

Small Systems Bulletin

Minnesota Rural Water Association



July 2023 | Summer News



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Welcome to this edition of the Small Systems Bulletin. The purpose of this bulletin is to keep you informed on issues concerning your water system. We issue this bulletin quarterly. Topics covered in the bulletin include: operation and maintenance, treatment, backflow/cross-connections, regulations, operator training, management, and many others. Dates and locations of future workshops are included.

If you have suggestions about topics that you would find helpful give us a call at 800-367-6792 or send us an e-mail at kyle.kedrowski@mrwa.com jennifer.koenig@mrwa.com

Watch for this quarterly newsletter and we'll see you at a future small system training workshop!

Feature Article: Validation, At Last, for City of Buhl!

Robyn Hoerr, MRWA Source Water Specialist



Minnesota Rural Water Taste Test Winner – 2023

Right in the heart of the Iron Range in scenic north central Minnesota, you will find the city of Buhl situated along the popularly-traveled US Highway 169. Buhl is called home by 957 people to whom it comes as no surprise that the city's water garnered the right to be called the best tasting water in Minnesota upon winning the Water Taste Test during the 39th Annual Minnesota Rural Water Association Technical Conference held in March.

Right from the beginning the city of Buhl has a history of taking great pride, and placing high value in the quality and taste of their water. People were initially attracted to the area because of the excellent mining prospects. As they continued to settle in the area and the population grew, the city was platted in 1900, and incorporated in 1901. Water was a highly valued commodity for those who initially settled in the community during the time before the city had a municipal well; the enormous effort it took to either procure water by carrying countless buckets of water for drinking, washing, bathing, and cooking, or paying the high monetary cost to purchase water contributed to the elevation of its value.

Much to the relief of its citizens, progress ensued and the city constructed its first municipal water supply well 1900. Thankfully gone were the days of residents lugging buckets of water for long distances from area springs and local mining operations. While the new well was successful in supplying water to the city's residents, the quality of the water was unsatisfactory and led to an unsuccessful attempt to deepen the well, and later to drilling their second well in 1902. Unfortunately, the water quality of the second well, which is still part of the municipal system today as the emergency back-up well, was no better the initial well.

The city residents struggled with water quality issues until 1914. It was at this time when the stars aligned and circumstances finally worked in the city's favor: Back in 1901, an iron ore prospector had been drilling exploratory holes near town, and in drilling a deep boring, he found something perhaps more valuable to the city's residents than iron ore—WATER! The city didn't realize their golden opportunity at the time, and it wasn't until 1914 having endured poor water quality for more than a decade to drive the city council to attempt to develop the 698-foot boring into a well with a 365-foot deep casing. This effort was a smashing success, and the rest is history!

The water from the city's new primary well was so good that the city council during the 1920's began to advertise their great tasting water to the tourists traveling up and down the highway, and later voted to add a message on their water tower stating, "BUHL FINEST WATER IN AMERICA," for all to see! That water tower is still present today as an iconic symbol pride for the city of Buhl.

So, what makes the city's drinking water taste so great? I couldn't resist taking a road trip to the city of Buhl to ask just that question! The city's municipal water utility has 489 connections and is considered a class D system where the raw water is only treated with fluoride. The primary source of drinking water is obtained from the 698-foot deep well in which remarkably, since its construction, no testing results have shown any of the human-caused federal Safe Drinking Water Act regulated contaminants. In fact, the water is so tasty and pure that the Buhl Water Company, since 1986, has made a successful business of bottling and selling it!

If you take a tour around town, at some point you're likely to run into the city's three maintenance staff which includes Trent Pink, Owen Lamere, and Lyle Pederson. These men are kept running in all directions taking care of the critical infrastructure for the city which includes operations for the water and wastewater utilities, maintaining the electrical power system, maintaining the streets and parks, and keeping up with city cemetery duties. When asked for their secret on making the Buhl water taste so fantastic, these humble gentleman refused to take even a small amount of credit for their success and replied that the water has just always been that way!

