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GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Business and Public Administration
Division of Public Administration

The Rantoul-Chanute Regionalization of Wastewater Treatment:
Small Town Interest Group Success

A Master's Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Public Administration

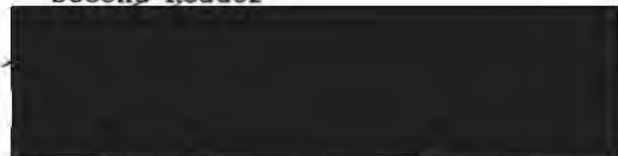
BY
Francis G. McLoughlin
Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois
June 1988

Signatures:

Chairperson

First Reader

Second Reader



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This paper is a collaboration. One only has to look at the bibliography to see the list of those who have helped so much. Without their assistance, none of this would have been possible. To them, I say thank you -- I owe you a debt of gratitude which is difficult to put into words.

It is here, however, I want to thank those who are not mentioned anywhere in the text. Without their support, the works in the bibliography would never have come together in this paper.

Professor Bill Toner read the manuscript more times than he probably cares to remember. I am especially grateful for his help in bringing the paper to completion. I am also indebted to all the other professors who travelled to Chanutte to bring the Governors State University MPA Program here. Obviously, without their efforts, this paper would never have started.

The list of people who have helped over the past two years, whether knowingly or not is too long to include here and such a list would undoubtedly omit someone. Suffice to say, thank you -- you know who you are.

To my wife Patricia, to whom this work is dedicated, and my son, Francis Michael, I want to say, thank you for your support and help. Francis can have his crayons back now.

Finally, for any errors that have slipped through the screening process, I bear sole responsibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the pages to follow I intend to show how the Village of Rantoul made a killing in the federal funds market. What did the Village do? It entered into a joint venture with Chanute Air Force Base to build and operate a regional wastewater treatment plant. This regionalization saved village residents millions of dollars while the Air Force, assured of money for their own on-base plant from the Department of Defense, had nothing to lose and public support to gain. In the end, both the village and Chanute Air Force Base have their regional wastewater treatment facility. The self-interest of both institutions is obvious. What is less obvious is the role of interest group politics in producing such a result and that is the topic of this paper.

James Madison (1787) recognized the perils of interest groups breaking our society down into factions and threatening democracy in The Federalist X:

The inference to which we are brought is, that the causes of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the right of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed.

Others have also recognized the perils posed by interest groups. Jeffrey M. Berry (1984, p. 1) in his book on our interest group society captures the dilemma of trying to control interest groups in a free society:

If the government does not allow people to pursue their self-interest, it takes away their political freedom. When we look at all the nations of the world in which people are forbidden to organize and freely express their political views, we find that there the dilemma has been solved by authoritarianism. Although the alternative permitting people to advocate whatever they want is far preferable, it carries dangers. In a system such as ours, interest groups constantly push government to enact policies that benefit small constituencies at the expense of the general public.

Looking at interest groups and how they work, accepted principles and rules of procedure will be my guiding theory to explain what happened in Rantoul. While many people have written on interest groups over the years, David B. Truman's (1951) work is considered, even today, the definitive work on the subject because it was one of the first to examine how public opinion shaped organized groups' agendas. His book, The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion, is relied on heavily to explain a lot of what happened in Rantoul.

Even a casual observer knowing few details of what happened between the Air Force base and the Village of Rantoul would stop to think. I stopped, and my research resulted in some very interesting results. While nothing illegal went on in this symbiotic relationship, a very simple moral issue keeps coming to mind -- is the

fact that Rantoul got a multi-million dollar wastewater treatment facility for a mere pittance fair to other communities? I think not.

The reason that Rantoul pursued the regionalization concept so vigorously is simple -- it meant residents wouldn't have to cough up big bucks for their own wastewater treatment plant. The plant was needed to come in line with federal water quality standards. On election day, the village board and mayor were all a little more electable because of their vigorous pursuit of the regionalized plant. The regionalization plan meant a savings to the average utility user of approximately \$30 a year compared to building a new wastewater treatment plant to service the village alone (planning Report Addendum, Jan. 1982, p. 15).

Their motivations being clear, who were the main movers and shakers in this drama? There were three major movers and shakers: The Village Mayor Katy Podagrosi; Village Comptroller Ken Modulin; and the Village Economic Development Consultant (EDC) Frank Elliott, a retired Air Force general and former Chanute Center commander. Elliott's \$40,000 a year price tag as the EDC for Rantoul was thought too high when he was first hired, but since then his leadership has revitalized this town according to many.

The Rantoul-Chanute Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant allows me the opportunity to present a detailed explanation of how the Village of Rantoul was able to make such a one-sided deal with the Department of Defense.

Chanute Air Force Base has a sewage treatment plant built in the early 1940s that has been violating federal clean water standards for years. Rantoul has a plant that is no longer capable of meeting the community needs and is also violating federal standards. With time running out on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's grants to upgrade and replace older sewage treatment plants, and with Chanute receiving more than \$11 million from the Air Force to replace its aging plant, Rantoul moved in with General Elliott leading the way with the suggestion to regionalize. For community relations and in the interest of consolidation, the base got the nod from Washington to go ahead. What this green light meant to Rantoul was simple -- an \$18 million plant at a total cost to Rantoul residents of about \$1.6 million. The Chanute \$11 million was pooled with a federal EPA 75 percent grant and a Rantoul bond issue and the regionalization project was under way.

A. Origin of the Proposal

Rantoul's regionalization includes bringing together all wastewater treatment needs of the village and the base in one treatment facility. In the late 1970s Jack McJilton, mayor of Rantoul, gave birth to the idea of regionalizing (Rantoul Work Study memo, Feb. 1977). It is significant that it was after the return of General Elliott to the area after retiring from the Air Force that the regionalization idea got up a full head of steam. McJilton was steadfastly in favor of a regional wastewater treatment facility, which would, in effect, because of the base, be funded more than 90 percent by the federal government.

In the late 1970s it was common knowledge that Rantoul needed a new wastewater treatment facility because of Clean Water Act violations and it was also known that Chanute was getting more than \$11 million for an on-base plant.

The regionalization idea was fad in the early 1970s and was not without detractors. According to James Ridgeway (1970, p. 170) in his *The Politics of Ecology*, the fad at the time was to replace small wastewater treatment plants with big, centralized regional systems which is good business for construction industry and engineers, but it is not necessarily an efficient way to deal with sewage. He holds that older, smaller plants may work just as well as one great big plant, especially since the technology has not changed since the turn of the century.

Ridgeway (1970) also mentioned the fact that in a regional system, 75 percent of the cost can be provided by federal grants. Also, if the local government is unable to finance its portion through bond sales, the federal government will buy the bonds at below market prices.

John Giachino and Carol Ferguson (1986, p. 88) in a recent article have disagreed with Ridgeway on wastewater regionalization, saying:

Whether contracted out or municipally operated, regionalization of wastewater treatment operations has proven a useful technique, especially for smaller communities faced with shrinking revenues and the loss of federal revenue sharing. With the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continuing its emphasis on treatment plant compliance by the 1988 deadline, regionalization allows both small

and large communities to take advantage of cost-reducing partnerships to provide their ratepayers with reliable water and wastewater treatment.

The pros and cons of regionalization were studied by the village and Chanute when it was decided that such a plan might be a viable alternative to building separate plants.

