

In February 2013, the Town of Pictou published information in the Advocate and released a pamphlet with water bills explaining the recurring water discoloration events. The complete article is available on the Town's website:

[www.townofpictou.ca/water\\_utility](http://www.townofpictou.ca/water_utility)

As a follow-up this release is intended to provide water customers:

- An update on equipment installation;
- An outline of projects for this year; and
- Details on an upcoming water rate hearing.

PHASE 1—MEETING PROVINCIAL WATER REGULATIONS

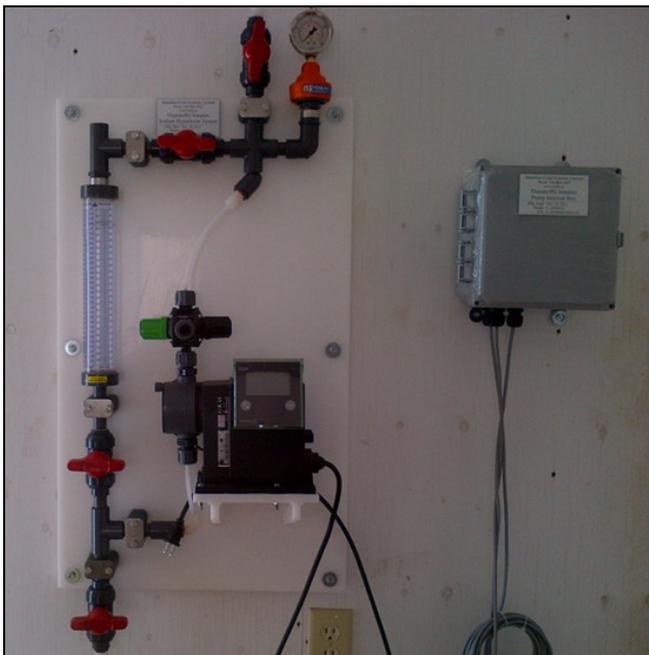
The main priority is to ensure the Town continues to deliver safe drinking water. This involves a number infrastructure upgrades:

- The installation to two new wells (completed);
- The installation of a new transmission line within the Caribou Wellfield (completed); and
- The purchase and installation of new disinfection and automatic monitoring equipment (in progress).

The estimated cost of Phase 1 projects is \$3.34 million.

To date the Town has undertaken approximately \$1.10 million of these upgrades. An additional \$1.87 million worth of Phase 1 projects will be completed in 2013. The balance, approximately \$370,000 will be carried out between 2014-2017.

It is important to note that the \$3.34 million in Phase 1 infrastructure upgrades relates to safe drinking water compliance only. The upgrades will not eliminate discoloured water but will reduce manganese levels.



New Chlorine Analyzers installed at all Pictou Wells

PHASE 2 – CENTRAL TREATMENT PLANT

We emphasize to all residents that discoloured water is caused by the interaction of chlorine and the naturally present high levels of manganese. To reduce discoloration the construction of a Central Treatment Plant is required. The estimated cost is \$4.08 million.

In 2013 the Town will be piloting a number of filtration technologies under the supervision of a consulting engineer who specializes in water treatment. These full scale tests will determine which technology will most effectively and cost efficiently remove the manganese prior to chlorination.



New Ultra-Violet Disinfection Equipment installed at Pictou Wells

AFFORDABILITY OF PHASE 1 AND 2 UPGRADES

Prior funding from the Province and Federal Government has been obtained for :

- New transmission line installed in the Caribou Wellfield;
- Purchase of monitoring and disinfection equipment; and
- Supply and installation of water meters.

The Town has approximately 1,300 customers. Financing \$7.43 million (Phase 1 + Phase 2) in upgrade costs is not financially possible for our population without assistance from the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Under the current year Provincial budget, the Town has applied for cost sharing from Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. Both Provincial and Federal governments have indicated a new large scale infrastructure program will be forthcoming. As soon as applications are available, the Town will be applying for cost-sharing under the new program.

## REGULATION / OPERATION OF WATER UTILITIES

All public water utilities in Nova Scotia are regulated by the Province through Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) and the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB). As an example, NSE regulates the amount of water that can be sustainably pumped from our thirteen wells. Water extraction is a major concern for the Town. At times it is pumped close to the maximum amount allowed by NSE.

To address the concern over water usage, the Town is proceeding with a meter installation program this summer. Meters have been proven to decrease residential consumption considerably and alert the Utility of leaks.

The NSUARB set rates and approves methods of billing for Utilities. The Town will be asking the NSUARB, during the June 19<sup>th</sup> hearing in Pictou, to allow for the continuation of flat residential billing until water discolouration has been successfully addressed.



Flow Meters installed at Pictou Wells

## SUMMARY

Upgrades completed by the Town:

- Installed a new transmission line connecting nine wells;
- Installed two new wells, allowing other wells high in manganese, to be taken out of service or have pumping levels reduced;
- Purchased municipal grade ultraviolet disinfection and automatic monitoring equipment;
- Alteration of the outlet pipe in the bottom of the water tower in attempt to limit discolouration events. These events occur when sediment in the bottom of the tower is agitated during changes in water pressure, i.e., a break in the distribution system resulting a rapid drop of water within the tower;
- Replacement of water lines on St. Andrews, Irving, Sinclair and Palmerston Streets;
- Looping of Alfred and Elliott Streets through the construction of Spruce Street (to improve water flow and chlorine residuals in that area of town);
- A pre-design engineering report for technical specifications and cost estimates for a centralized treatment plant.

**FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON WATER UPGRADES VISIT THE TOWN WEBSITE AT:  
[WWW.TOWNOFPICTOU.CA/WATER\\_UTILITY](http://WWW.TOWNOFPICTOU.CA/WATER_UTILITY)**

## INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS FOR 2013

- Designs and tender specifications have been prepared for the installation of new distribution piping within two streets;
- The installation of new disinfection and monitoring equipment (completion by mid-August);
- Interior and exterior upgrades of the water tower;
- Installation of water meters (to ensure the Town does not exceed withdrawal amount permitted by NSE); and
- Piloting of central filtration technologies.

## COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

As your Mayor and Council, we share your frustration and dismay about the appearance and quality of our drinking water. Within the Town's four year work plan, we have ranked improving water quality as our #1 priority.

We are similarly concerned about the affordability of system upgrades. As detailed above, compliance upgrades and water discolouration events are inter-related. To ensure the water is disinfected in accordance with Provincial regulation, additional chlorine has been required in recent years. Additional chlorine interacts with the manganese dropping the metal out of solution. When in solid form, it builds up within the tower and water lines, eventually releasing and passing through-out the system as discoloured water. While we fully realize the importance of disinfected water, we also know that 1,300 customers, in the absence of federal and provincial cost sharing, cannot pay for the costs required to address the removal of manganese. As customers and daily users we cannot continue to experience ongoing water discolouration events. It is just not acceptable.

We would like your help in communicating our water problems and dire need of cost sharing to federal and provincial politicians. Please feel free to contact any of us with your concerns or questions.

For more information on our water problems, engineering advice, and, specific details on the funding challenges we have scheduled a public meeting. The meeting will be convened:

**Wednesday, May 22, 2013 - 7:00 pm  
Pictou Academy Auditorium, 88 Patterson Street  
Pictou, Nova Scotia**

We hope to see you at the meeting.