

***Water feature for September issue of the Dewey-Humboldt town newsletter*****Arsenic in Drinking Water**

By: Jennifer Botsford, Arizona Department of Health Services

Arsenic is a metal that occurs naturally in groundwater in many mining areas in Arizona, including the Dewey-Humboldt area. Consuming water with arsenic above the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) safe drinking water standard (10 parts per billion, or ppb) can raise your risk for some cancers and other health effects. Arsenic has been found in both household private wells and Humboldt Water System's wells at levels above the EPA safe drinking water standard for arsenic. The Humboldt Water System, a privately owned company, is taking steps to reduce the level of arsenic in the water it provides to customers. If you own a well, there are steps you can take to protect yourself from drinking too much arsenic.

**Private Wells**

Household private wells are not regulated and tested under federal safe drinking water regulations. Therefore private well owners are responsible for the safety of their water. Some private wells in Dewey-Humboldt have arsenic levels above the safe drinking water standard, while others have levels below it. ADHS recommends that well owners test their well water every year for bacteria and nitrates, and at least every three years for metals, including arsenic. If your test results show arsenic levels higher than 10 ppb, ADHS recommends purchasing and installing a treatment system that will reduce the level of arsenic in your water.

For help finding a state-certified water testing laboratory or with understanding test results, call ADHS (602-364-3128). For help choosing a treatment system to reduce arsenic levels in your water, call Dr. Janick Artiola (520-621-3516), at the University of Arizona. To learn more about private well maintenance, testing and water treatment, visit [www.wellowner.org](http://www.wellowner.org).

**Humboldt Water System**

The Humboldt Water System is a private water company (not part of the Town of Dewey-Humboldt). Humboldt Water System runs two wells that provide water to more than 300 Dewey-Humboldt households and businesses. Humboldt Water System tests this water for arsenic and other contaminants and it is required to meet EPA safe drinking water standards.

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To lower arsenic levels, the Humboldt Water System is installing a new arsenic treatment system that is expected to start operation by early 2015. The Humboldt Water System's Annual Consumer Confidence Report, which provides water quality information, is available at <http://www.southwesternutility.com/view/250> or by calling Southwestern Utility Management at (520-623-5172).

**Stop By the "Safe Drinking Water Corner" at the Agua Fria Festival**

The federal, state, and academic organizations listed below are working together to address drinking water quality concerns in the Dewey-Humboldt community. The following groups are organizing drinking water information to distribute at the Agua Fria Festival in Dewey-Humboldt, October 4-5. Representatives from some of the organizations will also be available to talk at the festival, so stop by their tables to learn more about safe drinking water!

- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- University of Arizona Superfund Research Program