

Merrillville Stormwater Utility Executive Director Matt Lake is announcing a groundbreaking ceremony for one of its major projects for the year – The Taft Street Drainage Improvement Project – to be held this Friday, August 3, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. The groundbreaking will take place at the proposed south detention pond site, just south of 73rd Avenue and east of Taft Street, behind the Dairy Queen property.

Dyer Construction Company, Inc. was awarded the project, having submitted the lowest, most responsive bid for \$2,028,458.24. The Stormwater Management Board approved the award of the bid at its July 9 monthly meeting.

Construction is expected to begin on Monday, August 6. The drainage project (running east of Calumet Park Cemetery property) includes creation of two detention ponds – one just east of south 73rd Avenue and Taft Street (State Route 55) and the other just east of 69th Avenue and Taft Street, and installation of stormwater culverts, among other things. The project will alleviate flooding on Taft Street and select residential areas of Independence Hill subdivision. This drainage improvement project will eliminate flooding at three roadway overtopping locations along Taft Street, including replacing undersized culverts and storm sewers at four locations and constructing approximately 17 acre-feet of storage at two locations. The two storage areas will provide a regional flood control benefit, as well as naturalized wetland habitats. Creation of the retention ponds will start the project, followed by other drainage work, NIPSCO's relocation of a gas line and Independence Hill Conservancy District's installation of a new sanitary sewer line on Taft Street. The State of Indiana is contributing \$750,000 for drainage improvements within the right-of-way, and the Lake County Surveyor's office provided some surveying services.

Merrillville town councilpersons, Stormwater Utility Board and staff members, engineers from Christopher Burke Engineering -- the firm that did the design/engineering, staff from the Lake County Surveyor's office and Dyer Construction will be present for the groundbreaking.

Residents of the affected area and the public are welcome to attend. Information will be provided about road closures in connection with the project. For further information, contact Matt Lake at (219) 769-6784.