



Press Release

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Lehigh County Authority customers now receiving water directly from Allentown
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Beginning around 3 p.m. today, most Lehigh County Authority (LCA) water customers began receiving water from a new source – the City of Allentown. However, for most customers, the change was undetectable. LCA reports no significant changes are expected in water pressure, taste or quality as water is now being drawn through a long-planned water system interconnection with the City’s system.

However, one major change for some customers is the addition of fluoride to their drinking water. Allentown adds fluoride to the water treated at its treatment plant, but LCA does not add fluoride to its well water.

According to LCA’s water system hydraulic model, most of the water supplied from Allentown will be delivered to customers in LCA’s Central Lehigh Division in Lower Macungie Township, small portions of Salisbury and Upper Milford townships, and portions of Upper Macungie Township that are south of Interstate 78 and east of Route 100. Customers in these areas will receive a blend of water from Allentown and LCA wells, so the water will contain fluoride at a level of about 0.7 milligrams per liter.

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Customers in LCA's Central Lehigh Division who live in Weisenberg and Lowhill townships, and portions of Upper Macungie Township that are north of Interstate 78 and west of Route 100 will generally not be receiving water from Allentown. Therefore, no fluoride will be included in the water these customers receive on most days.

Over the next five years, LCA will be increasing the amount of water purchased from Allentown up to 7 million gallons per day in the fifth year. At that time, customers west of Route 100 will be receiving fluoride. Customers north of Interstate 78 will not receive fluoride for the foreseeable future.

In December, LCA mailed an informational newsletter to all affected customers to explain the impact on their water supply. This newsletter followed a series of bill-stuffer newsletters LCA put out throughout 2012 to inform customers of the impending changes.

Customers who are unsure about whether their water contains fluoride should visit LCA's website at www.lehighcountyauthority.org for details, or contact LCA at 610-398-1444. Anyone experiencing cloudy water or changes in water pressure should also contact LCA, at any time to report the problem.

Plans for the interconnection began in 2008 when LCA and Allentown negotiated a long-term water supply agreement to help maintain an adequate supply of fresh drinking water for the growing areas of western Lehigh County. This water system project follows decades of discussion between LCA and Allentown about the best way to manage local water resources.

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LCA has traditionally relied on groundwater wells to supply drinking water to its customers, while Allentown uses a mix of spring water and water drawn from the Little Lehigh Creek and the Lehigh River. However, most of the water used by LCA and Allentown flows through the same watershed area. By interconnecting the two water systems, supplies can be managed on a more regional, watershed basis, especially during times of drought or flood when either groundwater or surface water may be impacted by changing conditions

The first phase of construction was completed in 2010 and cost \$4.4 million, to provide LCA with 2 million gallons of water per day directly from the city's Schantz Spring source.

The second phase of the project, which cost about \$3.8 million, was completed in December 2012, with valves opened today, to provide an average of 4 million gallons of water per day to LCA. The Schantz Spring connection was closed today when the full interconnection went online.

LCA's customers currently use about 7 million gallons per day today, a number that will increase in the future as new residential and commercial growth that is slated for the region continues. LCA will supplement the water purchased from Allentown with groundwater drawn from a series of wells located throughout the service area.

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Media Notes

- All statements made in this press release may be attributed to Aurel Arndt, LCA's general manager.
- LCA is a nonprofit municipal authority providing water and sewer services to more than 52,000 people in 16 municipalities in Lehigh and Northampton counties. More information about LCA's services is available at www.lehighcountyauthority.org.