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## LOCAL COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATE IN PILOT PROJECT TO REMOVE ARSENIC FROM THEIR DRINKING WATER

Regina, SK – A pilot project to evaluate the potential of an innovative method for removing arsenic from municipal drinking water supplies has recently begun in Regina and two small communities in the surrounding area. The endeavor is a collaborative effort between a local water treatment company, Mainstream Water Solutions Inc., and the University of Regina with the assistance of Communities of Tomorrow and the National Research Council of Canada.

The project is in response to a change in the Saskatchewan Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality which will reduce the maximum allowable concentration (MAC) for arsenic in drinking water from 25 parts per billion (ppb) to 10 ppb.

Two local communities, the Resort Village of Kannata Valley and the Village of Buena Vista, have agreed to allow their water, exceeding the new MAC for arsenic, to be used for testing during the project. Kannata Valley and Buena Vista are two small communities of at least twenty in the province that have until 2010 to comply with the new regulation.

The main objective of the project is to develop a technology for arsenic removal that is cost effective, simple and reliable and, therefore, suitable for small utilities. “The proposed technology is based on slow sand filtration,” states Ann Gottinger, lead researcher. “Slow sand filtration has proven effective at arsenic removal, however, in source waters that are low in naturally occurring iron, such as that of Kannata Valley, many treatment systems including slow sand filtration will experience treatment difficulties. Our idea is to examine the addition of a specialized component to the Mainstream system that will use iron filings to provide the iron that will enhance arsenic removal,” says Gottinger. “In addition to being simple and low cost,” Gottinger explains, “the proposed technology will be environmentally-friendly as no chemicals will be used.”

“The Resort Village of Kannata Valley is very pleased to participate in the arsenic removal study,” states Bob Gordon, the community’s mayor. “Kannata Valley’s council is working hard to find the most ‘green’ water treatment system to improve our water system to meet the 2010 Canadian water guidelines and beyond. This is important as our water system supplies two other communities as well.” Gordon continues, “We feel that, should this study prove successful, not only will it help our water system but it may help others in Saskatchewan and around the world.”

Larry Hall, Mayor of Buena Vista, says, “Our community has good water, however, our arsenic levels are slightly higher than the new standard. We are looking for a reliable and affordable system and are hoping that through these project trials we can take a step forward now to solving a future water quality issue.”

The project, already underway with laboratory studies, will continue into 2008 when field testing will commence at Kannata Valley and Buena Vista.

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