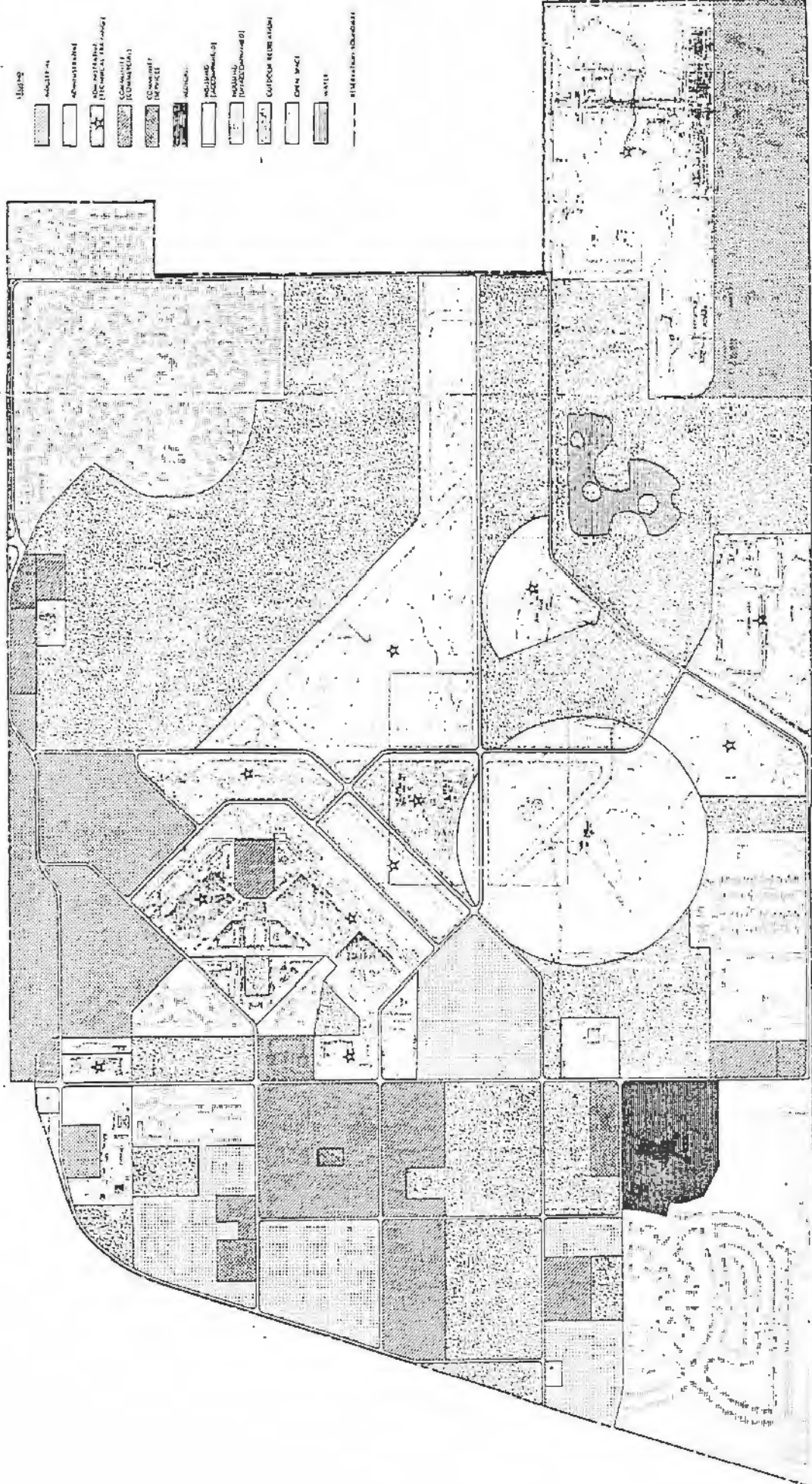
During the regionalization planning process, three plans, two to regionalize and one not to, were looked at to solve the legal problems faced by Chanute and the dilemma faced by Rantoul -- to wait and maybe regionalize or go ahead and upgrade current facilities.

Although never questioned about whether regionalization was the right decision or not, Rantoul's mayor always comes to the concept's defense when questioned about how Rantoul funded its end of the regionalization process.

There is substantial evidence to back up the mayor's claim that regionalization was the best choice for the two jurisdictions. Regionalization has worked in Oregon, Washington, and Mississippi (American City & County, 1986, p. 88). The Pascagoula, Mississippi wastewater treatment system was similar to the Rantoul-Chanute problem in the area of aging equipment causing effluent violation. When the city's Mississippi Gulf Coast Regional Wastewater Authority first contracted with a private firm to run its seven secondary treatment plants in 1981, all the facilities were found to be old and chronically out of compliance. The primary problem at the 0.1 to 8.8-million-gallons-per-day plants was inadequate

maintenance. Failing equipment had to be taken out of service, resulting in effluent quality violation. Several plants were receiving more wastewater than they were designed to handle, and the staff needed training in maintenance and process control techniques.

Another success story in the area of regionalization is the project that is now serving Sacramento, California (Duncan & Merrill, 1984, p. 57). The plant serving 800,000 residents in California's capital city is significant in its enormity and the way it consolidated the need of a large metropolitan area in one plant. The Sacramento Regional Wastewater Management Program was honored in 1984 with a design award from the American Society of Civil Engineers. Such awards are normally reserved for glass-sided buildings or bridges that seem to defy the laws of physics.



Chanute future land use plan

II. THE SETTING

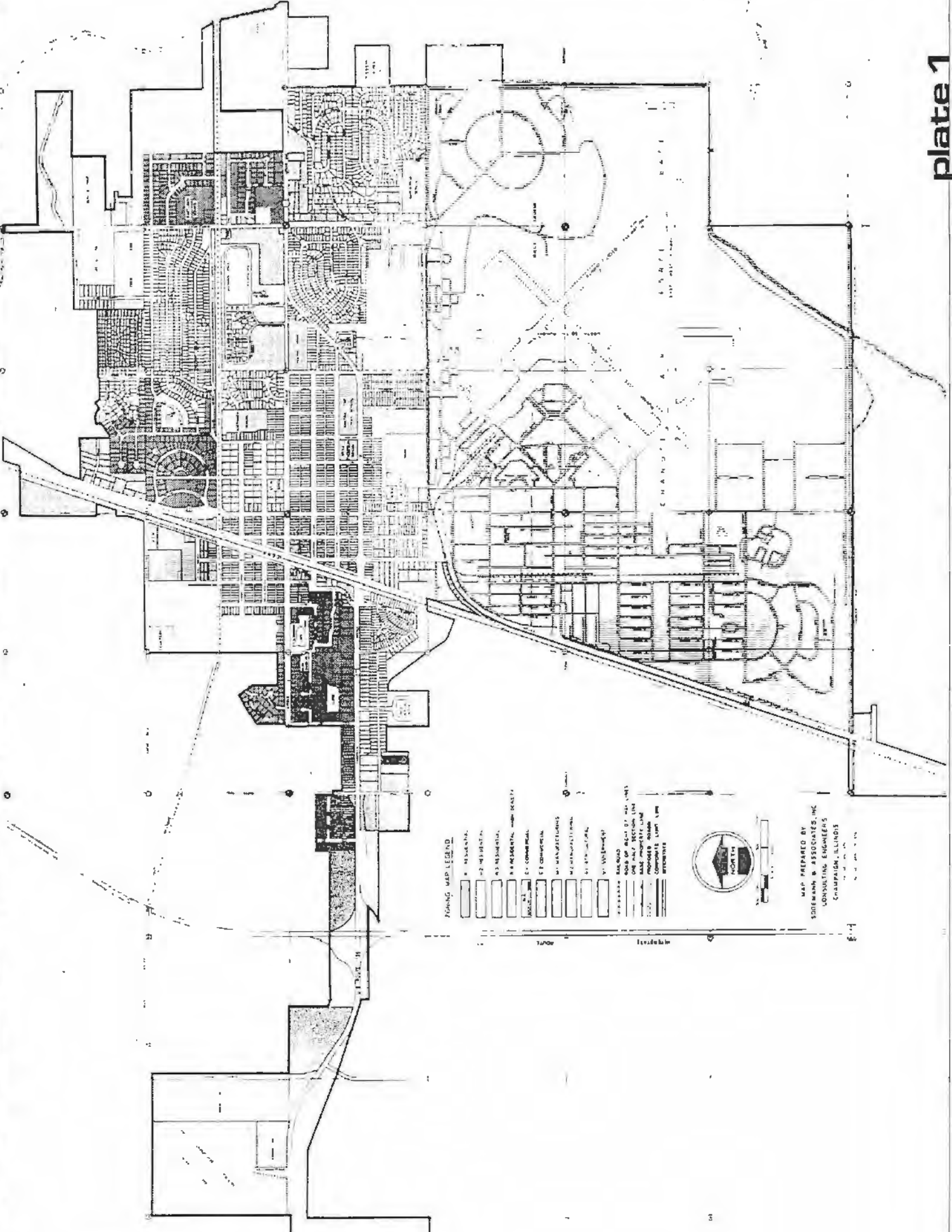
A. Chanute

Chanute Air Force Base is located within the corporate limits of the Village of Rantoul, in the northern part of Champaign County, Illinois. This location is approximately 130 miles south of the metropolitan Chicago area, and 14 miles north of the cities of Champaign and Urbana. Highway access to Chanute is provided by U.S. Route 45 adjacent to the west boundary of the base. Access to the Interstate Highway system is good, and interchanges with I-57 are located just north and south of the base. Other major highways in the area include I-74, I-72 and U.S. Route 136 providing connecting east-west access. A main line of the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad is also adjacent to the base and scheduled air service is provided at the University of Illinois Willard Airport, 10 miles south of Urbana. Amtrak passenger service is operated on the ICG line with a station located in downtown Rantoul.

Primary Mission

The mission of Chanute Technical Training Center is to provide technical training for officers and airmen of the Reserve, The Air National Guard, other Department of Defense agencies, military students of allies, and Air Force civilians employees. The mission entails the preparation of both resident course training materials, Air Force extension courses, specialty training standards, and Air Force and Air Training Command training manuals. The center reviews the curriculum of field training courses. It

ALL PARTS OF RANTOUL, ILLINOIS, MAP INCORPORATED AREA



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MAP PREPARED BY
 SOEEMANN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS
 CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

plate 1

RANTOUL FACILITIES DEPARTMENT RANTOUL, ILLINOIS ZONING MAP INCORPORATED AREA

acquires, manages, maintains and disposes of field training equipment for weapon systems assigned as its prime responsibility (Base Comprehensive Plan, March 1987, p. 7).

