

Rural residents hold demonstration against sludge spreading plan

By MARY HARDIN

Evening Press staff reporter

"You don't want our in the city. We don't want your sludge in the country."

This is not a line in a new country-western song. It was one of the slogans carried on a sign-bedecked manure spreader (full, of course) when about 25 persons picketed City Hall today in opposition to the Muncie Sanitary District's plan to apply sludge to farmland.

The group responsible for the demonstration is CAUSA (Citizens Against Unsafe Sludge Application). CAUSA organized last year to oppose the district's plan to spread treated sludge on 1,000 acres of farm ground.

The pickets were gathered for today's meeting of the sanitary district board.

They carried signs reading "Why not incinerate sludge," "Sludge poisons our wells," "Save our farms" and "Stop cropland applied sludge," as the manure spreader circled the downtown area and City Hall.

The manure spreader also carried a sign adorned with a rose that read "Sludge doesn't smell like roses."

Today's demonstration was prompted by a preliminary report on the plan released last week by the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency. That report stated no more environmental study would be necessary unless public demand in the next 30 days necessitated it.

Yorktown farmer Larry Stewart, who is president of CAUSA, told members of the Sanitary District board the EPA had informed the group of the necessary steps for getting further study and petitioning the board was one of the steps.

Stewart read a list of 12 questions to board members that detailed concerns over the plan to spread sludge over the county and 500 acres of ground the district plans to purchase.

Stewart said a meeting in opposition to the land application plan will be conducted Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Daleville High School.

After Stewart's brief presentation to the board, the meeting continued with a public hearing on the proposed 1983 budget for the sanitation and engineering departments.

Those departments, which operate under a separate tax levy from other city departments, have a total proposed budget of \$3.4 million.

The proposal is about \$100,000 more than the 1982 budget and calls for a tax rate of \$1.45 per \$100 assessed valuation.

The board will meet next Monday.

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at 10 a.m. to approve the budget.

Also today, the board approved a \$5,000 decrease in a contract awarded earlier to Stampco Construction, Albany, for installation of a sewer line on Janney and Ball Avenue.

The revised contract price is \$223,293.

David Osborn of the district's engi-

neering department said Stampco Construction requested a change in the plan to install the sewer line on the east side instead of the west side of Janney and Ball.

Stampco is one of three general contractors working on the project in an area northeast of Wheeling and McGalliard.



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RAISING A STINK ... Pickets with a loaded manure spreader circle City Hall today, protesting a plan by the Muncie Sanitary District to spread treated sludge on farmland. The protesters oppose the plan because they believe the sludge will contaminate land and

ground water and reduce property values. Their march today was scheduled after the Environmental Protection Agency released a report saying no further study of the plan was necessary unless public objections arose. — Evening Press photo by Jerry Burney.