

OurwaterQuality

Big turnout for water-testing event

In late August, we held a well-water clinic at the Pojoaque Wellness Center. The participants were mostly from Nambé, Pojoaque, Jacona and the Pueblos of Nambé, Pojoaque and Tesuque, all of which are located in areas of compromised water quality. We conducted free, on-site testing of water from private, domestic wells and offered testing for uranium at cost.

We had an overwhelming turnout, with some individuals bringing water from multiple wells. We had five staff members and one volunteer working the four-hour event and we could not keep up with the crowd. The participants were patient waiting in line and we answered questions about water quality while they waited. We also had copies of the satellite map showing the concentration of wells that previously exceeded the EPA's recommended limit (maximum contamination level, or MCL) for uranium content in public water supplies.

We provided a handout of the New Mexico Environment Department's guidelines for potential health-risk constituents in drinking water and we provided a list of websites that offer useful information on the potential human-health effects of various constituents in water. That list is available upon request.

Even though we informed participants that the uranium testing could take as long as 90 days, their concerns were so high that we elected to send the samples to a commercial, certified testing lab in Albuquerque. We will have results before the Department of Health's Scientific Laboratory Division (which recently moved locations) would even have accepted samples. The commercial lab will use EPA-approved mass spectroscopy to determine uranium levels, if present.

Participants were asked to fill out data sheets with contact information, the locations of the sample sites, and their major concerns. Without question, the

dominant specific concern was uranium, with arsenic coming in second, followed by nitrate and then fluoride.

The recurring theme was whether or not the water is safe to drink... for themselves, for their pets, and even their horses. Landlords expressed concerns for their tenants. One gentleman wanted to know if the water is safe for his pregnant wife, and a lady asked if it is safe for her grandchildren. People expressed concern about (dissolved) contaminants that they could not see. The contaminants of potential health risk all fit into that category and they are actually concentrated if the water is boiled.

Most participants noted hardness as an issue. Almost all samples had some fluoride, but with only a handful over the Secondary Standard of 2.0 parts per million. Nitrate was fairly common also, with several wells at twice the MCL for drinking water. Naturally-occurring nitrate is relatively insignificant in this



STEPHEN WIMAN

area and high levels of nitrates in local wells are usually a result of contamination by leaking septic tanks.

Arsenic testing is almost completed. By the time this article is published, we should have the uranium test results back from the lab and we will have begun contacting the participating well owners.

Stephen Wiman has a background in earth science (Ph.D. in geology) and is the owner of Good Water Company in Santa Fe. He may be reached at 505-471-9036 and skwiman@goodwatercompany.com.

Socialnetworking

A little bit about online etiquette

There is something amazing about having a live conversation about Santa Fe with someone in Spain or getting a tweet from one of your Twitter followers in LA about our housing market. Today people build their careers on LinkedIn from their smart phones. Many of us watch YouTube more than TV, and others track the Pet Parade or other Santa Fe events on Flickr. The first decade of this century might be remembered as when human communication shifted online globally.

We have zoomed into the future by googling around the globe in a nanosecond, yet we are still adapting to this new way of communicating, learning to network and interact online through social-media pathways such as FaceBook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Scoop, Flickr, and YouTube. We have discovered social networking online is phenomenal for getting your marketing word out, reconnecting with old acquaintances or

lost friends, and meeting new people who share common interests. But it appears a computer screen can erase common sense and any social etiquette skills we learned as humans to interact face-to-face.

When people realize they can meet new people or find customers online, they frequently get so excited they forget common courtesy and common sense. Here are some do's and don'ts to help. Remember the internet's privacy rule: there is no privacy on the net. Everything you say and do online is available to anyone forever. Do not post your financial information or when you are at your bank using an ATM — in other words, do not be stupid. Your future employer or college registrar can search your online behavior.

Be thoughtful about how you friend, follow, fan, and socially connect with others. Communicate more about your interests than your lunch or what you "really" think about your customer, ex-

partner, boss, co-worker, or neighbor. Talk about what is important to you and be positive and helpful to others. Engaging people by responding to their tweets, blog posts, or Facebook wall is how we can connect and build relationships and businesses. Jump in and participate with your experience and knowledge; do not just read streams of conversations and act like a voyeur.

Focus on being "you" in a genuine, courteous, and professional manner. When you are marketing your products, company, or services, look for opportunities to pitch where and when you are relevant and non-intrusive. Do not dump advertisements on someone's Facebook page or blog. Avoid using profanity or bullying people as you will be quickly unfriended and your behavior will follow you online everywhere. If someone says he or she is in a relationship, avoid making comments about dating them.



EMILY MEDVEC

Share your knowledge and open the door for others with your experience instead.

Remember, socially acceptable customs matter online as much as in person. See you online!

Emily Medvec is a Realtor with Santa Fe Realty Partners. Her interests are marketing and how social-networking sites change how we communicate and make decisions in the marketplace. Follow her at www.twitter.com/emilymedvec