Population

The composition of population assigned to Chanute is directly related to its primary training mission. With a total of 7,074 active duty military on base, the permanent party consists of approximately 2,474, while the remainder are trainees or students. Of the 4,600 trainees or students, 90 percent are Air Force members. There are 1,800 civilian employees on base. Other population served by Chanute facilities include more than 7,000 military dependents, of whom 50 percent live on base, and approximately 2,600 military retirees living in the east central Illinois area (Architectural Environmental Guidelines, March 1987, p. 9).

Construction Eras

Chanute Air Force Base has experienced several major building periods that exhibit several styles of architecture.

The first phase began in 1917 with the construction of the first on-base buildings (.... Guidelines, p. 10). Only two buildings remain from this period.

The second phase of development began in 1939. Construction during this period includes what people call the main base. The 3345th Air Base Group Headquarters where the education office is located was originally the base hospital. Also included in this building frenzy were the center headquarters building and Whitehall -- the largest military building in the United States until the Pentagon was built (.... Guidelines, p. 12).

Also during the second phase, wood frame structures were built to accommodate World War II trainees. These buildings have a plain utilitarian appearance and are currently being demolished.

The third phase began in 1952 with the construction of modern housing for military members and their families (.... Guidelines, p. 12).

The fourth phase began in 1965 and brings us up to the present (.... Guidelines, p. 12). Buildings during this phase provide the most modern appearance and include new dormitories, bowling center, service station, child care center, base exchange, commissary, arts and crafts center, data processing center and athletic forum.

Land Use

The land use pattern at Chanute reflects development decisions over the past 45 years and, in some cases, existing land use areas show evidence of the initial layout of the base. The existing arrangement of land use influences future land use patterns as changes occur with time. The principal characteristics of the existing land use pattern, such as the concentration of more intensive uses in the northwesterly part of the base, or the large expanses of open space in the former airfield and World War II cantonment areas, reflect the past history of Chanute's development.

Training

Training facilities, including classrooms, laboratory, and open space support the primary mission of the base and this is reflected in the land use pattern.

Many of the training functions are located in the compact core area adjacent to the former airfield. Other training facilities are located along Eagle Drive, close to the core area. In addition to the core area, training facilities are located in the 900 area. This location is well suited for facilities with functions such as fire and jet fuel training which require extensive land area and distance from other uses for their operations.

Industrial

Industrial uses, such as storage, office, and repair, are primarily located between the training core area and the northern base boundary. Other industrial areas are somewhat scattered, reflecting the location of individual uses such as the old sewage treatment plant and cold storage warehouse. The location of industrial use areas next to the core training areas and to one of the principal entries to the base creates desirable functional relationships.

Open Space

Open space, in terms of acreage, is the largest single category of land use on the base. While this area includes buffer areas, safety zones, recreation, and similar types of uses which would permanently be retained as open space, most of the land classified as open space is comprised of the former airfield or World War II cantonment areas where obsolete structures have been removed.

Extensive areas of the base are devoted to outdoor recreational use. The largest area, northeast of the former airfield, is occupied by the base golf course, a driving range, and other facilities. A large recreational complex, south of the community center, also provides a wide variety of facilities. Smaller recreation areas are located within more intensively developed portions of the base near base housing.

B. Rantoul

The Village of Rantoul has established land use designations for both incorporated and unincorporated land. Zoning within the corporate limits is shown on Plate No. 1. As the map indicates, Rantoul has a large mixture of residential and commercial zoning areas spread throughout both the east and west sides of town. The industrially zoned areas are confined to the Rantoul industrial Park located on the west side of the village. Rantoul zoned Chanute for governmental use. Actual authority over the military reservation lies with the Air Force.

Village Topography

The topography of the village and the area immediately beyond the village is typical of glacial moraines, in that the village is situated on the northern edge of the Rantoul Moraine (Facilities Planning Report, 1978, p. 11). The area is characterized by hummocky, rolling terrain with relatively wide variations in elevation for this general area. Elevations within the corporate limits vary approximately from a high of 752 to a low of 728 above mean sea level (Planning Report, p. 11).

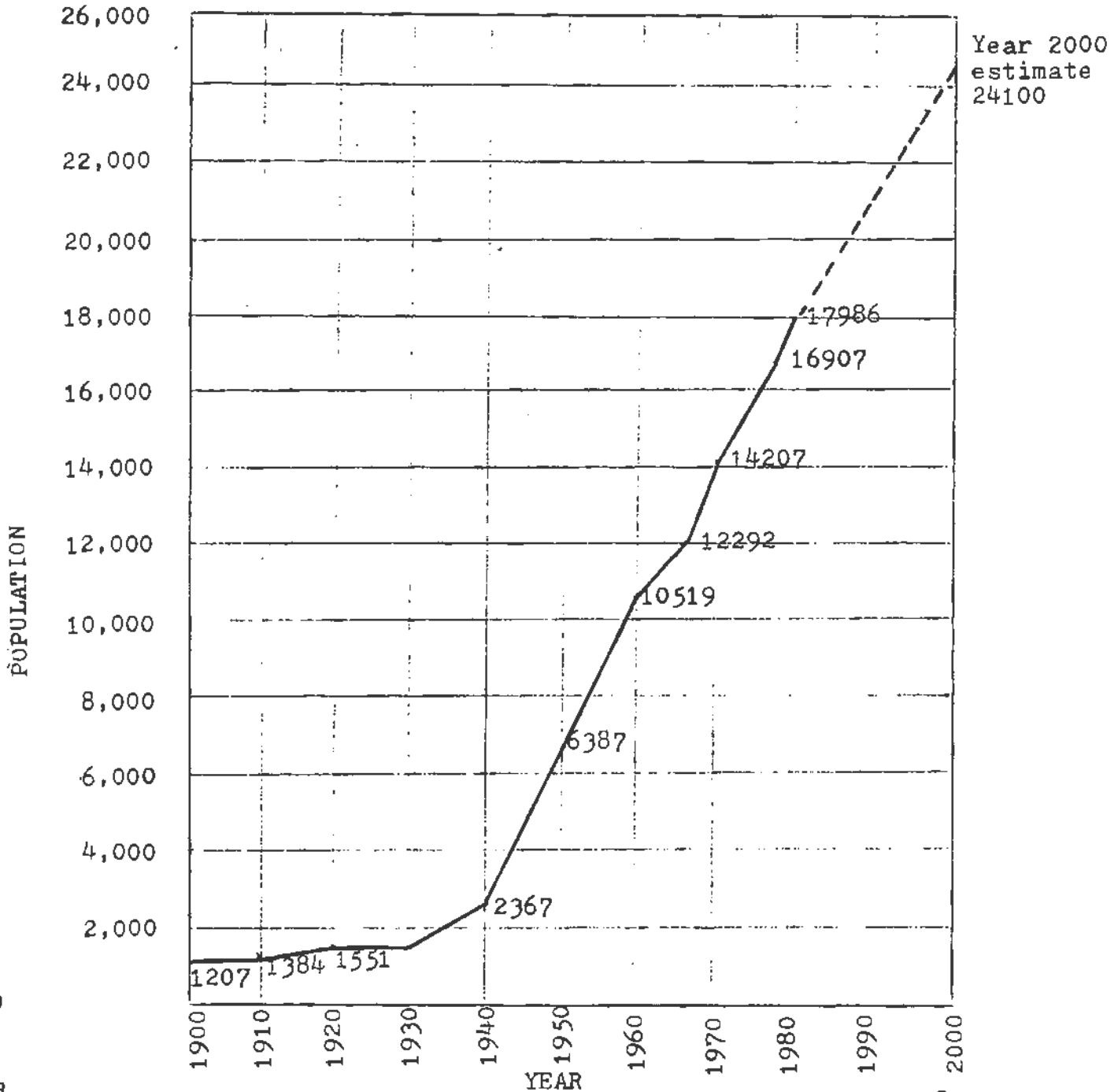
Geology

The bedrock underlying the village is primarily of Mississippian age and is composed of limestone, shale and sandstone. Depth to bedrock in the area is roughly 300 feet. Glacial till deposits of Wisconsinian, Illinoisan and Kansas age cover the bedrock and consists of unsorted mixtures of clay, silt, sand and pebbles (planning Report, p. 10).

The upper glacial drift, the Wedron formation of the Wisconsinian age, forms the present day land surface and is composed of till about 100 feet in thickness (Planning Report, p. 10). The middle glacial drift, the Glasford formation of Illinoisan age, is roughly 100 feet thick and consists of relatively impermeable till interbedded with layers of sand and gravel. Underlying the middle glacial drift layer is the lower glacial drift, the Banner Formation of Kansas age. Of the five wells in use by the Village of Rantoul two have been drilled into the lower glacial drift at depths of 281 and 291 feet respectively while the other three wells draw water from the middle drift materials at depths of 137, 142 and 150 feet respectively.

