



1053 Spruce Street * P.O. Box 3348 * Allentown, PA 18106-0348
(610)398-2503 * FAX (610)398-8413 * Email: service@lehighcountyauthority.org

Fall 2012

Dear Customer,

Over the past 2 years or so, residents have heard a lot of mixed messages about what is happening with our precious local water supplies. Many have expressed concerns over how the Little Lehigh Creek is being protected, the status of sewer system overflows, the use of groundwater and spring supplies, and most recently, the status of the City of Allentown water and sewer systems.

As your water supplier, and regional sewer system provider, Lehigh County Authority (LCA) has been heavily involved in many of these issues, and we have touched on some of them through our quarterly newsletter that is attached to your water bill.

To help improve communications with you, we have enclosed a fall newsletter with more detailed information on hot topics such as:

- LCA water system interconnection with Allentown, and what YOU need to know about your water quality
- Ongoing work to reduce sewer system overflows
- Rain barrel program update and opportunity to get involved
- Source Water Protection update

In addition, we encourage you to come to any of our Board of Directors meetings, which are typically held at noon on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at our operations center in Wescosville. Meeting schedules, agendas and minutes are posted on our web site at www.lehighcountyauthority.org.

As you review the information included in this newsletter, please feel free to contact us at with any questions or concerns you may have about LCA services and projects!

Sincerely,

Aurel M. Arndt
General Manager



Lehigh County Authority

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ALLENTOWN WATER SYSTEM INTERCONNECTION – UPDATE!

On January 2, 2013, Lehigh County Authority (LCA) will open up the new water system interconnection with the City of Allentown, completing a 2-year project to ensure adequate supply of safe drinking water is available for our customers for the foreseeable future. This is good news for our customers, but we also want you to be aware of the impacts you may experience. In addition to this newsletter, more information is available on our website at www.lehighcountyauthority.org.

What You Should Know About: FLUORIDE

Your property will NOT receive fluoride in your drinking water due to this interconnection!

While Allentown’s water has fluoride added at the City’s water treatment plant, our system is configured into pressure zones that separate which water flows to each region of the system. Your property is connected to the portion of the system that will NOT be receiving water from Allentown. In general, the area of our system that will not receive fluoride is located north of route I-78, which is a higher elevation than the rest of the system.

While we currently do not anticipate supplying any Allentown water to your property, you should check our website in the future if you have questions, to see if any new information is posted about the blend of water you are receiving, or call our office at 610-398-1444 any time.

What You Should Know About: HARDNESS

The water hardness level in your drinking water will not change significantly due to this interconnection. Allentown’s water contains a similar amount of minerals and hardness as LCA’s current well supplies.

What You Should Know About: TASTE

You should not notice any change in your water quality, taste, smell or color. If you do, please let us know so we can investigate the problem!

What You Should Know About: PRESSURE

Allentown’s water will be entering LCA’s water system at the same pressure as you are currently receiving. Water pressure is derived primarily by the gravity pressure created by the storage tanks in our system. We have approximately 9 million gallons of water in storage, and pressure from the tanks creates the system pressure that serves your home. This will not change. If you notice changes in pressure after January 2, 2013, please notify LCA so we can investigate the problem!

Report Any Problems You Experience!

During the week of January 2, 2013, we will be monitoring system pressure and water quality carefully as we open up the interconnection with Allentown. Your help in reporting any problems you experience will be truly appreciated. Please call us at 610-398-1444 if you experience any unexpected problems with water quality, taste, pressure, cloudiness, or any other issues!

Protecting the Source

Where your water comes from:

With the completion of this water system interconnection, your drinking water sources are now fully diversified, which helps to protect customers from the impacts of any potential localized water quality problems or contamination.

- ✓ **Groundwater Wells** – LCA will continue to operate some or all of our 19 wells to supply your system, as needed.
- ✓ **Springs** – Allentown uses two spring sources, Schantz Spring and Crystal Spring to supply their system.
- ✓ **Little Lehigh Creek** – All of LCA’s wells, and Allentown’s springs, are located in the Little Lehigh Creek watershed. In addition, Allentown draws water directly from the creek for full treatment at their water treatment plant.
- ✓ **Lehigh River** – The river is Allentown’s back-up supply, which will also be available to LCA on an as-needed basis.

At any given time, your drinking water may be drawn from any of these sources, so it is important to understand how to protect it from pollution events!

