The Observer

Having Confidence in Your Public Wat

Maintaining the public trust over the last few years has certainly been difficult for public water systems nationwide, even including High Springs, Florida.

Operating and maintaining a public water system is challenging work, to say the least. The purpose of the water system is two-fold: supply the public with safe and aesthetically pleasing drinking water at reasonable cost, and provide sufficient volumes of water under pressure for fire-fighting purposes. A look at the history of water distribution systems in the US reveals that the latter purpose was the reason the earliest water conveyance systems were originally built.

We are very fortunate to have such a water system in our town. Many residents in outlying areas rely solely on their small wells as a source of water and do not enjoy the benefit of pressurized water mains that protect their homes in the event of wildfires. When electrical power fails due to hurricanes, our public water system continues to run on diesel powered generators that keep the water flowing.

Our Water System

The High Springs drinking water plant and its distribution system is considered a small water system, with two supply wells, an elevated storage tank and 2,200 service connections. Small is a relative term; it is small as compared to Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) and its Murphree Water Treatment Plant with 15 supply wells that can produce about 44 million gallons per day to more than 65,000 customers. Operating and maintaining a small water system is

treatment plant and its distribution system reveals an intricate array of electronic controls, sophisticated telecommunication devices, advanced laboratory equipment, pumps and chemical feed units all overseen by a state of Florida certified operator and support staff. Mr. Rodney Hoffman, Plant Operator, has had many hours of training to achieve his license level and more hours to maintain the license through continuing education training. Our drinking water state exams are viewed in the industry as some of the toughest tests in the country.

In our area of Florida, we are blessed with an underground water supply that people around the world are envious of. Natural spring water that tastes good with low odor and is free of harmful microbes is something to be very thankful for. Our water system adds few chemicals to the water to protect it as it passes through the water distribution system to your home. Hydrogen peroxide is added to the water at the well in case natural organic material is present. This can happen during times the Santa Fe River rises from rain events, like hurricane Irma. Chlorine in the form of industrial bleach is then added as a disinfectant to kill any bacteria that might get into the water system from an inadvertent leak in the main. A small amount of polyphosphate is added to the water before it enters the water system to control any dissolved iron that might be in the groundwater and to help protect the inside of the water mains.

What's with the Hardness?

Community Forum

by

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our water mains and service lines to our homes. This coating is commonly referred to as lime scale and contributes to increased sales of "Lime-Away" as we try to clean the lime scale build-up off shower heads, coffee makers and glass dishware. Some people install home water softeners to remove the mineral content, which makes the water soft and soaps and conditioners seem to work better. While I completely understand the reason for this, please be aware of the level of sodium you may be adding to your water supply from a salt-type softener as it removes the calcium. In addition, the removal of all the available calcium and magnesium could be detrimental to proper bone and cell growth along with other health related issues. If you elect to install a home softener, you may want to discuss this with your health care provider about the lack of minerals in your home water

ability our drinking water h
nor the polyphosphate th
adds a protective layer.

As with any town found
in the late 1800s, the Hi
Springs water distribution sy
tem has several types of pi
and service lines in use toda
Pipe material ranges from t
modern day PVC and pol
propylene to cement and ca
iron pipes, with some galv
nized steel and lead servi
lines still in use. As the wat
system operators repair wat
leaks or perform routine mai
tenance of the water syste
they continually remove a
replace any lead service lin
they find. Our operators a
keenly aware of the potent
harm a lead water line c
cause and they strive to rid t
City water system of as ma
as they can. It is difficult
locate each and every one
the lead service lines commo
ly referred to as '"gooseneck
since many of the records
the locations have long be
destroyed, lost or were nev
created from the beginnir
During one occasion, the wa
system operators replac
every lead gooseneck alo
one road after one was fou
during a water main repa
This involved digging down
the large water main to remo
and replace the old servi
lines.

What's Happening Today?

The recent notice we
received with our water bills
a reminder of the compl
water chemistry from t
aquifer to the inside of c
water mains and home servi
lines. Several of the routi
lead and copper samples c
lected indicated elevat
amounts of lead in three sa