

## **City of Rosenberg Focuses on Safe Drinking Water**

*Last week, we published an article that provided background information on a new drinking water protection program. This is the second in a series of articles on local drinking water resources.*

Protecting the water you drink is critical; it is literally the source of all life.

The City of Rosenberg depends upon the Gulf Coast Aquifer as their source of drinking water. It's a safe supply of water. But it's important that we implement a program to assure it stays safe.

That's why our local community has taken a proactive approach in developing and implementing a Source Water Protection Program that fits our local needs. The Source Water Protection Program is voluntary; it is designed to assist communities in protecting their drinking water sources and is linked to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's drinking water protection program.

"Similar programs have been put in place in a number of communities across the state and is already producing results," said Mason Miller of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Source Water Protection Program.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Protection has contracted with several consulting firms (Atkins, LBG-Guyton, and Laura Raun Public Relations) to assist the City of Rosenberg who rely upon the Gulf Coast Aquifer in protecting the local drinking water supply. After meeting with local officials, the consultants began an inventory of

*potential* sources of contamination that exist within the area of influence around the city's public water supply wells.

The city also assisted the consultants in the source water protection inventory. Several areas of *potential* concern have been identified including oil and gas activities, petroleum storage tanks, auto repair facilities, and improperly functioning septic systems.

A good example of a *potential* source of contamination is used motor oil that could be illegally dumped. One gallon of used motor oil can contaminate one million gallons of fresh water.

The inventoried sources were then evaluated on a site-specific basis to determine the threat, if any, to the drinking water supply. The results of the inventory effort were then published in a report written specifically for the City of Rosenberg.

Based upon the recommendations made within the report, the local community can decide what management practices might work best for the local community. Best management practices can range from public education activities to ordinances prohibiting certain activities within source water protection areas.

The program seeks to increase public awareness, inform the public of the steps each citizen can take to protect the integrity of drinking water sources, and elevate citizens' level of participation in the effort.

In the next article, we'll discuss what potential sources of contamination may exist within our communities that could affect our drinking water and what we can do as individual citizens to protect our valuable drinking water supply.