

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Town of Bernalillo, Office of Mayor Jack Torres

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Town of Bernalillo successful in meeting the drinking water standard for arsenic.

On June 8, 2011, the New Mexico Environment Department Drinking Water Bureau notified the Town of compliance with the running annual average (RRA) for levels of arsenic in the drinking water. The Town has now met the standard for four consecutive quarters of sampling with consistent results of less than the minimum standard of 10ppb (0.010mg/L). "Although anticipated, this news is most welcome", said Mayor Jack Torres. "The Town has concentrated much effort in the last year on correcting a problem that has plagued our community for far too long", he added. The most recent water sample collected by the Drinking Water Bureau on May 24, 2010 puts the RRA at .008275mg/L. All reported samples were collected from the primary drinking water well (#4) which serves the entire community.

As a result, the Town is no longer required to make public notification of an exceedance of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for arsenic. Quarterly sampling by the Drinking Water Bureau will continue for at least two consecutive quarters, and if the results of this sampling remain below the MCL, sampling will be reduced to triennial monitoring.

The Town had been non-compliant with the standard since the first quarter of 2009. On March 29, 2010 the Town submitted a Corrective Action Plan to the Drinking Water Bureau to augment and/or replace the electro-flocculation system (aluminum coagulant) with a ferric chloride treatment method. The Corrective Action Plan was approved and implemented on April 15, 2010. By April 17, 2010, tested arsenic concentrations were reduced from 12.4 ppb to 4.2 in the treated flow. On April 30, 2010, the electro-flocculation system was completely turned off. Sampling on May 24, 2010, using only ferric chloride for treatment, measured a consistent concentration of 1.3 and 2.1 ppb for arsenic with an average of 1.7ppb.

Ferric chloride treatment and testing through October, 2010 yielded consistent successful results, and in November, 2010, the Town submitted and received approval of an application to the Drinking Water Bureau for a permanent modification to the drinking water system for the use of ferric chloride. The Town is currently in the engineering design phase for a permanent ferric chloride treatment system. The project is expected to bid for construction in July of this year. The Town will continue to use the temporary ferric chloride treatment system through final construction.