

Treatment plant boost for Dunrea

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Don Hamilton of B&D Well Doctors helped to unveil a new biofiltration water treatment system that will treat the town water in Dunrea on Wednesday morning. (Bruce Bumstead)

After nearly a decade of sipping water that was more coffee-coloured than crystal clear, residents in Dunrea are the proud owners of a new state-of-the-art water treatment plant.

The system uses biofiltration instead of chemicals to combat the iron and magnesium-laden water, and is touted for its green technology.

Although dozens of towns and municipalities in Saskatchewan boast the system, the Dunrea plant is the first of its kind to be used by a town in Manitoba.

“It was more the colour of coffee or iced tea and it stained toilet bowls and bathtubs,” RM of Riverside Coun. Dan Labossiere told the Sun.

“People started buying their water and taking laundry to Ninette and Killarney. The only thing the water was used for was bathing, but even then you didn’t feel clean.”

The community’s previous iron filtration system quit working in 1999 and was never replaced.

Instead, the community began to seek alternatives.

“We discovered this biofiltration system and talked with operators and residents in towns in Saskatchewan that use the system,” Labossiere said. “Their feedback was excellent and it was going to cost us about half ... so that was good motivation for us.”

The municipality was snubbed by federal infrastructure funding, so the town and Manitoba Water Services Board will share the \$130,000 bill.

Brandon’s B & D Well Doctors install and service the system in communities that service about 1,200 people, but co-owner Don Hamilton says that doesn’t mean it cannot be installed in larger communities.

To date, St. Lazare, Langruth, Clayfield and Manitou have submitted letters of intent to B & D pending government funding.

Shoal Lake is also toying with the idea, and B & D has been in the community testing the waters directly out of the lake.

“It’s turning into the water system of choice,” Hamilton said. “There are plants up and running all across Europe, B.C., Saskatchewan and Alberta.”

The system’s environmentally friendly and low-maintenance approach is drawing a lot of attention.

“Only about five to six per cent is wastewater when backwashing, compared to about 35 per cent in other systems,” Hamilton said.

That translates to about 1/20 of the amount of water that went to waste in Dunrea with its previous iron-filtration system.

“We used to backwash 400 gallons every two days, but now it’s at 300 gallons once a week,” Labossiere said.

The new plant has been operational since July 9, and celebrated its official ribbon-cutting yesterday.