The relationship between the area's geology, and the sewage treatment problem is rather clear. Any disposal of untreated sewage will contaminate the area's ground water due to the poor drainage

figure 1



* U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and Village Data Book, 1980. Off-base population data for Rantoul, Illinois.

in the area. We will see later how this problem is helped with man-made ditches.

Soils

There are two general soil classifications in the village. Soils in the western portion of the village on the Rantoul Moraine are members of the Drummer-Flannagan Association (Planning Report, p. 11). These soils are dark colored, poorly and somewhat poorly drained and were formed in silty material above layers of loamy and sandy outwash material. These soils are moderately to moderately slowly permeable and are subject to a seasonal high water table primarily during the spring. Drummer-Brenton-Elburn soils occur in low-lying areas or at the base of sloping areas.

Hydrology

The land in and around Rantoul is drained by man-made ditches which are located in the north, east and south of the village (Planning Report, p. 11). Big Ditch, a tributary of the Sagamon River which discharges into Lake Decatur, is located about one-half mile to the northeast of the village. The Upper Salt Fork Drainage Ditch is located three-quarters of a mile to the east of the village and drains into the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River. Salt Fork Creek, located along the southern edge of Chanute Air Force Base, flows southeasterly about two and one-half miles from the corporate limits to the upper Salt Fork Drainage Ditch. All three of the receiving streams have 7-day, 10-year low flows of zero.

Climate

The climate of the area is a humid continental type with cold, relatively dry winters and warm to hot, wet summers (Planning Report, p. 12). The mean temperature range from a low of 27 degrees Fahrenheit in January to a high of 76 degrees Fahrenheit in July. The mean annual temperature is 52 F. The climate provides an average growing season of about 181 days.

Precipitation in the planning area averages about 35 inches per year with an annual snowfall of 20 inches. The driest month of the year is February with an average precipitation of 1.8 inches. May has the most precipitation with an average of 4.1 inches.

Population

Based on United States Census data, the population of Rantoul, excluding the base, was 2,367 in 1940, 6,387 in 1950, 10,519 in 1960, 12,292 in 1966 (special census), and 14,207 in 1970 (County & Village Data Book, 1980). According to the last census in 1980, the population was 16,907 (County and Village Data Book, 1987). This near constant increase shown in Figure 1 projects a positive future for Rantoul.

Future Expansion

Currently, there are several residential subdivisions in the preliminary stages because of growth on base and to the South in Champaign-Urbana. These areas, located on the east and west

sides of town, will create many new building sites. Besides this, there are two recent subdivision which are not fully developed as yet.

The remainder of the residential lots within the village are occupied for the most part, and thus growth will have to expand into land which is now zoned for agricultural use. In the future, industry will most likely be confined to the west side of the village. This side of town has land available for industrial growth, but again, more land may be required, depending on the rate of growth. To serve the growing residential population, commercial development will probably also expand into new areas.

The population trend discussed earlier is expected to continue in the future because of the general attributes of the area. Its location on Interstate 57, U.S. Routes 45 and 136, and the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad facilitates travel to and from Rantoul and provides a link to major metropolitan areas.

The village has done much to make the town more attractive to its residents and new industry. The base is an attractive assignment for many who seek the much touted school system offered by Rantoul for their children.

A new municipal building, civic center, swimming pool, two new fire stations, an 18-hole golf course, and a revitalized central business district are all reasons to believe this community is a growing and viable one. Besides these points, there is a recent study and report prepared by the state showing a "definite need" for and "interest in" a Rantoul municipal airport.

C. The Plan

The off-base population to be served by the Eastside Plant (to be built for regionalization with Chanute) is estimated to be 15,110 (Planning Report, p. 27). Chanute has a permanent population of approximately 11,000 people (planning Report, p. 27). The village owns and operates the town's water supply, treatment and distribution facilities. The water supply and treatment facilities consist of five wells, the water from which is aerated, softened, filtered, chlorinated and fluoridated.

At the time of the facilities planning report (1978) submission, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency indicated that funding for Step 2 and 3, design and construction, of the project was not available for four to five years. Rantoul was awaiting the award of a Step 1 grant to study the problem of regionalizing a sewage treatment plant for both communities.

The report compiled by Sodemann and Associates of Champaign, Illinois was contracted out by Rantoul in 1977. The purpose of the report was to investigate the possibility of building a regional wastewater treatment facility for Rantoul and Chanute. The report analyzed the current situation which includes the antiquated equipment now doing the job; the physical characteristics of the area to be developed under the regional proposal; future land use, population and wastewater forecasts; and, finally, a "best plan" was offered by the architectural, engineering, and planning firm.

In their 11 October 1979 letter, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency stated that the funding status for the project had changed since the report was submitted and that Rantoul was eligible for Step 2 funds. The viability of Step 3 funds was to be determined by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency at the time that the design was near completion.

The stage was set for Rantoul and Chanute to join together in their venture to regionalize sewage treatment facilities. The new plant would allow Chanute to claim saving a negligible amount on a separate plant for the base, and allowed Rantoul to get a new plant for a mere pittance and at the same time increase sewer rates in line with the new \$18 million plant But everybody is happy.

III. THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT ISSUE

A. Chanute

In 1977 Chanute was in violation (Legal Notice of Violation, 1977, pp. 21-22) of the United States Environmental Protection Agency Water Pollution Control Act of 1972. The base was trying to solve the problem on its own, but to no avail. Some of the more than 30 violations charges included failure to limit discharge of suspended solids, fecal coliform bacteria, residual chlorines, ammonia, nitrogen and many other pollutants. Discharge limits on Biochemical Oxygen Demand (substances that use up the oxygen in the water) were also too high for the base plant to handle.

The main sewage treatment facility at Chanute has been in operation since 1940. With few exceptions, the physical plant has not undergone any significant upgrading from its date of construction to late 1979. In that year, a physio-chemical tertiary treatment system, consisting of chemical treatment followed by activated carbon absorption, was installed. This tertiary treatment system, procured on a 3-year lease, was intended as a short term solution to enable the base to meet National Pollution Discharge System permit conditions in the interim period before regionalized sewage treatment with the village of Rantoul was accomplished.

The problems were recognized by the base Environmental Protection Committee in the early 1970s and that is when base officials decided that the facilities needed upgrading (planning

Report, p. 1). The proposed upgrading was scheduled for 1975 (Center Judge Advocate, 1984). By the time the base decided to come in line with the Water Pollution Control Amendments of 1972, Illinois had changed the rules. In 1975 when the Illinois standards were published, they were more stringent than those of 1972 (Planning Report, 1982, p. 35). A study of the existing facilities showed that the only way to come in line with Environmental Protection Agency regulations was to build a new sewage plant.

According to Danville District Court records, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency notified federal officials that the state intended to file suit in U. S. District Court against Chanute (Legal Notice). The suit named George Vernon, Secretary of the Air Force (at the time); Col. Lee R. Cook, base commander (at the time); Casper Weinberger, then Secretary of Defense; and the United States Air Force as defendants in the suit (Center Judge Advocate, 1984). Although the suit was not filed until 22 May 1981, the base was cited by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 1977 with violations of the Water Pollution Control Act. An agency report at the time listed the Air Force facility at Chanute as the worst of 14 Midwest federal violators of environmental standards (Legal Notice).

There were three counts in the suit (Legal Notice). The first was violating effluent limits set forth in the permit issued in 1975 by the National Pollution Elimination System. The second count was procedural and included such things as not monitoring potential of hydrogen continuously, failure to notify the Environ-

mental Protection Agency when effluent was not in compliance with the set standards, and failure to submit required reports for an addition built by the Calgon Corporation. The third violation alleged the base violated Illinois law in addition to federal law.

The suit was put into an administrative hold pending the final decision to regionalize by Rantoul and Chanute and with interim corrective measures underway.

The corrective measures did not help, and major problems, which will be discussed later remained. Some of the interim corrective actions included:

- a. An inspection and evaluation of the base's sewage plant by an Environmental Protection Agency official, David Stoltemberg, to determine the efficiency of the existing plant;
- b. Installation of a trickling filter cover, a chemical addition, and four downflow carbon absorption columns;
- c. A final clarifier to be used as a chlorine contact tank;
- d. Sewage collection system updating; and
- e. The backwash from softener and the filter in the swimming pool was to be connected to a sanitary sewer and diverted to Rantoul (planning Report, p. 27).

B. Rantoul

Rantoul's federal wastewater treatment violations began in the early 1970s for Rantoul, but it was not until the late 1970s that all the problems came to a head.