While the city residents have believed for a very long time that their water is extraordinary, they were still excited to learn about winning this year's MRWA Water Taste Test since it served to validate their long-standing claims. When asked for his reaction to the news, the city's mayor, Brandin Carter, replied, "It's really good to see the Buhl's water recognized for what it is. After recently attending hearings at the MN State Capitol and listening to other cities in Minnesota with water supply issues, it was nice to come back home to our community with the realization of how lucky we are to have such a great resource!"

The residents will soon have the opportunity to thoroughly validate their long standing claim of having the finest water in America; a sample of the city's water will be sent to compete against the other states' entries in the National Rural Water Association's Best Tasting Water in America contest which takes place in February of 2024 during the National Rural Water Association's Washington D.C. Rally.

The Minnesota Rural Water Association congratulates the city of Buhl for being awarded the distinction of having the Best Tasting Water in Minnesota, and wishes the best of luck in the NRWA national competition. Buhl's commitment to drinking water excellence ensures their end drinking water result, which is QUALITY ON TAP!

Training & Technical Assistance Update:

The dates and locations for our upcoming in-person training sessions are listed below. We also have these dates posted on our *Training Calendar* page www.mrwa.com/training/trainingcalendar/. At the top of that page, please click on the box "Go To Small Systems Training" for our Class E & D training dates and locations. For our in-person training sessions, we will mail notices to operations specialists in those areas approximately one month prior to the class.

In-Person Training:

Class E Training Workshops (8am – Noon)

July 18, 2023

Beltrami Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Community Room

4111 Technology Dr NW

Bemidji, MN

October 3, 2023

Ramsey Municipal Center

Alexander Ramsey Room

7550 Sunwood Drive NW

Ramsey, MN

November 28, 2023

People's Energy Cooperative

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South

Oronoco, MN

Class D Training Workshop (8am – 5 pm)

August 22, 2023

Cohasset City Hall

305 Northwest 1st Avenue

Cohasset, MN

[Click Here to Register!](#)

Online Training:

We will continue to offer online remote training sessions using Zoom. If you have not received these email invites for the Zoom online training sessions, please email mrwa@mrwa.com and provide your name, public water system name, and preferred email address to us so that we can add you to our email list. If you have received emails from us in the past but not these Zoom notices, please check your Junk/Spam folder. If you use a Gmail account, you may need to check the "Promotions" folder for the email invites.



Once the online training sessions are scheduled we will post these online training session links on our website www.mrwa.com on our [Training Calendar](#) page. At the top of that page, please click on the box "Go To Small Systems Training" for our online training links. You will be notified via email of the date and time of each online remote training session. An email address will be needed to register for these online remote training sessions.

Each operations specialist must register and sign-in separately on their own device to receive credit for attending the online remote training session.

Online Training:

December 2023 at 10am

Date and Topic - To Be Determined

Additional Training Opportunities

Lead and Copper Rule Revisions/Asset Management Training
(6 direct water CEUs available)

More information on these training sessions can be found on our website www.mrwa.com, on our Training Calendar page. At the top of that page, please click on the box "Go To WATER Training" for training dates and locations.

July 12, 2023

Ortonville Community Center

200 Monroe Avenue

Ortonville, MN

August 8, 2023
Luverne City Hall
305 E Luverne Street
Luverne, MN

September 12, 2023
Stewartville Fire Hall
417 South Main St
Stewartville, MN

October 17, 2023
Hoyt Lakes Community Center
101 Kennedy Memorial Drive
Hoyt Lakes, MN

[Register Here](#)

Technical Assistance

We also wanted to let you know that if you have any questions about training or are in need of onsite technical assistance, please feel free to contact us to set up an appointment.

Thank you so much for all that you do in providing safe drinking water to your consumers!

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