

Will pipe puncture Providence pool?

By Marraea McGuinness
GUILDERLAND — When it rains it pours. Residents of the Mercer and Providence Street area in McKownville are holding their breath hoping that repairs done on Mercer on Thursday will prevent any additional flooding.

Earlier in the month residents presented the town board with a petition asking for help in solving a drainage problem in their neighborhood. The back yard of Bob Benson's Mercer Street home was flooded with nearly a foot of water since the spring, and other residents were experiencing flooded basements. The water was also breeding mosquitoes and pollywogs. The problem arose from a back up or break in the 50-year-old storm water drainage system.

On Thursday, a four inch plastic pipe was run through Benson's yard to Providence Street by highway and waste water management crews to drain the area. According to Benson the work dramatically helped the water level in his back yard, however since the pipe was laid the water has stood still on Providence Street, and some Providence Street residents experienced flooding with last week's rain.

On Wednesday morning, highway superintendent Todd Gifford moved dirt that was blocking the water in order to allow the water to flow away from Fuller Road. "The water was going the wrong way," Gifford said. "There's a lot of water coming out; I hope this will do it." Gifford also said he has not heard any complaints from Providence residents.

Gifford said the predicted rain will not help the area and

it will certainly increase the flow of water on the street, but it is unknown if there will be dramatic problems on Providence. Gifford said he looked at other yards affected after the pipe was laid and it appeared that they were dryer, although he was not certain of the actual affect of the pipe on other properties. Benson said his lot was soft and mushy.

The area is a natural wetland, Gifford said. When crews were digging the trench to lay the pipe they nearly hit the water table at three feet. Residents have also experienced some flooding before.

The pipe is a temporary solution to the problem Gifford said. There is a major obstacle that must be dealt with before further repairs can begin. There are no maps of the pipe system which was installed forty or fifty years ago. Maintenance was never done on the system since it was installed by the developer and not under the jurisdiction of the town. Gifford guessed the water level caused some problems for the developer so the pipes were laid.

Benson gave written permission to the town to work on his property, because it was an emergency situation easement wasn't given. When permanent repairs are planned residents will have to give easement to the town before work can begin. The town board will have to appoint an engineer. Gifford said the engineer will have to trace the pipe lines and determine if the pipes are blocked or broken.

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The Aztecs of Mexico celebrated New Year's on February 2nd.