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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2025

Shreveport Water Recap: Key Water Quality Challenges of the Past Year

Over the past year, the City of Shreveport's Department of Water and Sewerage has faced two significant challenges that impacted our community's water quality: elevated manganese levels during the summer of 2024 and an unexpected algal bloom in the winter of 2024. We want to acknowledge the frustration these events caused for our residents and provide transparency about what happened and what we're doing to prevent similar issues moving forward.

In the summer of 2024, residents reported water discoloration, which was ultimately traced to a spike in naturally occurring manganese. While manganese is not a health hazard at the levels detected, it caused visible changes in water color and raised understandable concerns about water safety. The source of the manganese was traced to a shift in water chemistry influenced by high temperatures and reservoir conditions.

Then, during the warmer temperatures in the winter months, an algal bloom led to a noticeable earthy taste and odor in the drinking water. Though the water remained safe to consume, the change in taste and smell understandably led to customer complaints and concerns.

In response to these events, the Department has implemented several key improvements to strengthen our treatment systems and improve water quality moving forward:

- We replaced a faulty chlorine dioxide generator and rehabbed a second generator to improve oxidation at the plant.
- We replaced the intake air compressor, which plays a vital role in helping oxidize metals and organics in the treatment process.
- Staff quickly rehabbed the old carbon feed system—carbon is the most effective way to absorb and remove the effects of excess Geosmin (the compound responsible for the earthy taste and odor). We are currently in the process of upgrading and replacing this carbon feed equipment.
- We've enhanced our manganese monitoring program to better understand the different forms of manganese present in the raw water and adapt our treatment process accordingly—using the most effective techniques for each form.

“We are committed to learning from these challenges and improving our systems to ensure high-quality drinking water for every resident,” said Interim Water and Sewerage Director Brandon Snead. “We’ve taken these events seriously, and our team has worked diligently to identify the causes, engage outside experts, and implement changes that will make a difference. We’re not just focused on solving problems—we’re working to prevent them.”

The Department of Water and Sewerage is committed to maintaining transparent communication with residents and continuing to invest in improvements that support safe, reliable water service for Shreveport.

For more information, visit our website www.shreveportwater.gov/.

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