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held on May 3, 1978 at 7:30 p.m. in the board room of the Rantoul Municipal

Building, 333 S. Tanner, Rantoul, Illinois for the purpose of obtaining citizen input on the facilities planning report for the Village of Rantoul. The facilities planning report presents an analysis of existing and future wastewater needs for the Rantoul facilities planning area and the economic and environmental assessments of the feasible alternative methods of meeting these needs and complying with state and federal discharge standards applicable to the village's wastewater facilities.

The project recommended in the facilities planning report consists of the improvement and upgrading of the existing Eastside Sewage Treatment Plant to provide treatment of all wastewater from the village together with a transport system to carry wastewater from the west side of the village to the proposed facility. The proposed facility would have an estimated operation and maintenance cost of \$35,500 per month and an estimated debt service cost between \$14,600 and \$16,400 per month. The total charge to a typical residential customer would be between \$3 and \$3.30 per month. Public comment will be considered prior to adoption of a specific project and completion of the facilities planning report.

The above notice of a public hearing in the April 24, 1978 News-Gazette started a formal process to get a new regional sewage treatment plant that would service Rantoul and Chanute. At the time, there were those in the community who wanted to regionalize, knowing the difficulties that Chanute Air Force Base was going through.

The village wastewater treatment facilities were strained to accommodate a population more than double that which the facilities were designed for some 50 years before. The notice which appeared in the a local paper signaled to the population that it was time that something be done. The violations were mounting

like unpaid parking tickets, and the federal EPA had already made an example of Chanute. Rantoul's fate was sealed if something was not done; so it was.

It was at this point that the then mayor, Jack McJilton, told a town meeting (1978) that he had been thinking about a regionalization alternative for some time. At the same meeting, the mayor accused the base leadership of stalling and, in effect, jeopardizing Rantoul's chances of receiving a 75 percent grant. At the meeting he said, "The project has to move out now; if it doesn't, the Rantoul-IEPA ratio changes to 55 percent and Rantoul simply can't afford that." Even at this point it was evident that the village was looking for a "reduced ride" and the pressure tactics worked.

The Rantoul Eastside and the Chanute Wastewater Treatment Plants both discharge to man-made ditches which are tributary to the Vermilion River, which eventually empties into the Wabash River. This artery system was what sent the first signal to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Although there are no recorded water quality data for these ditches, data from an IEPA water quality sampling station located 15 miles downstream from the plants on the Salt Fork, one mile south of St. Joseph at the I-74 bridge, indicated that water quality standards for fecal coliform, ammonia nitrogen, copper and total iron were being violated (Planning Report, p. 46).

Rantoul's Eastside Plant and Chanute's Plant were considered possible sources of the violations. The IEPA stated in a publication (...Engineering Evaluation, p. 13) that control of the

source of the violations would not correct the violations because of the age of equipment in use. Chanute was already cited in District Court for similar violations. Rantoul's "we're working on a solution" response saved them the indignity of appearing in court.

In order for the Eastside Plant to stop violations, it would be necessary for it to provide ammonia-nitrogen removal and additional Biochemical Oxygen Demand and Suspended Solids removal (planning Report, p. 53). In addition to the construction of units to treat these problems, it would also be necessary to increase capacity of the storm water pumps by adding a package pump station. The total cost after salvaging everything possible would be approximately \$3 million (Planning Report, p. 45). The Westside Plant would require the same upgrading plus a unit for phosphorous removal. The total cost, including salvaging existing facilities, would be approximately \$2 million (Planning Report, p. 45).

The Rantoul Westside Plant also discharges to a man-made ditch which is tributary to the Sagamon River which feeds Lake Decatur. Data from an IEPA water quality sampling station about 16 miles downstream of that plant on the Sagamon River at the U.S. 150 Bridge in Mahomet indicated that water quality standards for fecal coliform, total iron, copper and mercury were being violated here also (Planning Report, p. 13).

At this point, excuses were no good. The IEPA wanted concrete solutions and Rantoul and Chanute were ready to come together and offer one -- regionalization.

IV. THE REGIONAL ALTERNATIVE

A. Chanute-DOD-Air Force Perspective

The late 1970s was a critical time for the base with the very real prospect of the base closing. In his recent paper on the subject, John D. Loscher (1987) cites Maj. Gen. Edwin W. Robertson's letter (1978) to the Air Training Command commander as evidence of the negative impact such a closure would have on the community and future Air Force community relations.

The announcement that Chanute was under consideration for closure has had two immediate effects: (1) the generation of considerable political activity to forestall closure, and (2) an adverse economic impact in the local area. Real estate prices in Rantoul have dropped about 10 percent; I am told that as a matter of fact real estate is not moving at all. There have been defaults on real estate contracts and some business investments have stopped.... I have instructed our people that: (1) They must stay out of any involvement in the political process, (2) they must continue work as if Chanute will be here for another 60 years, and (3) they must encourage our civilian employees in hard-to-fill positions to stay with us.... I am attempting to support what I believe to be the Air Force position. I expect the Air Force will have some very disillusioned friends in this area.

Chanute was at a crossroads. The base leadership had to decide whether to recommend the regional wastewater treatment proposal to Air Force officials in Washington or to build a plant of their own and risk poor community relations for years to come. Chanute's violations of the Clean Water Act throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s had brought them to this juncture where they had to decide between three proposals that Rantoul had contracted the engineering studies on.

Land application systems were studied and dismissed as possible solutions for Rantoul's wastewater treatment needs. Such systems dispose of wastewater by percolation through the soil to groundwater aquifers or by collection of applied wastewater with underdrain systems or as surface runoff. Land application techniques include irrigation, overland flow and infiltration percolation.

Also, interim efforts to correct pollution problems and improve wastewater treatment facilities included a \$2.5 million addition to the on-base sewage treatment plant. The existing facility, a trickling filter plant, is more than 40-years old, and was designed to service a population of 5,000, less than half the current population (The News-Gazette, 1981, p. 5).

The \$2.5 million addition was the result of a contract signed with the Calgon Corporation to build a granular activated carbon absorption system combined with a chlorination system and a new polymer and ferric chloride treatment process. The project also included an aluminum dome 150 feet in diameter to cover and winterize the existing filter system.

Chanute was still polluting the Salt Fork Creek after the interim measures were in effect. All the base garnered from the deal with the Calgon Corporation was time due to the corrective measures installed by Calgon and the dome which is going to serve as the cover for the visitor reception center at the new base Air Park. Although the base recognized the Biochemical Oxygen Demand and the suspended solids in its discharge, it did little more than use a band aid approach for the problem.

A study (1978) of the existing wastewater treatment facilities at Chanute prepared by Clark, Dietz and Associates indicated that the base facility did not have adequate capacity and was not capable of producing a discharge which meets effluent requirements outlined in Chanute's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit. Three different alternatives which would eliminate these problems were evaluated. As a result of the evaluation, it was recommended that a completely new wastewater treatment plant be constructed.

The first regionalization alternative consisted of modifying the three existing treatment plants, Rantoul's East and West Plants and Chanute's, so their discharges met the criteria in their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits. The use of advanced treatment to meet these effluent standards is more cost-effective than land application for both the Eastside and Westside Plants.

Chanute's main sewage treatment plant has consistently failed to meet its treated effluent discharge requirements. The lease on the tertiary treatment system expired in 1983. Alternatives that were made available to the base to meet established effluent limitations at the main on-base treatment plant were limited. They included negotiation of a continued lease or outright purchase of the tertiary treatment system; terminate the lease on the existing system and design and construct a new tertiary treatment system; or request a variance from current NPDES permit requirements to allow an effluent quality compatible with

the base's existing sewage treatment facilities-with or without inclusion of the existing tertiary treatment system (Engineering Evaluation..., 1983, p. 8).

Analysis of the sewage treatment plant performance data presented in this paper clearly demonstrates the inability of the tertiary treatment system currently on-line to consistently meet NPDES permit requirements. Continued lease or purchase of the equipment hardly can be expected to improve its performance. The design and construction of a new tertiary treatment system is an uneconomically justifiable alternative for some, considering the projected short economic life of the facilities involved. Another idea that evolved during the regionalization talk involved seeking relief from the present permit conditions.

The second regionalization alternative consisted of transporting Rantoul's Westside flows to the Eastside Plant for secondary treatment and constructing combined tertiary units. Unlike regional Alternate No. 1, flows from Chanute would have been treated on-base at a new facility.

The third, and eventually selected plan, involves transporting all wastewater to a central location and constructing new secondary and tertiary facilities.

In September 1983, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency issued a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit for the main sewage treatment plant at Chanute. The permit carried an effective date of 12 October 1983, and is due to expire

1 July 1988. Chanutte has been able to stay within the parameters of the permit. Since the activation of the new regional facility in December 1987 no more violations are expected.

The evaluation of the performance of the base's main sewage treatment plant covers the time period between the placement of the tertiary treatment system on-line in January 1980 to August 1983. Since that time, the tertiary treatment system was scheduled to process more than a billion gallons of wastewater (Addendum-Facilities Planning Report, 1984, p. 12). However, the system has been in violation of wastewater standards more than 50 percent of the time.

