the Town. A vacant building has been purchased and is already undergoing renovation bringing year round jobs with it. Other locations are adding services that could not be provided without updated and costly septic systems. We are very thankful that this Governor, EFC and USDA RD understood the needs and found a way to make it come together."

Along with the Adirondack Council, other environmental advocates voiced their support for the Inlet Wastewater initiative.

"This grant and infrastructure projects like this one encourage economic activity in our villages and hamlets, enabling Smart Growth and reducing pollution and other impacts on valuable open space," said Julie McQuain, Chair, Clean Water/Watersheds Committee of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter. "We want development in the villages, where people and infrastructure are. It's the definition of Smart Growth and the model for a sustainable, livable New York."

Dave Gibson of Adirondack Wild said, "Adirondack Wild knows that high water quality is critical to this Adirondack community. Inlet's residents, businesses, visitors and outdoor recreationists are closely connected with and dependent upon the region's magnificent lakes, rivers and aquatic wildlife habitats. Improving water quality in the Fulton Chain area has been a very high priority for a long time. Therefore, we appreciate the efforts of the DEC, EFC and the Town of Inlet to move forward with this important waste water treatment project."