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## Hawthorn Woods approves CN noise plan

By

Hawthorn Woods residents living near the Canadian National Railway tracks will soon be able to apply for funds to reimburse their costs to alleviate train noise.

The village board approved a program Monday night for homes that are partially or entirely within a 65-decibel noise contour of the rail line. These homes will be eligible to apply for reimbursement up to \$4,687.50 per property to install landscaping or vegetation.

Property owners will only be eligible for reimbursement for noise remedies put in place between June 1, 2011 and May 31, 2013. That means anyone who has already taken steps to alleviate noise on their property has done so at their own expense, said Pam Newton, the village's chief operating officer.

To be eligible for the money, the property owner must complete an application to participate in the program. Applications will be available online starting June 1. The village will also email residents when the application is available.

This issue has been ongoing since Canadian National bought the EJ&E Railway in 2008, leading to an uptick in usage of the line that previously had been used sparingly.

Canadian National gave Hawthorn Woods \$300,000 to address noise issues. Newton said officials chose to go the scientific route by having the federal Surface Transportation Board analyze the area and create a noise contour map. With 64 residences eligible for reimbursement, the village will divide the money evenly.

While there were some questions about whether residents closest to the train tracks should get more money than those a bit farther away, Mayor Joseph Mancino said he thinks the program is fair.

"In my opinion, the program is satisfying the vast majority of these residents," Mancino said.

The plan in Hawthorn Woods is different from how other neighboring towns are distributing the noise mitigation funds, Newton said.

For example, the village of Long Grove gave the money to homeowners associations. In Hawthorn Woods, not all of the affected homes are covered by a homeowners' association, officials said.

For homeowners who have already installed landscaping to deal with the noise, Trustee Neil Morgan expressed concern they will be left out of the deal.

But, Mancino said they had to set certain boundaries to make sure the project was manageable.

"It's not their money to spend in anticipation," Newton explained. "Even if they would go spend money on something tomorrow, it doesn't qualify until the village approves their plan."

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