



Update: Perfluorochemicals and the City of Oakdale Public Water Supply



April 2007

Dear Resident:

In light of the recent news about drinking water issues in neighboring communities, I, on behalf of the Oakdale City Council, wanted to take this opportunity to update you on Oakdale's water. The bottom line is that our water is clean and safe to drink.

As you may recall, a process began in late 2004 whereby the 3M Corporation, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) tested municipal wells in several area communities. In Oakdale, the tests detected the presence of perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), also referred to as perfluorochemicals (PFCs). Results showed that in two of the City's wells, the detected levels of PFOS were at levels lower than, but close to, the health-based values set by the MDH. A "health-based value" is the maximum level of a chemical in drinking water considered by the MDH to be safe for people to drink daily for up to a lifetime. PFOA and PFOS were detected in trace amounts in four additional wells; the two remaining wells showed no detection. Oakdale officials worked swiftly to provide this, and all related information, to residents and businesses.

In 2005, the City reached agreement with 3M that called for 3M to design, construct, and operate a granular activated carbon treatment facility plant at 1900 Hadley. The facility, the first of its kind in the nation, began operations in November of 2006 and treats the water from the two wells identified with concentrations close to the upper limits of the health-based values. All tests conducted since operations have begun show the complete removal of all PFCs from the treated water.

Recently, the MDH announced that wells in several Washington County communities contain amounts of perfluorobutanoate (PFBA). While no official health-based value has been set, an interim advisory level of one part per billion has been issued for private wells in Lake Elmo. Seven of Oakdale's eight wells tested positive for PFBA, with three showing trace amounts, two close to the advisory level, and two exceeding the advisory level. The two wells exceeding the level are connected to the treatment facility and the PFBAs are being filtered out of Oakdale's drinking water.

Also recently, MDH lowered the health-based values for both PFOA and PFOS. As a result, one city well now exceeds the lowered values. In discussions with 3M, the most appropriate course of action is to drill a new city well, financed by 3M, that is outside of the "plume area". Initial plans call for the new well to be operational in 2008. Prior to that time, the well in question will be used only as a last resort.

The two wells routed to the treatment facility have become the primary wells serving the city. These wells have the capacity to supply virtually all of the city's monthly water needs for the majority of the year. However, during the summer months when water demand

increases, depending on precipitation, the City may have to bring on additional wells to meet the need. When that occurs, water from the additional wells will be diluted with the filtered water, thereby resulting in the outgoing water being below the advisory level. For this reason, we continue to strongly urge you to conserve water in the high-demand summer months, most importantly by following the city's permanent odd/even sprinkling regulations.

In closing, I wish to assure you that the City Council and I place the highest priority on your safety and well-being. The City will continue to work closely with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Department of Health to ensure the safety of our water. Also, we will continue to provide you with updates on our water as they become available.

Should you have questions or if you would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Oakdale Public Works Director Brian Bachmeier at (651) 730-2730 or Jim Kelly at the Minnesota Department of Health at (651) 201-4910. You may also find additional information on the city's web page at www.ci.oakdale.mn.us

Sincerely,
Carmen Sarrack, Mayor

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