

How's The Water?

Cesspool Health Means Aquifer Health

By PATRICIA AITKEN,
FRIENDS OF THE BAY
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The Long Island Regional Economic Development Council and the Town of Oyster Bay announced the kickoff of their educational outreach campaign to raise public awareness of the onsite wastewater treatment systems on Long Island. They are kicking off of an educational outreach campaign for Coordinated Environmental Solutions for Septic Problems Occurring on Long Island (C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Project), which is being supported by a \$45,000 award the Town of Oyster Bay received as part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Regional Council initiative.

This project will increase regional public awareness of onsite water treatment systems (both cesspools and septic systems) and water quality on Long Island and has the potential to create employment opportunities in the cesspool service industry.

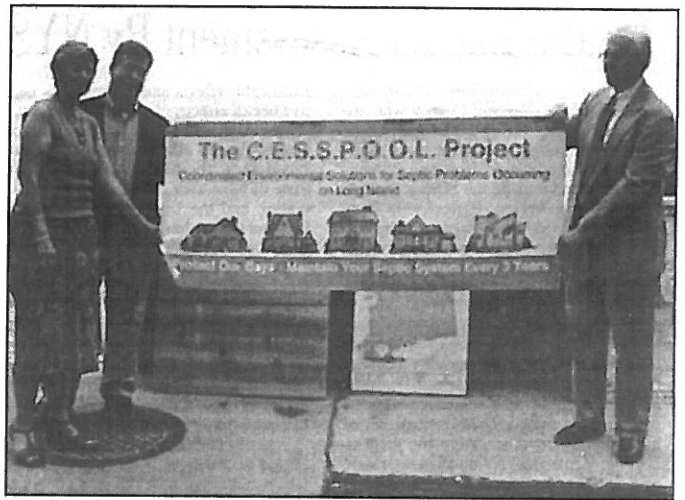
"Wastewater treatment is not often thought of when it comes to economic development. However, without safe water the quality of life in an area declines and businesses suffer, which makes projects like this vital to our economy," said Kevin Law, president of the Long Island Association and Regional Council co-chair. To that aim there is an educational campaign, "to help Long Islanders understand how they can do their part to protect their environment and well-being to ensure a bright and prosperous future"

Stuart Rabinowitz, Hofstra University president and Regional Council co-chair

said, "Simply put - we need safe water. This awareness campaign will teach Long Islanders how to be conscious of how our actions affect the environment and our neighbors, and protect our water for generations to come."

The C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. project will raise awareness of onsite wastewater treatment systems through an educational outreach campaign. The Town of Oyster Bay, Friends of the Bay and watershed protection committees for Manhasset Bay, Hempstead Harbor, and Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor will raise public awareness of the importance of regularly inspecting, maintaining, and repairing/upgrading cesspools within the watersheds of the three embayments. The project will be implemented in four phases and will result in an increased awareness of the need for regular, routine maintenance of cesspool systems with the goal of increasing routine maintenance.

"Septic systems have been found to be one of the major contributors to the contamination of fecal coliform bacteria and other pollutants to Long Island's ground waters, harbors, bays and waterways. Groundwater contamination is, consequently, of grave concern, as this contamination could enter the drinking supply through the aquifers. The short-term goals of the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. project are to raise public awareness of the importance of regularly inspecting, maintaining, and, as necessary, repairing/upgrading residential on-site sanitary systems within Nassau County and, consequently, creating jobs in the cesspool service industry," said John



Patricia Aitken, Rob Crafa and Eric Swenson at the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. conference.

Vendiito, TOB supervisor. "The long-term goals of the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. project are to reduce nutrient and contaminant loads to groundwater within the areas contributing to the county's surface water, thereby reducing the non-point source loads to these surface waters. Protecting the quality of recharge in these areas will protect and improve surface water quality. The town is very gratified the state sees the worthiness of this project and looks forward to working with our partners in making the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. project a success."

The Town of Oyster Bay will serve as the lead agency for the partnership between three Long Island watershed protection committees - Manhasset Bay, Hempstead Harbor, and Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor, and Friends of The Bay - to implement the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. project. It will raise public awareness of the importance of regularly inspecting, maintaining, and as necessary repairing/upgrading residential cesspools within Nassau County and consequently creating jobs in the cesspool service industry.

The campaign will be implemented in four phases:

Phase I: Establishing a geographic map of all the unsewered areas within the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor watershed

area by working with county health departments and local sewer districts.

Phase II: Establishing a baseline understanding of what the public awareness is so as to develop an educational campaign for residents.

Phase III: Creating and implementing the educational campaign to educate, motivate and assist residents in maintaining their septic systems.

Phase IV: Success of the program will be seen by the increased maintenance of septic systems and increased business for related companies. This grant will provide an indication of the number of residents that took action via redeemed coupons and increased business.

Last year, a total of \$785 million was awarded through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) for job creation and community development projects consistent with each region's strategic plans. As part of that process, the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Project was awarded \$45,000 from the Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Secretary of State Cesar A. Perales said, they have streamlined the application process and enabled local stakeholders to choose the projects they know will best help the region's economy.

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"The Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee (OB/CSHPC) is excited to be developing a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of the long neglected issue of cesspool issues with an unprecedented coalition of 32 municipalities," said Robert Crafa, OB/CSHPC Protection Committee coordinator. "This inter-municipal cooperation will be key to addressing this priority issue that has been

identified as a priority by study after study in the last several decades."

"Oyster Bay Harbor produces up to 90 percent of New York State's oysters and up to 33 percent of the state's hard clams and a large portion of Hempstead Harbor was recently re-opened to shellfish harvesting for the first time in over 40 years," said Eric Swenson, executive director of the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee. "Keeping these waters clean is critical to our local economies. With tens of thousands of homes with septic systems feeding into these Waterbodies, it is critical that these systems be maintained. The C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Project is fulfilling a real need. Without New York State funding, this would not be possible."

"Maintaining the quality of our water, whether drinking water, surface water or the water in our harbors and bays, will be the determining factor for the future growth of Long Island," said Patricia Aitken, FOB executive director. "This a groundbreaking initiative to address the issue of septic contamination of Long Island's water supply."

To learn more about each regional council and their economic development plans, visit www.nyworks.ny.gov. A map of Nassau County shows the hamlet of Oyster Bay and the City of Glen Cove have sewage systems, as does much of the southern portions of the area. The north shore with its small villages and (mostly) large properties is not sewered.