

THE ESCAPE

FALL 2026 newsletter



Welcome to fall in NEPA, when the hills come alive with brilliant colors, the air turns crisp, and our community settles into the warmth and traditions of the season. As we enjoy the beauty of autumn, we're grateful for the neighbors, events, and shared moments that make our community feel like home.



SCHOOL BUS TIME

With school back in session, drivers must be extra cautious in areas like bus stops and school zones. Children might be distracted, so it's our duty to ensure their safety. Slow down, watch for kids on foot or bikes, and stop for school buses with flashing lights. It's required to display a current 2026 EPOA sticker on your vehicle. Patrol will be making sure all are in compliance. We will have zero tolerance for anyone who does not stop at the stop signs. Citations will be issued. Let's work together to create a safe environment for our children.





The Escape Property Owners Association, Inc.

Dear Community Members,

Re: Planned Wastewater Treatment Plant Replacement and Assessment

Background and Need

Nearly a decade ago, EPOA Property Manager Ann Marie Miller began evaluating options to address the community's aging wastewater treatment plant. In operation since 1972, the plant has significantly exceeded its original 30- to 40-year expected service life. In 2017, the EPOA engaged Evoqua Water Technologies, a firm specializing in wastewater treatment systems, to assess the plant's overall condition. The evaluation found that metal fatigue in the treatment tanks made it impossible to reliably estimate their remaining service life, and metallurgical testing confirmed continued deterioration. Based on these findings, the EPOA elected to replace the existing equipment with a modern prefabricated packaged treatment system. Although the current plant remains operational, its aging components require increasingly costly repairs and substantial attention from the Escape's DEP Licensed and Certified Operator and our maintenance personnel.

Since 2016, the Association has recognized that replacement would require a substantial financial commitment. Our goal has been to secure available funding and develop a responsible plan that limits the fiscal impact on the community.

Project Planning and Funding

In 2017, the EPOA engaged KBA Engineering to design a **replacement** plant that would meet current federal, state, and local requirements. The project was then estimated at approximately **\$2 million**—an amount the Association could not reasonably fund on its own. Since this project's inception we sought to keep the community informed of the status during Board Meetings and by past Community New Letters.

The USDA Rural Development program supports qualifying infrastructure projects at interest rates below conventional lending rates. The EPOA began working with the USDA in 2017 and received a **Letter of Conditions** in January 2023. The letter does not constitute a loan approval. The loan will be considered approved on the date USDA's Form RD 1940-1, "Request for Obligation of Funds" is signed by the Agency approval official. The conditional endorsement is subject to specified requirements; failure to satisfy those conditions could result in the withdrawal of USDA commitment.

By January 2023, the estimated project cost had risen to \$3,078,000. Progress slowed during the COVID period since federal agencies could not operate normally. However, coordination continued with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI), and Palmyra Township so the project could continue meeting environmental and construction planning requirements.

Current Cost and Assessment Impact

As of 2026, the estimated project cost had escalated to **\$5,400,000**. The increase reflects plant modifications necessitated by the PA DEP (larger capacity, inclusion of a surge tank and backwash return), higher construction, labor, and material costs, required for a project of this scope. We understand the significance of this increase that all property owners will bear.

- **Financing term:** The USDA funding obligation would be repaid over 40 years.
- **Estimated owner impact:** Each property owner would pay approximately an additional \$40 per month through a community assessment. The final amount may vary; based on the project's actual cost as determined by bid submissions.

Permitting, Approvals, and Appeals

Over the past several years, the EPOA has completed the required planning, engineering, environmental review, procedural documentation, and coordination with state agencies. Soon after obtaining the

necessary Pennsylvania environmental permits in early 2026, we submitted the project to the Palmyra Township Planning Board. The Township granted conditional use approval in July 2026. The Township's approval resulted in a challenge to its ruling from an Escape resident concerning the proposed plant location. The Homeowner has exercised the legal right to appeal, and the matter will be heard in Pike County, Milford, PA. Our attorney is seeking an expedited process to reduce delays, and the EPOA is collaborating with legal counsel to prepare an appropriate response. Keep in mind this appeal procedure, as with all the legal proceedings to date defending this undertaking comes at a cost. Our legal counsel does not work gratuitously.

Note, any change to the already approved plant design would require revisiting the various authorities (DEP, DRBC, PNDI, Palmyra Township, etc.) thus further delaying the project timeline as well as encountering additional cost impacts. The current waste treatment plant and its associated elements (buildings, filtration, clarifiers, pumps, oil separators, etc.) have underground utilities and process-distribution systems that will require repositioning. The major portion of the new plant will be below ground level with only approximately two feet above grade to minimize its visibility. Any alternative work could require additional excavation and potential retaining wall construction, adding additional time and expenditure. Because the specific legal and technical issues are outside the Association's area of expertise, the Board nor the EPOA Property Manager will not speculate about or characterize the substance of the appeal. Relevant information is available to the public through the appropriate channels.

