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Pine River Township taking advantage of land agreement

April 26, 2007

Pine River Township has taken the first steps toward utilizing the benefits of a recent "historical" land share agreement by discussing an extension of water utilities to businesses.

By [Erica Goff](#)

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Pine River Township has taken the first steps toward utilizing the benefits of a recent "historical" land share agreement by discussing an extension of water utilities to businesses.

Kevin Beeson, Pine River Township supervisor, said he has been approached by a number of businesses in the township, mostly along Alger Road and M-46 north of Alma city limits, about extending water services through the area for added fire protection. There are a number of major businesses and industries in Gratiot County, such as Garr Tool, in that area that could benefit by having the added utilities and fire protection.

"Insurance rates of businesses are based on a number of factors and one is based on water," Beeson said.

An agreement signed between the township and the cities of Alma and St. Louis earlier this year will make such an extension more feasible. The land share agreement, signed in February, allows the township to extend utilities into areas that overlap with the city limits. Beeson said the idea is in early discussion stages but involves a consideration to extend water utilities along Alger Road north to M-46 and about a half mile west along the road.

"It amounts to about a mile and a half worth of water main," Beeson said.

Beeson raised the issue at last week's township board meeting and members approved his moving forward with information gathering on such a project. He said the next step is to develop some preliminary costs for the project to determine how much money would have to be borrowed. A public hearing would be held shortly thereafter to hear public input on the subject.

One incoming project, expected to be located on Alger Road between Family Farm and Home and Garr Tool, could also benefit from the expansion. A Super Walmart is proposed for construction in that location, and has so far passed all local permitting processes for site planning and zoning. Beeson said the company expects to release requests for contract bids May 31 and contractors will have 30 days to develop bids. Construction is expected to begin Aug. 1 and a tentative opening date is set for May 2008.

"The availability of sewer is already there so to have both utilities will help encourage additional businesses," Beeson said. "That is the heaviest traveled road in the county and this will help encourage development."