

Oswego toasts water system

By Matthew DeFour
STAFF WRITER

OSWEGO — House Speaker Dennis Hastert visited one of Oswego's well stations Friday to dedicate the village's state-of-the-art radium filtration system with a check from the federal government for \$950,200.

Village President Craig Weber introduced Hastert by commemorating the system, which began as a pilot plant in 2002 before it became fully operational in mid-2005, as "a first for Oswego and a first for the nation."

"Our communities were facing a real challenge a few years back," Hastert said, referring to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's decision in 2000 to require the village and 130 other communities throughout the state to start complying with federal radium requirements.

Towns in northern Illinois, many of them in Hastert's 14th Congressional District, were affected by the new regulations, particularly because they draw water from deep wells with naturally occurring radium content, as opposed to Lake Michigan, Hastert said.

The new filtration system, developed by Colorado-based Water Remediation Technology, cost Oswego about \$2.7 million to install, with the federal government footing about a third of the bill. The village expects to pay an additional \$300,000 per year in operating costs, though the technology is

Radium removal grants

Federal funding for radium removal awarded to Fox Valley communities

Batavia	\$1.5 million
DeKalb	\$2.5 million
Elburn	\$500,000
Geneva	\$1 million
North Aurora	\$1.75 million
Oswego	\$1 million
West Chicago	\$1 million
Yorkville	\$1.5 million

cheaper than other available filtration systems because it involves less maintenance.

A number of local dignitaries, including State House Minority Leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego; State Rep. Patricia Reid Lindner, R-Sugar Grove, and village trustees and staff, gathered for the half-hour ceremony at the Well No. 8 facility on Grove Road.

Water Remediation Technology President Charles Williams came from Denver to attend the event and said that, since working with Oswego, the company has begun more than 60 other pilot plants nationally, including systems in Elburn and Sycamore.

Williams marvelled at the voluminous blue tank in which his product was making Oswego's drinking water safer.

"When you think that there's 1,000 gallons of water a minute going through it right now and you don't hear any noise, that's a good thing," he said.