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Dear Property Owner,

Since their discovery in 2020, PFAS have been found in much of Pellston's drinking water. This discovery was originally found by Pellston High School students who sampled multiple residences in the area with Freshwater Future PFAS sampling kits. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) verified the test accuracy and then performed a Village wide analysis.

The Village of Pellston has begun exploring options for a long-term drinking water solution through a grant. This study has revealed that creating a municipal water system is overwhelmingly the best option for Pellston residents. A municipal system, sourced from a water source not contaminated by PFAS, would provide clean, safe drinking water without the need for filtration, allowing for easy monitoring of quality and safety. It is the only viable long-term solution for our drinking water issues.

Establishing a municipal water system is not feasible without significant financial assistance from the State of Michigan, as the costs are prohibitively high. Through years of effort, the Village of Pellston is currently positioned to secure significant financial assistance from the State of Michigan, which will pay for the municipal water system and hookups for residents. The success of the municipal water system and the securing of State funding depend on the majority of Pellston residents connecting to it. This majority connection will be the only opportunity for the Village to secure significant principal forgiveness and access grant funds. The Village, along with its partners at EGLE, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW), Emmet County, and the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians have worked hard to make this project possible. Now, we need your engagement and awareness of the benefits of connecting to a municipal water system.

Please join us for one of the following public outreach sessions:

- October 27th, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM at Pellston High School Auditorium***
- November 3rd, 10 AM - 12 PM and 6 PM - 8 PM at the Pellston Village Hall***
- November 4th, 6 PM - 8 PM at the Pellston Village Hall***



In the coming weeks, you will receive more information about the process, procedures, and how you can support clean water for the Village of Pellston. One of these mailers will include a survey that will require your attention and response soon. Meantime, please review the attached document within this mailer and follow the QR code or link to the Village's website for more information.

Sincerely, The Pellston Village Council

ATTENTION PELLSTON

Municipal Water System Need to Know Information

Why are polyfluoroalkyls (PFAS) in our drinking water?

During the 90s and into the 2000s, Pellston Regional Airport used and was required to train with PFAS-containing firefighting foam. PFAS chemicals from the foam seeped into the ground and contaminated the groundwater, Pellston's drinking water source. Today, this contamination has spread to the south into the Village of Pellston.

Are PFAS present in the drinking water a concern?

Yes. PFAS are "forever chemicals" because they do not break down and are extremely difficult to remove from groundwater. Studies have shown that exposure to PFAS can cause:

- High blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women
- Thyroid disease
- Reduced fertility
- Liver damage
- Higher cholesterol, especially total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol
- Small decreases in infant birth weight
- Decreased immune system response to vaccines in children
- Development of certain types of cancer, in particular kidney and testicular cancers

For more information on health issues, see the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services PFAS Exposure and Your Health fact sheet, found on the Village of Pellston's website, located under the PFAS Information & Update header (www.pellstonmi.com/what-are-pfas-1).

What are we currently doing?

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and Emmet County (the owner of the airport) have been working together to determine the extent of PFAS contamination in Pellston. This work has involved testing homes, monitoring wells, soil, and the water in the Maple River. We now have a better understanding of the extent of the PFAS problem.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has provided residents with point-of-use filters for PFAS impacts. MDHHS has also provided retesting of private wells. Results indicate that PFAS levels are not decreasing in the area. Emmet County continues to provide bottled water at the Pellston fire station.

Remediation started at the airport, with a carbon injection in 2024 with good results. A fire truck cleanout and hot spot soil removal is planned for next year, using grant funds provided by the EGLE. Remediation helps prevent groundwater PFAS contamination from worsening, but PFAS impacts will likely remain in Pellston for our lifetimes due to the difficulty of completely removing these "forever chemicals".

Municipal Water System Need to Know Information

What are we currently doing? Cont'd

The Village received a grant from EGLE to explore potential options for the future of its drinking water. The Village's engineer, OHM Advisors, has determined that the best available long-term solution for drinking water is the creation of a municipal water system. They have tested three locations for a community well and estimated the cost to be \$44 million which will include a community well system (multiple wells), iron removal, disinfectant, distribution system and elevated storage tank.

Currently the Village of Pellston has secured \$32.2 million through EGLE in principle forgiveness. Also, EGLE is assisting Pellston with funding applications to find/secure the remaining balance of \$11.8 million in grant dollars with the goal of having a zero-debt construction to minimize costs to homeowners.

Why a Municipal Water System?

A municipal system provides clean, safe, drinking water without filtration that can be monitored easily for quality and safety. It is the only long-term solution for drinking water issues for Pellston. The water source is outside of the PFAS contamination area. Without connecting to the municipal water system, or using a whole house filtration system, you would need to use point of use filters to remove PFAS from your drinking and cooking water.