It was clear to many at the time that the tertiary treatment system could not do the job required and the violations continued (Engineering Evaluation, p. 8). In November 1982 violations prompted an experimental modification to the plant in which chemically conditioned trickling filter effluent was pumped to the unused primary tank for sedimentation prior to discharge to the secondary clarifier and the activated carbon absorption system.

The activated Carbon absorption system was leased by Chanutte from Calgon Corporation at a cost of approximately \$40,000 per month. Initial construction costs for a building to house processing equipment, in-plant piping changes, and the provision of a cover for the trickling filter amounted to nearly \$1.6 million. Under the lease agreement, two complete changes of carbon are provided annually at no additional cost. Additional carbon, if required, is available at a cost of approximately \$10,000 per carbon column.

On the basis of 1,300 days operation since the tertiary treatment system came on-line, the cost of activated carbon absorption-exclusive of chemical operation/maintenance costs amounts of \$1,323 per day. Such cost is considered acceptable in the short term if the system performed its primary function, i.e., enabling the main sewage treatment plant to meet established NPDES permit requirements. Unfortunately, the system has not lived up to expectations. Rather, it has turned out to be a white elephant in terms of its past operational performance history.

In recommendations to the center commander and with regionalization in sight, Col. Evans Parker (Engineering Evaluation, p. 13), base civil engineer at the time, suggested that Chanute, with the cooperation and support of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, prepare the necessary documentation to formally request a variance to current NPDES permit requirements for the main sewage treatment plant on base.

He also suggested that Chanute negotiate an extension of the lease on the activated carbon absorption system until such time as the variance is granted.

All of the wastewater treatment problems were negligible according to many base officials and the future regional facility would only add luster to Chanute's renaissance.

The new joint venture wastewater treatment plant is only part of the boom. The Air Force has started to build a \$2.6 million liquid-fuels training center, a \$6.3 million weather training facility, completed work on a \$6 million firefighting school, a

\$12 million dormitory and an \$80 million heating plant is due to be constructed within two years. This is only part of the growth planned for Chanute according to Kevin Marek, a civilian planner for the base.

Said Marek: "The old runways and expansive concrete tarmac next to them give Chanute, which covers more than 2,100 acres south of Rantoul off U.S. 45, a key selling point for keeping it open -- plenty of readily available, Air Force-owned room for growth. That space to expand was one factor that led the Department of Defense not to close the base in the late 1970s. We've got more area that could be developed than any other base -- the way they figure it in Washington, we could expand by more than 50 percent" (The News-Gazette, 1987, p. A-12).

Earlier this year Chanute released a 20-year Base Comprehensive Plan (1987) which highlights Chanute's future. The plan is an ambitious program of developing and renovating facilities. The major emphasis of the plan is replacing and renovating and constructing new training facilities, according to Center Commander Brig. Gen. Joel M. McKean (The News-Gazette, 1987, p. A1). "As the training facilities expand over the next two decades, use of the former airfield would provide space for new buildings according to the plan," he said.

B. The View From Rantoul

The federal government had a great deal of input about the specifications and location of the sewage treatment plant. The Village of Rantoul submitted a plan to base officials in September,

1980, which proposed a regionalized treatment facility to treat wastewater from Rantoul and Chanute as the best alternative, based on water quality considerations, planning objectives, and to meet present and future wastewater treatment needs in the area.

Under the proposed plan, wastewater from Chanute is transported to the regional plant by an interceptor constructed between Chanute and Rantoul. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency approved the regional plan on the condition that the necessary legal, financial, institutional and management resources would be available to construct, operate and maintain the proposed plant (Planning Report, p. 12-13).

Although costs have risen since the initial contract was let, alternate one still came in the cheapest for the services it would render to the communities. According to Rep. Edward Madigan, R-Lincoln (Rantoul Press, 1985, p. 1), the new plant should bring the wastewater system in Rantoul and Chanute up to federal standards. "The jobs generated by this venture will help Illinois and Rantoul. No where, Air Force-wide, is there a joint venture such as this," he said at the ground breaking ceremony for the new plant.

The total estimated cost of the recommended plant is \$18 million. Financing of the village's portion of the project cost will be through revenue bond and general obligation bond issues and an Environmental Protection Agency construction grant, while Chanute will use its appropriation to finance its portion of the costs.

As stated in the Environmental Protection Agency Program Requirements Memorandum 75-35 (Planning Report, p. 48), the portion of the construction of the treatment works that jointly serves a municipality and federal facility is allocable to the federal facility if the federal facility produces more than 250,000 gallons per day or 5 percent of the total design flow of the waste treatment works, whichever is less. According to the memorandum, as a minimum, the federal facilities portion of the cost should be based on the ratio of its total hydraulic requirements, including allowances for future needs, to the total design flow of the treatment plant.

For Chanute, secondary treatment and the transportation system from the base to the Eastside Plant, the cost is \$4,774,400 and the estimated operation and maintenance costs are \$127,400 annually.

The \$4,012,200 for Rantoul secondary treatment includes costs for upgrading the Eastside secondary facilities and for constructing a transportation system from the Westside Plant to the new Eastside Plant. Since, in this alternate, the Village will continue to treat a portion of Chanute's wastewater which is now being transported to the Eastside Plant, a portion of the cost for upgrading the facilities is attributable to the base.

When we look at the funding of the wastewater treatment facility that is to service the two communities it must be noted that there seems to be an unequal distribution of funding. Is Rantoul in fact getting a 90 percent federal grant to build the \$18

million plant? Chanutte, being a federal reserve, could have a new plant built on base for approximately \$11 million. But, because of the decision to regionalize, those funds are pooled with Rantoul's 75 percent Environmental Protection Agency grant and bond sales revenue. Essentially, what this means is that the two communities with a population of about 25,000 people are getting an \$18 plant for approximately \$1.6 million of local funding. The General Obligation Bond issues which Rantoul is using to finance its portion of the plant results in each user paying about \$9 a month representing a 57 percent increase over present rates (Planning Report, p. 102) but a bargain at twice the price nevertheless.

Where is the Environmental Protection Agency's Construction Grants program going from here? In 1986 the authorization was identical to those in 1985, \$2.4 billion. But it declined over the next three years to \$1.8 billion this year, \$1.2 billion in 1988, and \$.6 billion in 1989 according to a 1985 Congressional Budget Office report. During this period, federal funds would be limited to completing projects currently underway. After 1989, localities are expected to pay the entire cost of building new facilities and expanding existing ones to meet effluent treatment standards. The Reagan administration's proposal might ultimately stimulate more efficient local investments, although the statistical basis for this result is uncertain.

Rantoul is a town that is growing, but it is never destined to be a booming metropolis with Champaign-Urbana close by.

Chanute also has what seems like a bright future after years on shaky ground. Its primary champion in Congress, Sen. Charles Percy, is gone, but it would not be wise for any representative or senator not to defend this Central Illinois employer. Its fate may already be written with the current administration going out in less than a year and already finding it difficult to defend massive defense budgets. Chanute's advocates have poured millions into the base over the past eight years.

With the catch phrase "well into the next century" used to describe the life expectancy of everything from new cars to children's toys it was just a matter of time before it came to be used to describe Chanute. It's a phrase that General Elliott uses on an almost daily basis these days to describe Chanute's future. This bust base has bloomed into a boom base over the last 10 years.

"I think the future of Chanute is very strong," said Rep. Edward Madigan (The News-Gazette, 1987, p. A-1), one of the key figures in pressing the Carter administration not to close the base 10-years ago.

Whatever the criticism is of the way Rantoul financed its shiny new wastewater treatment plant, there is plenty of precedents for the prognosis to look good. The new plant is sure to be a great success and the future looks bright, at least for Rantoul. No matter what, Rantoul has a state of the art wastewater treatment plant at a minimal expense. The needs of the community will be served for the next 20 years and the physical plant is programmed to function well into the 21st century.

If it were not for Chanute funds, it is highly unlikely that Rantoul would be getting a new plant at all. In the future the Environmental Protection Agency grant program is being eliminated, so what are many towns to do?

The purpose of the Environmental Protection Agency's construction grants program is best understood in terms of the Clean Water Act -- to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation's water supply. The program is in trouble and going into deeper financial trouble, and, according to a Congressional Budget Office report (1985, pp. 43-44), is due to be phased out by the end of the decade. Some alternatives deserve mention:

1. Continue federal grants of 55 percent for capital cost, subject to annual appropriations and distribute according to state priority list.
2. A four-year phase out proposed by the administration's 1986 budget; federal grants would be restricted to ongoing projects and would no longer be available after fiscal 1989.
3. State revolving funds could pick up the slack over a five-year period. Federal and state contributions would help capitalize state revolving funds to finance future projects, replacing the current project grant program.
4. A last alternative could be tried by those who don't mind the onslaught from environmentalists. That is to continue current policy with some regulatory reform. Fewer communities would be required to meet strict national standards, with more ocean dis-

charge waivers, relaxed discharge standards or water quality requirements in some streams, and greater use for innovative permits.