Next Steps and Community Commitment

While the appeal proceeds, the EPOA continues advancing every aspect of the project that can move forward responsibly. We are collaborating with engineering, local authorities, planning, legal, and project professionals; following all applicable requirements; and working to protect the interests of the community as a whole. We recognize that this process has been lengthy and property-owners may have questions about the project, its cost, and the schedule. The subsequent and/or on-going steps are:

- Conclude the appeal process, evaluate the outcome, and identify any required actions.
- Prepare bid package to be submitted to qualified vendors.
- Provide USDA with updated plans, bid specifications, permits, timelines.
- Fulfill any remaining Township conditional use issues.
- Submit bid specifications to qualified vendors.
- Evaluate bid submissions and award the project.
- Complete construction and commissioning, currently expected to take 18 to 24 months.

During construction, one of the two in-ground treatment tanks, or "trains," will be taken offline and removed to make room for the new packaged treatment plant. The EPOA is taking contingency measures to help keep the remaining treatment system operational during this period.

Closing

We will continue to focus on moving the project expeditiously to its eventual end while managing costs responsibly, and keeping residents informed as the project advances. Replacing the aging wastewater treatment plant is essential to the community's infrastructure and long-term future. **Our priority is to meet this need in a financially responsible and environmentally sound manner that serves the best interests of the entire community while complying with federal, state, and local agencies.**

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and continued interest as we work through this vital process.

Respectfully,

**EPOA Board of Directors
Ann Marie Miller, Property Manager**



Misc. Info:



Water Shut-off

If you are leaving for the season, please call the office to get your water temporarily shut off to avoid frozen pipes and leaks.



MEETING



Board Meeting

Saturday, November 7th
10 AM at the Marina Building.

*Important discussion about the sewer plant is on the agenda.

Smoke Test

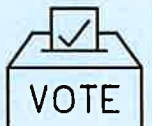


Pennsylvania Rural Water Association will be conducting smoke testing on 10/19 & 10/20. (weather permitting). Smoke testing is a non-invasive method used to detect blockages and defects in sanitary and storm lines. It is done through the man holes.

Bylaws vote

YOUR VOTE
MATTERS

Voting for changes to the Bylaws is happening now. You can vote online or stop in the office for the paperwork. Fill out the form and drop it off at the office. You must place the envelope in the ballot box yourself. Do not leave it in the mailbox outside and do not hand it to an employee. It must be placed in the locked Ballot Box. Deadline to vote is 10/22/26



Escape improvements

We replaced the brown street signs with new bright blue street signs throughout the community. These new signs make the road names more visible.

Notary

We have a Notary available on Friday and Saturdays. Stop in the office or call to make an appointment with Celeste.



SUMMER RECAP

CELEBRATING AMERICAS
250TH ANNIVERSARY



POOL TIME!



POPCORN CART AT THE PICNIC



A warm thank you to everyone who joined us this summer! From the sunny days at the pool to our vibrant community gatherings, your presence made it unforgettable. We loved seeing the smiles and shared moments. Let's keep this spirit alive as we head into fall!





4TH OF JULY GOLF CART PARADE

Which golf cart is the most patriotic?

Here's the results:

1ST



The Handwerk Family

2ND



The Pogorzelski Family

3RD



The Gratacos Family

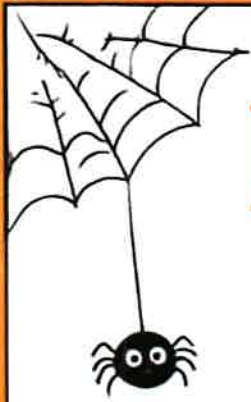
more pics from the parade



HALLOWEEN

AT

THE ESCAPE



SPOOKTACULAR FUN!

If you would like to be a participating house in handing out candy, please stop by the office to pick up a pumpkin to place in your window.

HALLOWEEN TRICK-OR-TREAT

Bring the little ghouls and goblins for a fun and safe trick-or-treat around the community!

Friday, October 30th &
Saturday, October 31, 2026

🕒 Curfew is 10 PM



REMINDERS

Please be respectful of neighbors and look both ways when crossing streets. Watch for cars and walk on the side of the roadways.



THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR COMMUNITY A SPOOKTACULAR PLACE TO LIVE!



≈ ≈ The ESCAPE ≈ ≈ apparel order form

T-SHIRTS
\$15

**PULLOVER
SWEATSHIRT**
\$25

**ZIPPER
SWEATSHIRT**
\$30

⌵
 SIZES
 S - 3XL
 ⌵

⌵
 DESIGN #1
 ⌵



⌵
 DESIGN #2
 ⌵



Customer Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Size	Color of Garment	Lettering Color (Black or White)	Design #	Quantity	Price Each	Total
ORDER TOTAL:						

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 Thanks for supporting The Escape!
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