

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“Clean Water in Abundant Supply” by Dennis Watts, City of Norfolk Water Superintendent



Water is used to sustain life but it's also used for pleasure (think hot tubs) and is necessary for economic development as many businesses need a guaranteed supply of large quantities of water.

Water and especially safe drinking water is often taken for granted. When we turn on a faucet we expect clean water to flow out. Citizens in other countries aren't as fortunate. It is estimated that over 3,000,000 deaths occur yearly due to contaminated drinking water.

Our goal at the Norfolk Water Division is to ensure that safe drinking water is available cost effectively and in an abundant supply every day of the year at every water tap.

The Water Division operates two water treatment plants. The East Water Treatment Plant was built in 1933 and is located at 111 So. 1st Street. The West

Water Treatment Plant was built in 1974 and is located at 300 So. 49th Street. There are five wells at the east water treatment plant and eight wells at the west water treatment plant. These wells are capable of pumping a total of 12.8 million gallon per day of well water. Our highest actual million gallon per day was pumped in 2002 when we pumped 10.95 million gallons in one day. The combined pumping capacity of both treatment plants is 8,900 gpm, and we have a storage capacity at the reservoirs of 4.8 million gallon.

Operators man the water plants 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our service crew consists of four employees that take care of all service calls, locates, and repairs to fire hydrants and distribution system.

The City of Norfolk water distribution system consists of approximately 120 miles of water main. These mains range in size from 4" diameter to 24" in diameter. The oldest water mains in service were installed approximately in the late 1800's. The distribution system also has 1,217 fire hydrants. The fire hydrants are inspected on a biannual basis to ensure they are operable in the event of a fire. The system also has 9,777 water meters in the system. These meters range in size from 5/8" to 6". The meters measure in cubic feet, one cubic foot equals 7.48 gallons. The cost of one gallon of water is less than one tenth of a cent per gallon of water.

To ensure water is safe to drink, City staff obtain 25 water samples per month that are tested at the State Of Nebraska Health Department Lab for coliform. City water is also tested for 83 other primary contaminants. The City water regularly meets or exceeds all EPA standards. A consumers' confidence report is sent to all customers on an annual basis and includes all Norfolk water quality data for the prior year.

Most residents don't even think about their clean water supply and we want to keep it that way. Taking for granted ample clean water shows that the City has provided citizens with many years of ample clean water. Clean water is our number one concern so that Norfolk citizens don't have to be concerned with it at all.