Beginning in Spring 2013, LCA and Allentown will be joining forces to install educational signs along roadways throughout our watershed to inform drivers that any spills should be reported to 911 immediately. Roadways pose the single largest risk to our water quality, and you can do your part by calling in any spills you notice, and of course, NO DUMPING hazardous materials into storm drains or water ways!



Hot Topic: Sewer system overflows

In late 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued an order for all the municipalities using the regional sewer system in central Lehigh County to eliminate sewer system overflows that we have experienced during wet-weather events over the years. Municipalities throughout the region have sewer systems providing service to residents and businesses. These sewer systems are connected to LCA's regional pipeline that transports waste to the City of Allentown for final treatment.

How do the overflows happen?

The primary issue we are all faced with is rainwater infiltrating the sewer system during wet-weather events. This occurs when sewer lines are cracked and need to be repaired, when customers have gutter systems and sump pumps connected to the sewer system, when manholes are not sealed properly, etc. Removing the rainwater from the system will be a long and expensive process requiring a partnership of all municipalities and customers.

What is being done about it?

Over the past 3 years, municipalities in Western Lehigh County have done a lot! First, they formed a partnership with LCA to collaborate on solutions to this problem under a program called Sewer Capacity Assurance and Rehabilitation Program (SCARP). Municipalities adopted the SCARP plan, and we are all working together on the next steps, which include continued flow monitoring to determine the priority areas that need to be looked at closely, and determining the most meaningful and cost effective ways to reduce rainwater infiltration. Some customers may have already participated in their township's basement inspection programs, or maybe you have seen crews working on sewer line repairs, manhole repairs or other projects in your neighborhoods. These are all part of the regional program to remove rainwater from our sewer systems, and we appreciate your help!

Another major project was the construction of a 3 million gallon Flow Equalization Basin at our waste treatment plant in Fogelsville. This tank allows LCA to "hold" some of the high flow volume that goes through the system during wet-weather events, so it can be released later after the flows subside.

Is it working?

YES! The community should understand that removing rainwater from the sewer system is going to be a long and expensive project, but it is important to our community to keep working on it. However, the work we have done so far has been successful in two major ways: 1) Municipalities are now working together to solve a regional problem in a cooperative way; and 2) When the rain comes, we have systems in place such as the new Flow Equalization Basin, that help us manage the high flows. We can build on these successes to continue working toward our community goal of eliminating sewer overflows!

Rain Barrel Report & 2013 Plans

Since 2009, LCA has partnered with Coca-Cola, Lehigh Valley Syrup Plant, to distributed about 650 rain barrels to customers and residents. More will be available in 2013 to anyone who is interested in collecting rain water for outdoor use.

Rain barrel systems that are commercially available today run in the range of \$150 to \$300. Through LCA's program, you can get a 55-gallon barrel for free, and make a rain water collection system yourself using our rain barrel diagram and a few supplies from your local hardware store, that should cost no more than \$30 to purchase.

Want to participate next year? Contact LCA today to express your interest, and we will keep you informed of opportunities to get a rain barrel in the spring!

Note to Current Rain Barrel Owners: Due to the cooler weather, rain barrels should be stored away for winter to avoid ice damage!



Getting to Know LCA is Easy as 1 – 2 – 3!

1. Visit our customer care representatives at our office at 1053 Spruce Street in Wescosville, or call us at 610-398-1444 any time with your questions and concerns!
2. Visit us on-line, and even pay your bill, at www.lehighcountyauthority.org!
3. Come to a Board meeting on the 2nd or 4th Monday of the month at Noon!



INSIDE: Fall 2012 Customer News & Updates

H₂O Emergency? *How Will You Know?*

Over the past 2 years, LCA has been working on updating records to include phone numbers for all customers so we can contact you in the event of an emergency. We appreciate your help in keeping our database up to date, and many customers have responded with their information.

Did you know... ? If LCA encounters a water quality problem that poses a public health risk, or if a system malfunction is disrupting your water or sewer service, we are required to contact you to protect the public's health. However, you may not receive these important notices if we don't have your phone number on file!

Updating your account information is easy

- Visit us online at www.lehighcountyauthority.org and use the link to "LCA Emergency Notification System" to send us your info!
- You may also call us at 610-398-1444 at any time to verify or change your phone number.