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Cary Hopes New Plant Will Ease Sewage Stench

Plant Will Turn Sludge Into Fertilizer

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CARY, N.C. -- As the town of Cary grows, so does its sewage needs. Some say the stench coming from sewage buildup around Harrison Avenue is also growing.



Cary officials plan to turn sewage sludge into fertilizer.

"The smell out here near Harrison can be almost offensive," Mayor Ernie McAlister said.

Cary's two waste water treatment plants are working overtime trying to handle more than 65,000 gallons of sewage a day.

"You have sludge that needs to be treated and that's what creates the smell," McAlister said.

Cary officials say the solution may be turning the sludge into fertilizer pellets.

Monday, Cary broke ground on the region's first system that will convert waste into high-quality fertilizer. The state of the art plant will cost \$13 million. A federal grant is helping to pay around \$1 million of the cost.

"You always look for win-win solutions and this seems to me the genuine article," Rep. David Price, D-Chapel Hill, said. "You're talking about reducing the volume of waste and talking about a product that has an economic value."

"The pellets will be commercially valuable for farmers," McAllister said. "It's taking something with no value and adding value to it."

The plant is expected to come online in 2005. It could generate 50,000 pounds of fertilizer everyday.

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