



New wells harden town water

Problems build up for many users

By JACK DANYLCHUK
Fitzhugh Staff Writer

Jasper's water isn't quite as hard as nails, it only seems that way.

Since the town tapped into new wells last February, the calcium carbonate content has risen to 180 milligrams per litre from 130.

"That's considered hard – but not exceptional, and it's not a health concern," said Ken Quackenbush, Jasper's manager of environmental services.

"Alberta Environment puts the limit for human consumption at 500 milligrams per litre."

But at 180 milligrams per litre, calcium carbonate increases

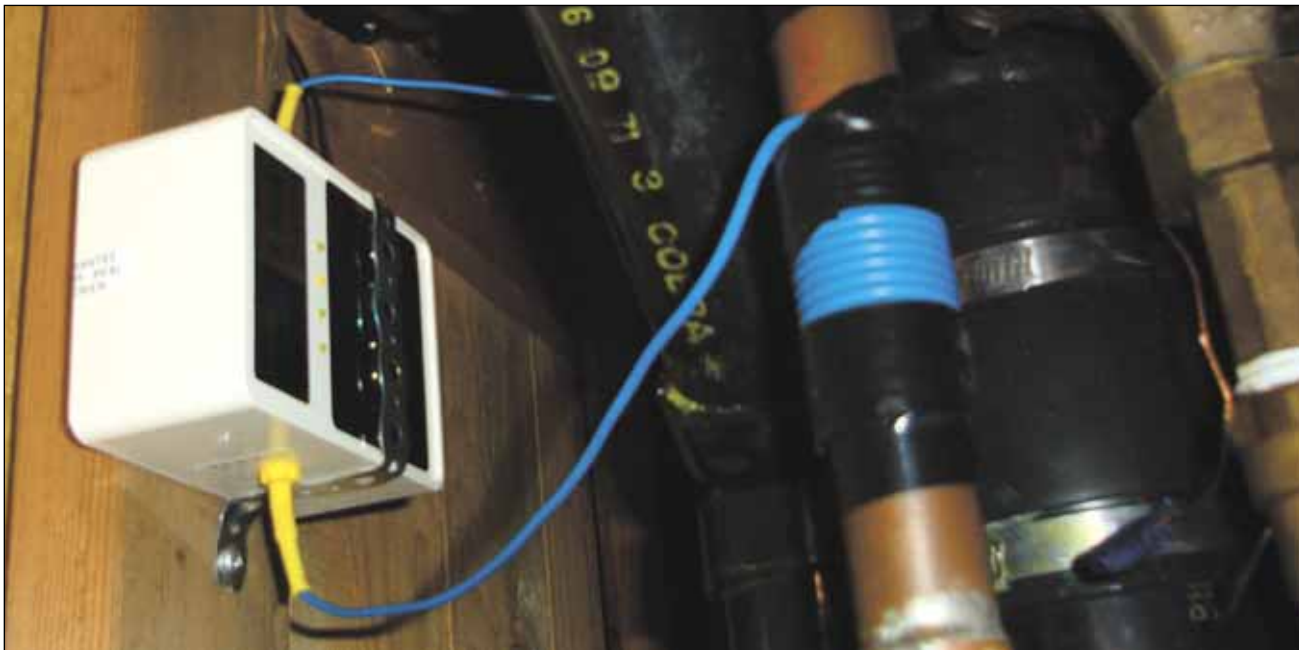
scaling – the build-up of hard deposits – in pipes, especially where a large volume of water is used.

The problem is showing up in the cooling unit for the ice plant at the Jasper Activity Centre, restaurant dish-washing and coffee machines and might cause problems for homeowners with on-demand water heaters.

"At the Activity Centre, it's just a matter of cleaning out the pipes, but we're looking at other solutions," he said.

Installing a water softener is one possibility, "but we're not at the point where we would treat water for the whole system," Quackenbush said.

"We're also looking at ionizing the water so that the calcium carbonate doesn't settle out." 🐾



Engineer John Ogilvy and the little white box that keeps mineral deposits out of his water pipes, bathtub and kitchen appliances. JACK DANYLCHUK PHOTOS

Radio wave water solution

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It's just a small plastic box with two blue wires coiled around the water intake pipes, but for the last 15 years it has solved Jasper's hard water problem for John Ogilvy.