The major drawback with the first alternative is the length of time it will take to provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities. According to the budget office report, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the \$53.1 billion in all outstanding eligible needs would require about 36 billion in federal outlays and about \$17 billion in state and local outlays by the year 2000 (Planning Report, p. 70).

As for the second alternative, some states are already searching for new sources of revenue to replace federal grants. Some states are exploring new funding mechanisms, such as dedicated taxes and special set-asides. In 1984, 12 states began special studies to explore new sources of revenue to replace diminished federal grants (Planning Report, p. 53).

The third alternative, state revolving funds, would set up reliable sources for development capital that would be available to localities for as long as the fund operated.

The last alternative, regulatory reform, offers no new funding resources or financial management systems, but they would eliminate the need for some types of costly investment, allowing more efficient targeting of limited federal grants. Both relaxed standards and innovative permits might allow some localities to meet water quality standards at less cost. Some permits that could be used according to the report are:

Seasonal Permits: Levels of water in treated wastewater effluent are allowed to vary according to season.

Flow Variable Permits: These permits vary allowable levels of pollutants on a monthly or weekly basis in direct proportion to measured flow of receiving streams.

Interplant Tradeable Discharge Permits: Within a stream segment, minimum levels of wastewater treatment are not required of any particular plant. Instead, a maximum level of pollutants is apportioned to all dischargers who trade among themselves the rights to discharge different levels.

The different kinds of permits are limited only by the imagination and allows a great deal of flexibility at the local level, taking away the demanding national standards.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the key to the regionalization of wastewater treatment between Rantoul and Chanute is the pressure put on by the key players in Rantoul. The project was looked on as a hassle by the Chanute Technical Training Center Commander Maj. Gen. Joseph D. Moore as late as December 1985. In the margin of a memo (1985) he sent to the base civil engineer he noted "Is it too late to go it on our own?" The response from the civil engineer mentioned all the planning work that had already been invested in the project and the special interest from the Department of Defense in regionalizing with Rantoul.

V. THE REGIONAL ALTERNATIVE AS A CASE IN INTEREST GROUP POLITICS

A. Theory of Interest Groups

In their work on interest group politics in America Ronald J. Hrebenar and Ruth K. Scott (1983, p. 5) define interest groups as organizations that have engaged in activities to affect public policy decision making. Most such terms have acquired decidedly negative connotations as a result of their utilization by the popular press in exposing lobbying improprieties.

David B. Truman in his classic study (1951, p. 33) on interest groups reinforces this idea saying, "From interaction in groups arise certain common habits of response, which may be called norms, or shared attitudes In this respect, all groups are interest groups because they are shared attitude groups."

What I have written about here raises questions about fairness and brings to mind concerns that were raised 200 years ago by James Madison (The Federalist, No. X, Vol. I, 1787). He did not trust factions or interest groups and, indeed, viewed them as a threat to democracy. What we have seen in the regionalization effort is a clear case of factionalism triumphing. In his writings, Madison was writing about more temporary factions, but his warnings could probably be attributed to contemporary reformers decrying the abuses of modern groups.

Madison was only the first of many to comment on the crucial role played by interest groups in American politics. Once the political community grows beyond the manageable boundaries of

the town meeting, some kind of private associational life becomes essential to democracy; in fact, it is difficult to imagine large-scale democracy without it. In their book on the subject, Kay Lehman Schlozman and John T. Tierney (1986, p. 4) write, "Not only does organized interest activity go to the heart of governance in a democratic nation state, it also goes to the heart of what is most distinctive about democracy in America."

A French aristocrat, Alexis de Tocqueville (1831, pp. 95-96), also commented on what he called associations he saw when he toured the American republic in 1831-1832. He was greatly impressed by the American tendency to organize in order to participate in democratic politics: "Whenever at the head of some new undertaking you see government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association." In addition he observed that:

In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used or applied to a greater multitude of objects, than in America.... Societies are formed to resist evils which are exclusively of a moral nature, as to diminish the vice of intemperance. In the United States, associations are established to promote the public safety, commerce, industry, morality and religion.

There can be no question that the United States is the largest interest group society in the world, but the question of fairness or right or wrong is up to the participants to decide.

B. Interest Group Politics in DOD

From an interest group point of view, we must look at the

motives of the federal government in the regionalization process, because, without its OK, none of this could have taken place. Either way, the Air Force could not lose on the money end of the deal, but it could have lost a lot in community support for the training that goes on at Chanute and the good community relations that have developed over the years. Who cared if Chanute's \$11 million went for a regional or for an on-base plant -- the most important thing, it seems, to the people in Washington was to make sure that a good Air Force-Community tie existed. As we heard earlier from the town leaders, this (Rantoul-Chanute) is one big happy community.

The cooperation between Rantoul, Chanute and the federal government confirms James Madison's fear of factions which he wrote about in The Federalist, No. X, Vol. I. (1787, p. 64):

A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for preeminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good.

Madison, also in Federalist, No. 10 dismissed in a sentence the mistake of curing the illness called faction by curtailing the liberty that sustains it. Schlozman and Tierney (1986, p. 410) say that the contentiousness of pressure politics in our age may contribute to a circumstance in which we think more about ourselves

than our grandchildren: it may place an untenable responsibility upon those who would presume to govern; but it may be a price we pay for the right we enjoy as citizens.

Just as I have talked about the interest group theory applied to the Rantoul-Chanute Wastewater Treatment facility so too we can look to other cases that involve the federal government. One of the most prominent in recent years involves the Air Force purchasing of the F-16 Fighting Falcon as its front line fighter aircraft into the next century. The aircraft is produced by General Dynamics and built at its Dallas-Fort Worth facility. The subcontractors for the plane employ people in almost every state in the Union (Aviation Week, 1986, p. 11).

The Northrop Corporation invested nearly \$2 billion of its own money to develop a front line fighter and win the contract away from General Dynamics. After several years of research and development they came forward with their entry, the F-20 Tigershark. The plane passed all tests with flying colors, but thanks to a vigorous lobbying effort by General Dynamics, its contract was renewed. The Air Force's decision to modify 270 existing General Dynamics F-16As for its air defense fighter requirements eliminated Northrop's F-20 from the competition. The F-20 could have been produced for several million dollars less than the F-16, but special interest pressure paid off (Aviation Week, p. 11).

We can clearly see in the fighter plane example that the federal government is not always interested in doing what is right as much as in doing what is best for a specific population and what

will be most beneficial at election time. We can see many parallels between this case of the Rantoul-Chanute plant. Here too, community relations and the next election were the primary influences on whether to regionalize or not. A work on public opinion and responsible democracy (Ippolito, Walker, and Kolson, 1976, p. 8) points up this deficiency in our kind of government:

Interest groups bring together individuals with common policy interests and concerns.... The assumption is that the leaders of interest groups will convey the views and interests of their members to governmental officials.... Externally, the group's influence is based upon the rewards and sanctions it and its members, can employ against the parties, candidates, or officeholders.... There is no question that interest groups are a major element in the political process and that some interest groups have established effective connections with political parties and with government.

The General Dynamics and Northrop competition was an excellent example of how the private sector can influence the federal government, however, there are also instances where private groups lobby for government employee benefits. The Air Force Sergeants Association is one of the most active Air Force groups in Washington trying to protect benefits already earned by the enlisted force and trying to expand others. Everything from a dependent dental program to trying to stop commissary privatization was on its agenda last year. The former was initiated and the latter stopped due to its efforts. Interest groups definitely have a place in a free society, but what of the many who don't have an interest group looking out for their special interest. As I stated

earlier, Madison thought that interest groups could not be eliminated, but may be controlled, and in the Federalist Papers (1787) he wrote:

The inference to which we are brought is, that the causes of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed.

C. The Regional Alternative as One More Example

There can be no doubt that the powers in Rantoul that decided to go ahead with the regionalization project had the best interest of the residents of Rantoul in mind. Interest group politics was very definitely at work here. Schlozman, and Tierney (p. 163) recognized the difficulty of identifying specific instances where interest group activity worked saying, "...the appropriate way to consider the influence of organized interests in politics is to ask not "Who won?" but "Would the final outcome of the controversy have been less congenial to the organized interests in question had they not been politically active?" It is clear in the Rantoul case that no action would certainly have meant financing their own wastewater treatment plant.

