

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Diane Gellerman of Imperial is seeking \$2,828.58 from the city of Imperial for damages she has alleged her home sustained from a sewer system backup into her basement.

In July, Gellerman presented bills to the city for repair to her property and loss of personal items. The city council took no action on her claim at that time.

In August, the city council was informed of Gellerman's filing of a suit in Chase County Court. The case is currently in the discovery stage, said City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland.

In court documents, Gellerman alleges that on Dec. 4, 2007, the city's sanitary sewer system backed up into her basement at 129 West 16th Street, "causing the basement and furnishings, fixtures and personal property to be inundated with substantial amounts of sewage causing damage."

Her complaint further alleges the actions constitute a "taking of the plaintiff's real and personal property," and that the city was negligent in regular maintenance and inspection of the sewer lines.

Leyland noted the city's public works department has a regular maintenance program for its sanitary sewer system, which cleans out the lines once a year and, in some of the more troubling areas, more often.

The city currently does not have insurance coverage for such sewer backup claims, she added.

While it may not be the situation in this particular case, tree roots can be a problem in some sewer lines, Leyland noted. There is a product that can be used in a residential line once or twice a year that kills such roots growing into the lines. Residents who know they have potential tree root problems with their sewer lines can contact Leyland for more information.