"The problem started when Jasper switched from lake water to well water," Ogilvy said. "The wells were sunk in limestone and that put calcium carbonate in the water."

The newest wells made Jasper's hard water problem worse – but not for Ogilvy. The engineer and former town councillor looked to Britain for the solution - not to a conventional water softener that requires a steady diet of salt to neutralize the minerals that make water hard and clog shower heads.

"London is built on limestone, so the water there is very hard, much harder than here," he said.

British engineers years ago came up with a simple, elegant answer: a system that induces an electric field in the water pipe, temporarily altering the molecular structure of the water and stopping the lime from setting up in a hard, scaly deposit, Ogilvy explained.

Sold under the Water-King trade name, the device removed built-up calcium carbonate deposits from water pipes in Ogilvy's home, erased a bathtub ring and dissolved scales from the water closet of the toilet.

"It cost about \$350, it was effortless to install and costs nothing to operate," he said, "and it doesn't change the taste of the water." 🐾



Regional and related NEWS

Trades training funded

Alberta Education has approved a careers training proposal from Grande Yellowhead Regional Division teachers for full funding of almost \$300,000.

Sharon Styles, supervisor of learning services along with industrial art teachers Ryan Hall of Parkland Composite High School in Edson, Jacob Feniak of Harry Collinge High School in Hinton, Vaughn Olorenshaw of Jasper Jr./Sr. High School, Jeff Burgess of Grande Cache Community High School and Matt Kolotyuk of Grand Trunk Community High School in Evansburg, focused the GYRD proposal on the mechanics, fabrication and construction needs across the five high schools for a project total of \$420,000 which includes divisional funding of \$120,000.

Firefighter training

Firefighters from across Alberta will continue to receive high-quality, certified, local training through the allocation of \$500,000 by Alberta Municipal Affairs for fire services training initiatives.

Under the program, conditional grants are available to firefighters for certified training courses at the province's 24 regional training centres. The program also supports access to new distance learning programs.

Funding for training is available to firefighters from all municipalities, with 80 per cent of enrolment initially reserved for volunteers.

Hantavirus alert

Warmer weather brings spring cleaning and warnings to take precautions against hantavirus, a potentially fatal infection acquired from contact with mouse droppings or urine.

Special precautions should be taken when cleaning outbuildings such as sheds, and unoccupied dwellings such as cabins where evidence of rodent infestation is found. A few simple steps can reduce the risk of infection: ventilate enclosed areas for at least 30 minutes before cleaning; use rubber gloves; do not sweep or use a vacuum cleaner to remove droppings in an enclosed space; spray any dead rodents, droppings and the surrounding area thoroughly with disinfectant or diluted bleach to minimize dust; place rodents directly into a bag and seal it; wipe droppings up and place the cloth in a bag and seal it; dispose of rodents or droppings in garbage cans with tight-fitting lids, or bury them.

The virus can affect anyone who comes into contact with mouse droppings. Individuals who develop difficulty breathing and who have recently been in an area contaminated by rodents should see a doctor immediately.

Workplace safety

There were fewer workplace injuries in Alberta last year, but there were 154 occupational fatalities in 2007, up from 124 in 2006.

The provincial lost-time claim rate for 2007 was 2.12 people per 100 person years, down from 2.35 in 2006. Of the 154 fatalities in 2007, 44 were motor vehicle incidents, 47 were workplace incidents, and 63 were occupational disease deaths.

April 28 is National Day of Mourning, commemorating workers whose lives have been lost or who have been injured in the workplace. May 4-10 is North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. 🐾

- Jack Danylchuk

the fitzhugh

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CORRECTIONS: All stories are checked for accuracy, but a newspaper is a human endeavour and although we strive for perfection, we make no claim to it. Any error will be corrected in the next edition of the paper.

• Jasper town council is comprised of seven members, including the mayor - not eight, as stated in the last issue of the Fitzhugh.

• Cops for Cancer did not raise more than \$5,000 in Jasper in 2007; this is the charity's first year in town.