The authors of a book (Ornstein and Elder, 1978, p. 75) on public opinion and responsible democracy capture the essence of the relationship between elected officials and their followers saying:

The assumption that political leaders should be sincerely interested in what the public thinks is a distinguishing feature of democratic politics. The legitimacy of democratic regimes is based upon popular consent, a consent which applies not only to the choice of leaders but which also guides leaders once they are chosen. The division of society into the few who make important decisions, and consequently exercise great power, and the many who exercise little direct control over what the government does is not uncharacteristic of democracies, but democratic theory proposes it is necessary and proper that the few, the elites, pay heed to the opinions of the many, the masses if they are to govern rightly.

We said earlier that nothing illegal took place in Rantoul, but they did what was right for their town. By doing what was right for their town they did not hurt the base, but they raise an interesting question whether towns such as Rantoul should be allowed to take advantage of their relationship with a federal installation. The local school system is subsidized by the federal government with a lump sum payment because of the dependents of military members who attend the local school system. Also, although not illegal, it is interesting to note that Rantoul includes the Chanute population in its census figures and therefore has received federal revenue sharing funds in the past based on an inflated population.

When asked about the relationship between Rantoul and Chanute and the benefits that Rantoul enjoys because of the relationship, the mayor of Rantoul is defensive. "We do enjoy some benefits of having an Air Force base on our doorstep, however, it being here is not without costs," she said, "the base population

places an enormous strain on community services. Approximately 60 percent of the off-base population would not be here if it were not for the base. These people need police protection, fire protection and they necessarily have to take advantage of the utilities offered by the village."

The federal grant program authorized under Title II of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, provides grants to municipalities to assist in the construction of wastewater treatment works. Currently, the grant program is administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency according to administration procedures of the federal grants under federal regulations.

Rantoul's windfall doesn't bother many in the Rantoul community, because it benefits them, and on-base residents are apathetic. Their somewhat shortsighted view considers the situation like this: "We didn't lose anything by regionalizing and Rantoul gained a wastewater treatment plant." This generalization and rationalization by Air Force members who are transient and have no stake in the local community is what made it so easy for the Village of Rantoul to do what they did.

Community leaders such as Maj. Gen. Frank Elliott (USAF, retired), economic development consultant, and former Chanute Technical Training Center commander, do not find anything wrong with the village taking advantage of a "gift horse." In a recent interview he said, "It was a sound, prudent decision to regionalize the wastewater treatment needs of the Rantoul-Chanute community. We're

not in the business of trying to make life difficult for village residents. The fact is that the village needed a new plant and was going to get one. When Congress allocated the more than \$11 million for a Chanute plant, we decided to try for regionalization and the Air Force was receptive.

"When we look at the big picture, we in the village see where we live as the 'Rantoul-Chanute' community and, thus, we share in the benefits and the costs of this relationship. There is no doubt in this case that the Village benefited in the short term, but in the long run both the base and the Village, what we like to call 'the community,' will benefit."

How does it sit with Elliott that Rantoul enjoys a benefit rarely found elsewhere in the country. "The Rantoul-Chanute relationship is not rare. There are several Air Force bases that enjoy relationships with small communities and there are several military installations throughout the Department of Defense that have regional plans to take care of a myriad of needs. You'll find everything from noise pollution to wastewater treatment covered. In fact, DOD encourages local commanders to get as much bang for their buck as possible and that means making sound fiscal decisions that certainly won't cost more, but, when possible, help bolster the local economy; that's what happened with the regional wastewater treatment plant on 136."

Rantoul Mayor Katy Podagrosi echoes General Elliott sentiments and scoffs at the idea that Rantoul is getting something for nothing. In a recent interview she said, "When we look at the

history of the relationship between Chanute and Rantoul, we see a relationship that has grown throughout the years. If every time an opportunity that benefited one community more than the other was questioned, we would never get anything done around here. The two communities are so closely intertwined that it is impossible for one to grow without the other," she said.

The mayor went on to talk about the public trust.

"When an individual casts a vote for me, he is putting his trust in me and my office. Although I was not in on the beginning of the regionalization process, I think it was a good decision. Would it have made any sense to increase utility rates any more than absolutely necessary by going it ourselves when the regionalization alternative was available? The answer is simple -- no. When you are given the public trust, simple decisions are few and far between, so when one presents itself, you better take advantage of it and we did."

"We know that there are many communities in East Central Illinois which don't have the advantage of a federal reservation on their doorstep and their wastewater treatment needs are going to cost substantially more than ours on a per capita basis. But my job, and that of the Village board, is to do what is best for our community.

"Ours is a good relationship, one that has grown over the years and we intend to nurture the relationship and we are confident that the Air Force wants a similar relationship with us. The regionalization plan was a signal to us that the Air Force sees

here a chance to grow. Ours has to be a model for other communities similarly tied to military installations to emulate," she said. The mayor is a walking, talking statistician, more than able to spout off numbers that help show why the Village is not the bastard child of the base.

Norman Ornstein and Shirley Elder (1978, p. 75) describe this position in their book on interest groups:

The ability of a group to command facts, figures and technical information in support of its position is another key organizational resource. Substantive information, to be used by legislators or bureaucrats to support their positions or to persuade individuals to change their views, is at a premium in the political process.

It is easy to understand why the Rantoul leadership and residents don't see any problem with the regionalization process, in fact, many residents are tired of hearing the story that the base carries the town. Many residents get quite heated when people intimate such a relationship. One such resident is Hank Gamel, a Rantoul policeman and former Air Force member. He, too, points to the services that military members use in the community that Rantoul deserves to be recompensed for. The regionalization of wastewater treatment between the two communities was a logical decision as far as he is concerned and his sentiments are echoed by many in the community.

One can easily understand why residents are so happy about their new plant, which will provide for their needs well into the next century. With the new plant the sewer rates will rise from

\$1.29 per 1,000 gallons of sewage run through Rantoul's system to \$1.49 plus a \$1 monthly service charge. The water rate will go from \$1.75 per 1,000 gallon used to \$2 plus a \$1.50 service charge. For the average village resident, who runs 6,000 gallons of water through the system a month, their bill will rise from \$20.20 to \$23.50 a month (The News-Gazette, 1987, p. A-3).

Rantoul's residents would have tolerated nothing less than regionalization and the village leaders could not afford to ignore their public. David B. Truman in his 1951 text (The Governmental Process, p. 265) says:

The process of group politics is such that no organized groups can afford to be indifferent to public opinion. Moreover, the same influences which have led to a rapid multiplication of organized interest groups in America have also caused an increased concern with public opinion.... Public opinion in this sense is not to be conceived of as a collective and essentially rational entity, but as an aggregate of the more or less rational opinions held by those individuals who, on a given issue make up the "public."

Rantoul's public was certainly well served by the village administration, however, how well was Chanute's public served? As the Air Force so often likes to say these days -- we are all stockholders in the military. Well, the stockholders will be happy to know that their money was well spent on the good of the few. All the other small communities throughout America that are cited for wastewater discharge violations shouldn't hold their breath waiting for Uncle Sam to come and grant their wish.

VI. CONCLUSION

There is no difference between what Rantoul did and what lobbyists do every day in Washington. Rantoul had a receptive base to deal with and a former center commander in its camp. These two factors helped the Village's cause. There was nothing illegal in what happened, but the case was worth, at the very least, the examination I have given it.

Rantoul's administration was the dynamic partner in the regionalization process -- the Village administration saw a golden opportunity and seized it.

What Rantoul gained from the plan is clear -- an immense savings in wastewater treatment for as long as the plant continues to work. The Air Force, on the other hand, gained nothing, but maybe a little goodwill from the community. It seems the base and the Village are inseparable, and it looks like the marriage of military and civilian communities is working well in this case.

The one-sided, symbiotic relationship will rarely benefit the base because Chanute's fiscal pipeline is to Washington, and whenever Rantoul can tap that pipeline, I'm sure it will.

There are many communities in the east central Illinois area that have not found a way around the problem of aging facilities, and they do not have the luxury of being able to squeeze funds out of the federal government. Rantoul's squeeze was successful primarily because of the environment and the experts it has in the village administration, most notably General Elliott.

V. O. Key Jr., noted these characteristics in his book (1964, p. 126) on pressure groups. He said:

The policies and programs of groups ... are shaped by the interactions within the group, the experiences of its members, the environmental circumstances affecting the group, and other factors. Interest group activity is not ... a simple reflex action. Rather, group objectives take shape from ... all the internal processes leading to group action.

What we see in the case of the Rantoul-Chanute facility is a masterful use of the Village's interest group power. The relationship they have been nurturing for 70 years has paid off in the past in nickel and dime fashion. Subsidies for their school system and federal revenue sharing, using the base population to get a larger share of the pie than otherwise would have been given, are only two ways that this Village has gained from its association with the base. Although, technically the base population can be included with the Village's, the base population is supported with federal dollars. But the big payoff came when the switch was turned on last month at the new Rantoul-Chanute Regionalized Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The question raised at the beginning "Was it fair?" is answered -- NO. The people of Rantoul should not be castigated, however, but are to be congratulated for using the system and all the political clout they had to capture a rather impressive prize -- BRAVO.

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