

Violation to get swift response

Written by Bruce Clymer, city administrator
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I am writing in regard to a Letter of Violation the City received May 28 from Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

DHHS is charged with the responsibility of making sure that all Public Water Systems are in compliance with State and Federal regulations regarding water safety and quality. The notification received was in regard the level of arsenic in the water exceeding state limitations.

This violation occurred at the municipal well located at 16th and Avenue G. Arsenic is a metal that occurs naturally in the environment, and may occur as a by-product of some agricultural and industrial activities.

The city intends to provide notice to each customer as required by DHHS, so you should expect notification in the mail. However, I wanted to take the opportunity to inform the public this is on the City Council agenda for the council's review and action on June 1. I realize this will letter will not be published until after the council meeting, but I am anticipating quick and decisive action by the City Council.

According to the DHHS, this violation does not require boiling, freezing, or letting water stand; which in fact may make the arsenic more concentrated. Also, according to the DHHS, you do not need to use an alternative source of water and there is no immediate risk; and that the only risk comes about after many years of exposure to arsenic at these levels.

The good news is that the well in violation has seen very limited use for many years. In fact, the well has not pumped water into the public water system for over a year. I am anticipating the City Council will provide direction to not use this well until such time as the well either is able to come into compliance; or possible abandonment of the well.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at City Hall.