

# Radium Treatment Plan Started For Two Wells

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MANCHESTER – The township has awarded a 3-year contract of \$370,560 to Water Treatment Technology, based in Westminster, Colorado, for radium removal at the Holly Oaks facility.

Those wells on the township's eastern side were shut down last summer. Well 8 had elevated levels of radium, and 7, near Well 8, was shut down after the most recent round of state testing.

The Holly Oaks Treatment Facility was built back in the 1960s.

“It was taken off line last year after slightly elevated radium levels. The well could have continued to be kept in operation for up to a year without treatment, but the township chose to follow the most conservative path and take it offline until permanent treatment could be put in place,” Director of Public Works Al Yodakis said. “The contamination is a naturally occurring element which is somewhat common for shallower wells in Ocean County. Several surrounding towns are also using the same or similar treatment.”

Radium is a naturally occurring radioactive metal found in trace amounts in rocks, soil and groundwater. Guidelines allow for less than 5 pCi/L.

Well 8 has tested within state limits for the last decade. However, the state testing July 10, 2018, found that Well 8’s rolling annual average exceeded what the state allows. The township immediately closed both wells.

Yodakis further explained. “We can’t predict the radon levels but looking at the results from other towns in Ocean County, the levels tend to stay where they are once elevated. The treatment will stay in place if the facility continues to operate. We’re going for three years as we are exploring our options. We are looking at possibly drilling a new well and with interconnects to purchase water from surrounding systems. We’re taking a look at what makes the most financial sense for the township.

“It will be back online once the treatment system is installed. We are hoping the middle of May. It has not affected the residents however we need the facility for our busy usage season when people are irrigating their lawns,” Yodakis said.

“Please rest assured, our drinking water is safe and has been safe. Certainly, if there was an immediate concern, the state would not allow the township to continue to use the well for one year while we fix the issue,” Mayor Kenneth Palmer said when it was announced the wells were closed. “Based on scientific studies, one person out of 10,000 would suffer health risks if they consumed

two liters of water per day for a period 70 years with levels in excess of 5 PCI/L.”

Wells 7 and 8 are used primarily during the township's peak summer irrigation season.

The eastern area has been serviced by six wells for the last decade: wells 10, 11 and 12, which are deep wells that draw water from the Raritan Aquifer. These wells are located at the township's water facility on Route 571 and supply the majority of year-round water.

Wells 4, 7, and 8 are shallow wells that draw water from the Cohansey Aquifer. Well 4 is on Route 70 near Leisure Knoll, and wells 7 and 8 are located adjacent to each other between Holly Oaks and Renaissance.

Water Treatment Technology's process "is the most effective and environmentally responsible choice you can make for removing radium from drinking water and the community. That's because after removing the radium, we dispose of it in a licensed facility. With other treatment processes, radium removed from water may be sent to the wastewater treatment plant and can end up back in the local environment," a company spokesman said.