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For Immediate Release

LCA Publishes New Tool to Share Info on Lead Pipes

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Searchable public portal shows locations of lead pipes, pipes made of galvanized material, and unknown pipe material where inspections are needed.

Allentown, PA – Lehigh County Authority (LCA) has published a new, searchable map to help customers learn more about the pipe material connecting their residence or business to the public water system. LCA has projects underway to identify customer pipe material and further develop the inventory, which will help plan replacement of lead and galvanized steel pipes with copper. Properties with lead and galvanized steel pipes can expose residents to lead in drinking water, which has serious health effects for humans, especially expectant mothers, infants and young children.

LCA has been working to build its water service line inventory data since 2022, but pipe material information is not available for many homes in the service area. Customer pipe data has not been part of the records managed by LCA in the past because sections of the pipe are privately owned or were installed prior to LCA operation of the system. Inspections of customer-owned service lines are needed to further develop the inventory and help LCA plan projects to remove lead and galvanized pipes. The new map provides the most current information available on customer properties, including how the information was obtained, whether by historical or construction records, or in-person inspection.

“LCA is committed to removing all lead from the water system, but it will be an expensive and long process,” said CEO Liesel Gross. “We are working to develop this inventory so we can apply for grant funding to ease the rate impact of this program. We also need help from our customers to complete pipe inspections and coordinate with us on the service line replacements over the next 10 years.”

About the Inventory Map:

Find the map at www.lehighcountyauthority.org/leadfree. Use the looking glass icon to open the search feature on the top right corner and type in the property address you want to view. Click on the symbol shown to view additional details about the water service line material on the utility side and the customer side. Confirm the property address that shows with the data.

Properties with Lead Pipes or Pipes Made of Galvanized Material:

LCA’s water testing shows no lead in the water that leaves our treatment facilities. Lead can enter the drinking water from lead or galvanized service line pipes that connect homes to the water main in the street. It can also come from lead solder or other plumbing fixtures with lead in the home. LCA uses an optimized corrosion control program in the treatment of drinking water to help prevent lead from entering the water, but it is still a risk if the pipes are made of lead or galvanized material.

If the map shows a property's pipes are lead, galvanized requiring replacement, or unknown material, customers should take steps to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water. The steps can be found on our website, www.lehighcountyauthority.org/leadtips, and include daily flushing to bring in fresh water from the main, regularly cleaning faucet screens or aerators, using a certified filter product, such as a pitcher with filters certified to remove lead, and more.

When customers are eligible for service line replacement, they will receive direct communication from LCA about the project, requirements, and construction schedules. Later this fall, construction will begin to remove 150 lead and galvanized steel pipes at no cost to customers due to a PENNVEST grant and low-interest loan of \$5 million.

LCA Receives \$12 Million in Grants and Low-Interest Loans from PENNVEST:

At a meeting earlier today, the PENNVEST Board of Directors awarded \$12 million to LCA for the next phase of service line replacement work. Funding includes \$6,337,070 in principal forgiveness and a \$5,660,930 30-year, low-interest loan, slated to replace approximately 1,000 customer-owned service lines in Allentown.

LCA continues to pursue additional grant funding and build project plans for the removal of lead and galvanized water service lines. Customers can learn more on our dedicated webpage www.lehighcountyauthority.org/leadfree.

About [Lehigh County Authority](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org): Lehigh County Authority (LCA) is a public water and wastewater utility committed to protecting public health and the environment by providing high-quality, safe, and reliable water and wastewater services, serving a population of approximately 270,000 people. A nonprofit, public agency, LCA was founded in 1966 by the County of Lehigh and is governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the County.

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