



Steve Mallett

Steve Mallett is a native of Morrilton and attended Arkansas Tech where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering while working part time at City Corporation. He worked for 11 years at City Corporation in the engineering department before leaving in 2002 to work for the City of Hot Springs. In 2012, Steve returned to City Corporation where he now serves as the General Manager and is honored to have the opportunity to serve the River Valley in that capacity.



# Lead no Issue for City Corporation Water Customers

Anyone watching the news lately has likely seen the issues facing Flint, Michigan, with respect to high levels of lead in the drinking water. The levels of the lead found in some households were well in excess of the acceptable levels established by state and federal agencies that regulate the production and delivery of drinking water. Questions have been raised as to whether we in the River Valley are susceptible to a similar occurrence. This article intends to put those concerns to rest and assure the public that the water produced by City Corporation for the city of Russellville and surrounding areas has been and will continue to be of exceptional quality and safe to drink. In fact, City Corporation was recently awarded "Best Tasting Drinking Water" in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Louisiana!

Unlike Flint, Michigan, the overwhelming majority of homes in the city of Russellville where built after the 1930's and do not contain any lead piping. Our distribution system contains a very small amount of lead piping, which is totally comprised of small diameter pieces that connect a portion of our older water main to some private water services. However, there is lead present in our piping system primarily in the form of lead soldered joints in household and main line piping. Lead was used as a method to seal the pipe joints up until the 1970's. It is estimated that



Sampling of Water



Huckleberry Creek Reservoir

almost all of the lead in our distribution system is associated with old galvanized and cast iron pipe, which currently constitutes approximately 30 miles or approximately 14% of our system.

The amount of lead piping in the system is not the only factor that led to the circumstances in Flint, Michigan. The changes in the water quality as a result of switching water sources, and the decision not to add a corrosion inhibitor to the finished water directly led to the leaching of lead out of the piping and into the drinking water. By comparison, City Corporation and our customers are extremely fortunate to have a superior quality raw water source, the Huckleberry Creek Reservoir. The treatment process begins at the reservoir with the addition of treatment chemicals to control taste, odor, and to adjust pH. The raw water is then treated at a modern water treatment facility to remove contaminants and achieve an optimal pH level. Finally, a

corrosion inhibitor is introduced to the water to prevent harmful materials, including lead, from leaching out of both water mains and household plumbing. Corrosion analysis is performed at least bi-annually, which ensures that the water will not degrade plumbing.

On January 4th, 2014, the EPA implemented a no-lead rule. This rule prohibits brass fittings and meters containing any lead from being placed into service in the water system. All of the brass fittings were discarded and all new fittings are lead-free. Also, while the rule allowed for lead containing meters to be left in service until requiring replacement, City Corporation chose to comply immediately through replacement of all the 12,000 water meters in our system with new stainless steel meters. City Corporation also inspects all tanks periodically and flushes the water mains twice a year to ensure that high quality water is delivered to our customers.

In addition to



the implemented measures listed above, the levels of lead in our system are monitored through a lead and copper testing program mandated by the Arkansas Department of Health. The Lead and Copper program is designed to detect elevated levels of lead and/or copper at the customers tap. All water systems are required to initially collect samples for two consecutive six month monitoring periods based on population. Due to the historically very low levels of lead found in our samples, City Corporation is currently on a tri-annual sampling schedule. We last sampled in 2014 which consisted of 30 samples taken at selected homes based on criteria aimed to identify the homes most likely to have lead in their plumbing. All thirty were well below the action level of 0.015 mg/l, with twenty-five being less than the detectable limit of 0.003 mg/l. All of the thirty homeowners

were notified of the results within 30 days regardless of the result. Our next scheduled sampling date is in 2017.

While all of the aforementioned measures have addressed any possible lead contamination issues, City Corporation has an approved capital plan that includes replacement of deteriorating pipes, beginning with the galvanized and cast iron. Funding has been secured for the first phase of this effort, which is part of the overall project estimated at over \$26 million. This effort is predicted to eliminate 99% of the lead in our distribution system based on our records. This will further protect our system and our customers from any lead related issues in the future. The date for completion depends on the timing and amount of future funding, but our goal is to have it accomplished within the next

ten to fifteen years.

City Corporation values and appreciate the trust that the City of Russellville and our customers throughout the River Valley place in us and we are dedicated, as always, to provide the safest, highest quality drinking water to our customers.

For more information on this and many other related topics, please visit our website at [www.citycorporation.com](http://www.citycorporation.com).