

New water system on-line in Fleming

BY CHRIS ISTACE

It appears the installation of a new water treatment system in Fleming may lead to an end to a boil-water order that has been in place for the past 15 months.

Regina-based Mainstream Water Solutions installed a biofiltration treatment system in early July to get control of high turbidity readings in the town's supply. The \$214,000 system cost the town \$150,000, with federal and provincial grants covering the balance.

Turbidity—or the amount of sedimentary particles in the water—allows bacteria to hide where chlorine can't reach it. If the amount of chlorine is increased to kill the hidden bacteria, the water becomes undrinkable because of increased trihalomethanes, a poisonous chemical compound that results from a reaction between chlorine or bromine and organic matter in the water.

While turbidity readings of less than one are acceptable, three consecutive days of readings showing a turbidity of three or more forces a boil water order.

Town foreman Rick Hamm says the system was registering turbidity readings of 6.5 to 14.

"It peaked on one day last year at 20," he said while giving a tour of the new water treatment plant last Tuesday. "If it hits 20, you don't need three days. The boil water order just goes on."

Brad McGonial, the water treatment system operator from 1991 to January of this year, said the turbidity in Fleming's water appears to have been caused by a sudden influx of manganese.

"We're guessing that it could have been caused by a mineral spring opening in the dugout,"

Town's boil-water order may be near an end

said McGonial, who adds the water has been clean since the installation of the new treatment system.

"I ran it for 17 years and this is the best water we've ever had," he said.

The new filtration system handles about 10,000 gallons of water per day. It includes nine filtration tanks for ozonation, sand filtration and carbon filtration. Four storage tanks hold about 10,000 gallons of water once it has gone through the filtration process.

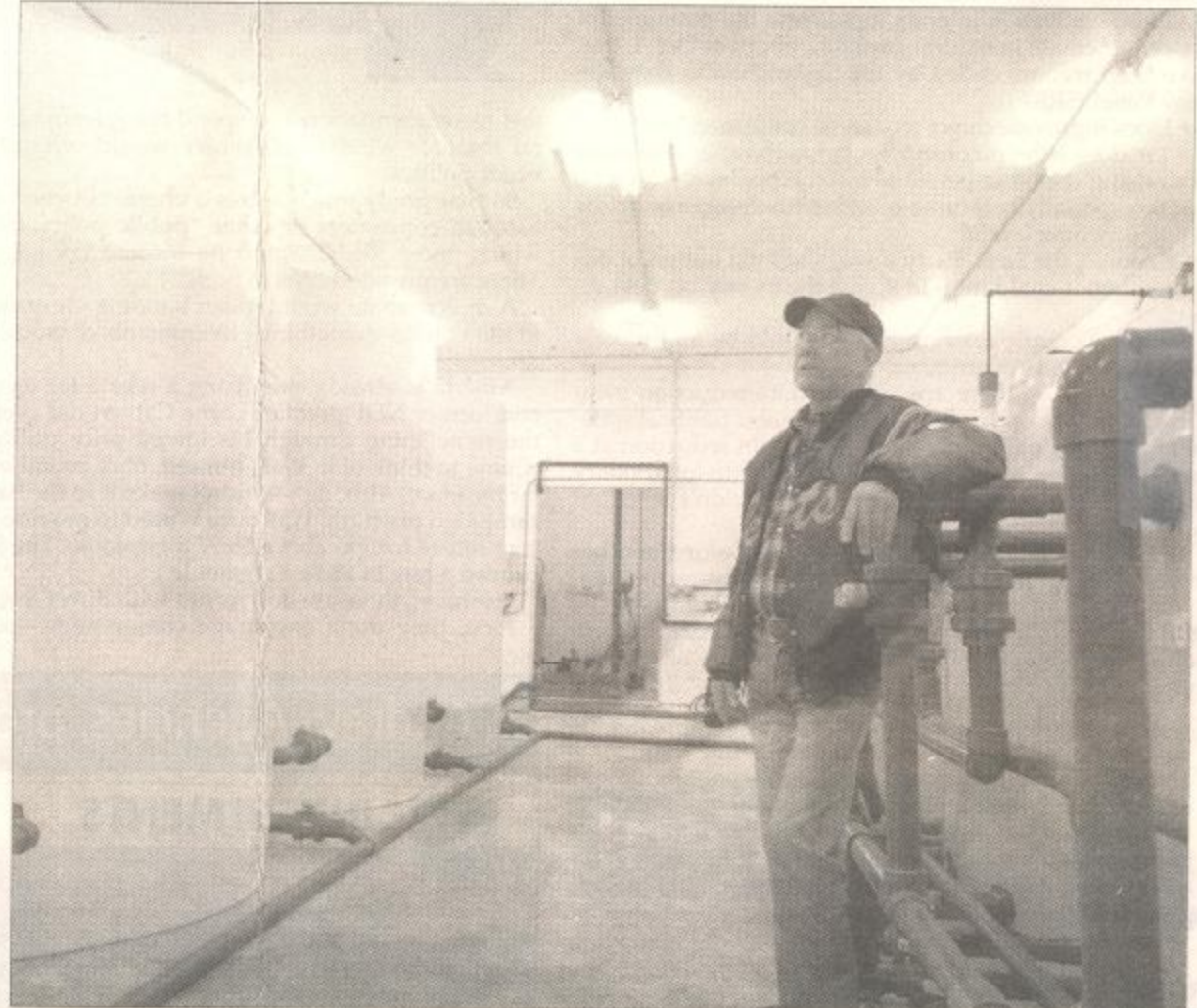
Hamm said the new system allows them to use about one-third less chlorine, while other chemicals required in the old treatment system have been discarded with the new system.

"Now we're getting a turbidity reading of 0.4 to 0.5 and it's below one, where it has to be," said Hamm.

If these readings continue through the next six weeks, Hamm expects the boil water order to be removed in mid-October.

The project isn't totally complete. New pressure tanks will replace two obsolete tanks currently providing water pressure to Fleming hook-ups.

Hamm said the new system, which can provide water for up to 50 hook-ups, is more than capable of sustaining the 38 hook-ups currently on line. Regardless, should the town grow drastically in the coming years, Hamm added that the system's set-up—which includes a new building to house the plant—is capable of expanding to provide enough ca-



Chris Istace photo

Fleming town foreman Rick Hamm says the community's new water filtration system has stopped a turbidity problem that caused a boil-water order 15 months ago.

capacity to sustain 75 hook-ups.

Reviews of the new water being provided by the town's system have been good. In fact,

many residents are finding their water is softer despite the lack of a softening system in the plant.

"The water is so pure that when

they are washing their clothes or dishes, they are using half the amount of detergent they used to," said Hamm.