

Treating city nitrates long term, costly project

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include headache, dizziness, weakness or difficulty in breathing.

City Manager Wayne Hill told the city commissioners at a meeting on June 16 that one city well has tested at 11 ppm for nitrates, and one or two others are showing slight increases in nitrate levels.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment requires the city to test wells at least once a year, he said, but when one shows a level of nitrates higher than 10 ppm that testing has to be done every three months, Hill said. If the test results show a nitrate level exceeding 10 ppm, the city is required to notify the public to take precautions.

"It will take quite a bit of time to get this solved," Hill said. "I am sure that it is something we will continue to have problems with, and know that the state health department is watching. They know we are looking into the problem, but at some point we might get an order to treat all the wells."

Over the past year, he said, a well at Chambers Park has tested at 11 ppm for nitrate three times. Under state regulations, he said, the water has to be tested at the well, but when tests are made at nearby houses, the nitrate level is well within the limit.

In past years, he said, the city abandoned a well at Memory Park because of high nitrates. Nitrates commonly come from fertilizers and manure, animal feedlots, municipal wastewater and sludge and septic systems, Hill said. In his research of the nitrates in the city wells, Hill said he has not been able to pinpoint where the nitrates are coming from. He said there is no historic evidence to explain why the high level of nitrates are found in the middle of the town, and not as high in outlying areas.

Hill said he went to McCook, Neb., to see that city's water treatment system. McCook was under an order from the Department of Justice to treat the

drinking water because of high levels of uranium, arsenic and nitrates, he said. The plant cost the city more than \$15 million.

There are options to treat Goodland's water, Hill added.

"I have advocated a central collection point for all the well water," he said. "Mixing the water from the wells would lower the total nitrate level and might keep the level low enough to keep the city from having to build a treatment plant for maybe 10 years or more."

The other option is to treat the nitrates at each well, but Hill said that would be expensive. He said there are several ways to treat the water, but then the city will have to deal with the waste products.

He said one person from a firm he talked to has a plan that would treat the water at each well, and the waste could be applied to agricultural land. However, he said the process has not been proven yet or approved for cities to use.

He said the first option is to look at the project with a hydrologist from Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, an engineering firm with an office here.

"I have one presentation from Wilson and Co.," Hill said, "but I want to be sure we are looking at the best answer for the city and our people."

Commissioner John Garcia asked if nitrates have showed up in wells other than the one at Chambers Park.

Rich Simon, city public works director, said they had, but were not as high as those in McCook.

"We want to look at all avenues," Mayor Rick Billinger said. "I want someone who dealing with water is all they do."

Hill said he would include some engineering work as part of the budget for next year.

"We need to look at it for the long term," Hill said. "We looked at the tendency of the city wells, and the increases are not going to stop."



Goodland riders join 'chick ride' to Oklahoma

Five Goodland women joined a larger group of 36 motorcyclists Friday afternoon for a trip to Lake Tenkiller in northeast Oklahoma. The Goodland riders included Linda Quint and Lisa Malsom (top photo), Kim Bohme, Jodi Miller and Tonya Cox (right photo). Quint said they picked up riders along the way, most of them from Hays. Quint said they enjoyed the 609 mile roundtrip. They enjoyed the scenery on the ride and took a boat ride on the lake.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News



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