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GROUNDWATER PROTECTION PROGRAM MARKS 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Abundant resources remain in Richfield water reserves

Richfield, WI – Heavy pumping, constructing excessive impervious surfaces, and rapid, unchecked development are all elements that if not properly monitored can cause the depletion of a municipality's precious groundwater supply. In light of that fact, in 2004 Richfield took a proactive stance on this issue passing the State's first "Groundwater Protection Ordinance" to safeguard all its residents who rely solely on groundwater. As a result of that ordinance and rigorous water monitoring efforts, the Village is proud to announce that ten (10) years later, even with increased development, average groundwater levels have risen nearly 3 feet overall since 2004.

John Jeffords, current Village President and Town Board member in 2005 when the Groundwater Protection Ordinance was first approved, said, "[O]ur job as representatives of the community is, and always will be, to ensure that residents continue to have access to the natural resources they need. The creation of this ordinance took leadership by the then Town Board to be the first municipality in the State to monitor developments and its effects on water drawdown at the property boundary line and showed excellent foresight for the Village's planned future on private well and septic systems." In December, the Village Board voted unanimously to approve the continued groundwater monitoring program for 2014, making this the 10th consecutive year the Board has continued to uphold its conservative resource management philosophy.

As Mequon found out, rapid and unmonitored growth caused water levels in the dolomite part of the aquifer to drop as much as 150' from 1970 to 2000. "In stark contrast, our monitoring shows that the amount of our water supply remains excellent, water levels having risen almost 3 feet in a decade" said Dr. Douglas Cherkauer, the longtime consultant behind Richfield's groundwater monitoring program. Along with measuring water levels at various wells and streams throughout the Village, Dr. Cherkauer collects samples for bacterial analysis, reviews groundwater studies, and maintains and reports on data collected to Village representatives and the public on an annual basis.

"Dr. Cherkauer has done an excellent job of keeping residents and the Board up-to-date with the current state of our water levels. Water supply continues to be a growing concern for citizens throughout the country, but here in Richfield we want to ensure we're doing everything we can to maintain our private well and septic systems for generations to come" remarked Trustee Bill Collins.

Since 2003, the water levels of over 40 private wells spaced geographically throughout the Village have been personally monitored every other month by Dr. Cherkauer. The Village continues to maintain ample levels of water resources as a result, even with large commercial developments like Cabelas', Endeavor Business Park, and various local strip malls which operate without municipal sewer and water services.