

2008 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report:

# The Water We Drink



*Amy W. Wynn, Mayor*

**City of American Falls - 550 N. Oregon Trail - American Falls, Idaho 83211 -226-2569**

We're delighted to present to you this year's Annual Quality Water Report. This report is designed to inform you about the quality water and services we deliver to you every day. Our constant goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water. Our water source is ground water currently pumped from six municipal wells and from an artisan's source located east of American Falls. Our wells draw from the Snake River Aquifer.

We would also like to update the community on the status of our bonds that just passed on May 26<sup>th</sup>. We are currently seeking financial assistance from several agencies to get the Sunbeam project started. We are also working on budgeting money to begin upgrading 4" main lines to at least 6" main lines and upgrading our booster station, currently we do not have any redundancy in the booster station. We may also be upgrading a 4" water line to at least 6" line on Bennett St.

The City of American Falls is pleased to report that our drinking water is safe and meets federal and state requirements. While your drinking water meets the current standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. The standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. USEPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at **high** concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems. Some people who drink water containing arsenic in excess of the MCL over many years could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer. We will continue to regularly monitor the well near the golf course when it is in operation, to assure that it meets the current standard.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immune-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant, you should ask for advice from your health care provider. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water before we treat it include: **(1) Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife. **(2) Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and grease production, mining, or farming. **(3) Pesticides and herbicides**, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses. **(4) Organic chemical contaminants**, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also, come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems. **(5) Radioactive contaminants**, which can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In the attached table you will find many terms and abbreviations you might not be familiar with. To help you better understand these terms we've provided the following definitions:

**Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/l)** - one part per million corresponds to one minute in two years or a single penny in \$10,000.

**Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter** - one part per billion corresponds to one minute in 2,000 years, or a single penny in \$10,000,000.

**Picocuries per liter (pCi/L)** - Picocuries per liter is a measure of the radioactivity in water.

**Millirems per year (mrem/yr)** - measure of radiation absorbed by the body.

**Million Fibers per Liter (MFL)** - million fibers per liter is a measure of the presence of asbestos fibers that are longer than 10 micrometers.

**Action Level** - the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**Treatment Technique (TT)** - A treatment technique is a required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**Maximum Contaminant Level** - The "Maximum Allowed" (MCL) is the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal** - The "Goal" (MCLG) is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

MCL's are set at very stringent levels. To understand the possible health effects described for many regulated constituents, a person would have to drink 2 liters of water every day at the MCL level for a lifetime to have a one-in-a-million chance of having the described health effect.

#### **Lead Informational Statement (Health effects and ways to reduce exposure)**

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. **The City of American Falls** is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your drinking water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing.

The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile value for the lead and copper level detected are of the most recent round of samplings taken from 20 homes in the city of American Falls. Only one house had a lead detect above the Action Level.

Reports will not be mailed out but are available at our City Hall upon request. Please call our office at (208) 226-2569 if you have questions.

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua beber. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

Thank you for allowing us to continue providing your family with clean, quality water this year. In order to maintain a safe and dependable water supply, it is necessary to make ongoing improvements that will benefit everyone. These improvements are sometimes reflected as rate structure adjustments. Thank you for understanding and for your cooperation during these improvements.

The American Falls Water Department works around the clock to provide top quality water to every tap, said Pete Cortez. We ask that all our customers help us protect our water sources, which are the heart of our community, our way of life and our children's future.

If you have any questions about this report or concerning your water utility, please contact your Water/Wastewater Superintendent Pete Cortez or the American Falls City Hall office at 226-2569. We want our valued citizens to be informed about their water utility. If you want to learn more, please attend any of our regularly scheduled City Council meetings. They are held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall.