



Water Dept. to treat for iron build up

LITTLETON -- The town's Water Department will begin a treatment program this month in an effort to reduce the aesthetic water quality problems associated with naturally occurring iron and manganese concentrations, according to general manager Savas Danos, who added that the concentration of these two elements in the ground water supplies has increased over the past several years to the point that treatment is warranted.

For the treatment, a blended phosphate product will be injected at the four drinking water supplies and work its way throughout the distribution system, Danos said. The injected product, called CalciQuest, is a mixture of food-grade polyphosphates and orthophosphates that have been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use in drinking water. The blended phosphate product has several properties that will enhance the quality of the drinking water provided by LWD, Danos said.

Danos explained further that the product controls iron and manganese through the chemical process of sequestration, which binds the iron and manganese into a compound and thereby reduces the potential for staining of interior fixtures. Secondly, he said, the product gradually removes iron and manganese deposits from the interior of the distribution system, allowing for greater rates of water flow. And finally, he added, the product reduces lead and copper corrosion of interior plumbing by forming a protective barrier between the water and the metal surface of the pipes. Once formed, this barrier reduces the leaching of lead and copper into the drinking water, and also prevents mineral deposits from developing on the interior of the pipes.

One side effect of this injection will be the loosening and dislodging of existing iron and manganese deposits from the interior of the distribution system. If significant amounts of deposits are dislodged at once, the potential exists that customers will experience dirty-looking water in their drinking water. While it appears aesthetically unpleasing, this "dirty water" is safe to drink, Danos emphasized. If a customer encounters dirty water, LWD recommends flushing the dirty water from the home via an exterior faucet.

To reduce the potential of loosening large deposits at the same time, LWD will slowly increase the dosage over the course of several weeks before reaching the recommended injection rate. After several weeks of operation, LWD will initiate a town-wide flushing program to help dislodge and remove some of the iron and manganese deposits. The flushing program will occur in April. A listing of streets scheduled for flushing will appear weekly in *The Littleton Independent*, on the department's web page, www.lclwd.com and via a recording at 486-3104, ext. 460. It is likely that supplementary, localized flushing will be required through the summer months as

additional deposits are loosened within the distribution system. A second town-wide flushing program is tentatively scheduled for October, 2005.

Customers with any concerns are encouraged to call the customer services department at (978) 486-3104 or view the department's website, www.lclwd.com for further information.