

Angola approves \$125,000 for iMAN

by Jennifer Decker jdecker@kpcnews.net | Posted: Wednesday, September 7, 2011 12:00 am

ANGOLA — The Angola Common Council approved funding the expansion of the Indiana Metropolitan Area Network in the city using \$125,000 of Major Moves funding at Monday's regular meeting.

The funding will allow the expansion of the Steuben County-based fiber optic broadband from Angola to I-69. The expansion will also go south of the city limits and will include a small section of Wohlert Street. In the process, Bill Geiger, iMAN founder and project manager, said in a letter to the city that it would offer Angola customers even faster and greater broadband capacity.

The council decided to fund the fiber optic network's expansion after a lengthy discussion on the cost of connecting lift stations.

"It's clearly economic development," Council member Dave Olson said.

Waste Water Treatment Plant superintendent Craig Williams said he was concerned with the cost to the city of \$125 monthly per lift station to connect to the network.

In a letter to Mayor Dick Hickman and the council, Williams said he supported the expansion as an economic development tool. Williams said 20 sewage lift stations are operated throughout the city and each has a computer monitoring system and he said each is critical to the health and public safety of the community.

"The proposed iMAN expansion would come within close proximity of the 12 to 20 lift stations we maintain," Williams said. He asked the council to encourage iMAN to provide low bandwidth connections to existing and future expansions of the fiber system by reducing the monthly connection fee. Williams said the connections are needed to communicate between lift stations.

"I fully support the funding. When Nathan (Armstrong, Angola information technology manager) brought it to department heads, he said it would be a feasible replacement," Williams said.

The council said it would negotiate that lift station connection fee with iMAN.

Since 2002, Angola has invested more than \$200,000 in iMAN. According to iMAN figures, it's expected Angola could receive a payback of more than \$42,000 on that investment that could continue to grow. That's because the system is an arm of the Steuben

County Community Foundation. A part of iMAN fees are returned to the communities in which it serves through grant money made available by the foundation.

Clerk-Treasurer Deb Twitchell said the \$125,000 will come this year and it takes up to 45 days to process a Major Moves appropriation.