

TOWN OF WINNSBORO

207 North Congress Street • P.O. Box 209 • Winnsboro, S.C. 29180

Telephone: (803) 635-4041 • Fax No: (803) 635-3697 **Update on Taste and Odor Issue**

The Town of Winnsboro's Water Department continues its efforts to address the taste and odor issues that are affecting customers served by its Water Plant. The musty taste and odor is harmless. It is caused by geosmin, which is produced from algae in water and is naturally occurring in the environment. It is what gives dirt and certain vegetables like beets their odor.

The Town of Winnsboro's Water Treatment Plant gets its raw water from the Broad River, which is experiencing unprecedented levels of geosmin. Although we cannot pinpoint the exact reason for this, we do know that algae, which produces geosmin, thrives in hot temperatures, low water levels, and still or slow-moving water. We have experienced all three in recent months on the Broad River above our plant intake.

The Town of Winnsboro is not alone. Other municipalities that draw water from the Broad have seen similar issues. We sample source water for geosmin routinely and usually it is well under 5-parts per trillion. However, over the last two months, it has spiked dramatically. It is a rarity that we see levels approaching 25 parts per trillion in water from the Broad River; however, the current levels are much higher.

While the taste and odor from geosmin is harmless, we understand it is a nuisance for our customers and we are doing everything we can to eliminate it. We continue to add activated carbon, which acts like a sponge, in the treatment process. We are also cleaning the elevated storage tanks and flushing our water distribution system. In addition, we have taken steps to add a chemical feed on the source water supply line that will allow us to directly apply copper sulfate in order to kill the algae. Copper sulfate is a chemical commonly used for this purpose, and our plans have been reviewed and approved by SCDHEC prior to implementation. We have been in constant communication and consultation with SCDHEC concerning this situation. We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your patience as we work to resolve the issue.