

## Discussion with Patsy Olsen, September 24, 2009

I spoke with Patsy on the phone to ask her what was the current status of their wells in regards to arsenic and what have they done so far to alleviate the problems, and if there was a time table for when the new arsenic equipment will be installed.

The new arsenic removal equipment will cost \$165,000. In order to buy the equipment the water company would have to take out a loan. In order to secure the loan they would have to show they have some way to pay it back. They have been working with the Arizona Corporate Commission for almost a year now to get permission to raise their water rates so they can cover the costs of the new equipment. This is almost all finalized now, they still have to come up with exact amounts. It will probably be \$6.25-\$7.00 more per household per month.

As soon as they can implement the rate increase go ahead, then they can go get a bank loan. But even after they have the loan in place, they will have to get permits, construction bids, etc. So they could still be looking out a number of months before everything would be in place and working. Ironically, they have a new well they could bring online right now that shows lower arsenic levels than the current well supplying water, but ADEQ won't let them bring that well online until they have the arsenic equipment in place. What a catch 22!

Here are some other facts I gleaned from this conversation and my experience:

- Their wells are measuring out at 30-35 parts per million arsenic. Not 55 ppm as Mr. Krupa has described in his emails. Their new well is measuring in the low 20s, but they are not allowed to bring that on line per ADEQ's approval.
- As per the research Paul Bishop and I have done for the BC Plan, the entire Verde Valley suffers from arsenic levels higher than the 10 ppm allowed by the EPA. Heck, all of Arizona has arsenic problems. There are places in Paulden that measure 800 ppm. So exceeding the EPA standards by 20-25ppm is not drastic.
- Patsy said Gary did not come to her to discuss the arsenic problem. She was alerted by some other people that he was complaining about the water company so she approached him to talk about what they are doing and he knows what the situation is.
- Gary also made a statement that some people said that a sewer system would improve the water quality. Montezuma Water Company has to make reports to ADEQ on the water quality and make those reports available to the customers. There is **no evidence** of contamination by septic systems. These statements have no basis in fact.

Technically Montezuma Water Company has until January 11th, 2010 to comply so right now they are not out of compliance. Apparently there are many small water companies across the state that are in the same boat. If they went beyond this date before they could get everything working what would happen? That's not clear. I think maybe someone could sue them. But would that really be a good course of action? Put them out of business and then nobody has any water?

Here is my recommendation:

- Montezuma Water Company is actively pursuing a remedy to the situation. It is to no one's benefit to make complaints to ADEQ. I would urge patience from those in the community who are concerned and ask that they work through their neighborhood association MEPOA to resolve these issues and be willing to accept the decision of the majority.
- If individuals are extremely concerned about arsenic levels, they could purchase an RO system that removes arsenic. We just paid \$339 at Home Depot for a zero waste RO system that removes arsenic to the new 2006 EPA levels. There is also the occasional cost of filter replacement, but it is still a lot cheaper than buying bottled water.

I think Patsy Olson is ***earnestly working*** towards solving the problem. I think we are in tough economic times when it is harder than ever for a small business to get a loan. *\*The people who live in Montezuma Estates would have no water if the water company was put out of business by being sued.* So I would urge Mr. Krupa and anyone else who is considering such a rash course of action to think about it some more. Especially when there are things they could personally do to improve their water's quality that would be a lot cheaper than starting a law suit and risking even more hard feelings from their neighbors.

I do not think having a "forum" put on by the BCRC would solve anything. We would just rehash these facts and still be at the same place. I think Mr. Krupa and any other residents who are concerned about the arsenic levels should be more patient with the situation and take personal measures to ensure their water's quality until such time that the water company can provide the arsenic removal equipment.

Kayo Parsons-Korn  
Water Committee Chair  
Beaver Creek Regional Council

\*President's Note: This is an opinion – not based on factual information.

If insolvency, the company would be placed in receivership until settled and service to customers continued, uninterrupted.

Kala Pearson – President  
Beaver Creek Regional Council