- A municipal water system is preferred over whole house filtration for several reasons:
 - Whole-house systems may not remove all PFAS and point of use filters will continue to be recommended for your drinking and cooking water.
 - Whole house filters are expensive, and many households do not have space for them.
 - Changing out just one whole house canister can cost over \$500.
 - Whole house filtration requires extensive testing to ensure they are working, which means contractors will need to access your home regularly.
 - Whole house filtration systems have a lifespan of 15 years.
 - Your tap will have more consistent optimal water pressure
 - Well pumps rely on electricity to operate. If connected to the municipal water system during a power outage, you will still have access to water.
- Preferred over deeper wells
 - PFAS can be found in deep wells as there is no confining layer in the aquifer within the Pellston region
 - There is no guarantee of PFAS-free water with a deeper well
 - Deeper wells may draw in PFAS from shallower water
 - High iron levels in deeper wells can look, smell or taste undesirable.
- Property values
 - A home with PFAS contaminated water may be more difficult to sell
 - Homeowners are required to disclose the knowledge of drinking water contamination at the property's point of sale, potentially turning away buyers
 - Fire hydrants may mean lower insurance rates and better fire response

Municipal Water System Need to Know Information

Why a Municipal Water System? Cont'd

- Homeowner apprehension and/or responsibility reduced
 - Currently homeowners are concerned about PFAS in their daily water use such as watering vegetation, bathing etc. A community water system will resolve this issue.
 - The need to use point of use filters will no longer be needed and the homeowner will no longer need to keep up with the replacement schedule or the logistics behind filter replacement.

Also, in the event of a power outage, you will still have water when connected to the municipal water system because a pump relies on electricity to operate.

Will I have to pay a bill if I connect to the Municipal Water System?

Yes, you will have to pay a bill if you connect.

Pellston has completed a water rate study that was based on the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) estimate provided by an operator firm (Mead & Hunt) that performs this service for similar sized communities in our area.

The monthly water bill estimate below is only an estimate using the best information available currently. The Village is not under contract with a water system operator and the numbers provided below may decrease or increase.

A monthly bill estimate is heavily dependent on the number of property owners that connect. The following table represents an estimate using 100% connection rate along with 51% connection rate to depict the value of having a higher connection rate.

Percent of property owners' connecting to system	Estimated monthly bill for drinking water
100%	\$70
51%	\$98

The monthly water bill estimates above assumed that the property owner's usage is approximately 4,000 gallons per month. Actual bill will be based on actual volume of water used (metered).

What if you can't afford a water bill?

If you cannot afford the cost of the clean water from the Village of Pellston, there are community resources that may be able to help. Below is a list of agencies that may be able to provide some assistance:

- MiBridges & MDHHS Assistance: 231-348-1600
- MI Dept of Health and Human Services Energy Assistance Hotline: 800-292-5650
- Community Connections: 800-432-4121
- NMCAA: (231) 947-3780
 - Email HEESIntake@NMCAA.net
- Salvation Army Petoskey: (231) 347-3531
- Veterans Affairs Emmet County: 231-348-1780

Municipal Water System Need to Know Information

What if you can't afford a water bill? Cont'd

- Michigan Veterans Trust Fund: 989-275-6047
- Friendship Centers of Emmet County: 231-347-3211
- True North Community Services (Heat & Energy Assistance Program): 231-924-0641
- 2024 NW MI Community Resource Guide

What else should I consider when deciding to keep my well or connecting to municipal water?

- Electricity savings: When connected to the municipal water system, you should see a reduction in your monthly electricity because you will no longer need to run your well pump. It is estimated that the median cost to run your pump is \$21 a month, depending on the pump's horsepower, local electricity rates and water usage. Formula to calculate your own pump electricity cost: Pump's power in kW x hours per day x days in a month x electricity rate in dollars/kWh
- Well replacement: A well pump costs about \$350 with a life expectancy of 8 to 15 years. If anything happens to your current well, a 100 to 150' replacement well can cost between \$10,000 and \$12,500 if allowed by the local health department.

Cost of future well maintenance/replacement:

If you choose not to connect your home to municipal water, the state will not continue to pay for services such as well testing, bottled water, and filters. In addition, if your existing well fails, your local health department may require additional protection to your well or they may not issue a replacement well permit at all because groundwater in your area is contaminated by PFAS.

Cost of Connecting later:

Should you decide not to connect at this time, the future connection costs (connection to the main, water service line, pavement repairs, turf establishment, indoor plumbing connection, water meter and well abandonment would cost more, and all associated costs would be the responsibility of the homeowner. Currently the Village is working to secure grants for this work to be completed during the project at no cost to the homeowner if they commit to taking public water during the offering period (future correspondence).

What now?

The Village of Pellston is currently exploring principal forgiveness loans and grants through the State of Michigan to fund significant portions, if not all, of the municipal water system. Funding is anticipated to cover:

- Cost of the water system's infrastructure (wells, iron removal, disinfectant, distribution line, water service connection).
- Repaving of roads impacted by waterlines
- Decommissioning of the home's private well
- Costs of running water to home and hooking up to existing plumbing
- Water service area is depicted below with a boundary line shown for parcels currently serviced by public road or other previously approved road system between homeowner and Village.

Municipal Water System Need to Know Information

Conclusion

Without financial assistance from the State of Michigan, a municipal water system will not be possible due to the high cost. Water bills normally include a mark up to pay back construction loans or there is a special assessment to property owners to cover the debt of construction. The more funding that is received, possibly covering the entire cost of the project, the lower the cost of future water bills and/or elimination of a special assessment for water system construction. To obtain funding, we need your support.

The municipal water project will not be possible without the majority of Pellston residents connecting to the system.

This may be the only chance for the Village to obtain this level of principal forgiveness and grant funds. The Village and its partners at the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW), Emmet County, and the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians have worked hard to make this project possible and to position the Village for a large appropriation of public funds.

The Village of Pellston's goal is to have 100% grant or principal forgiveness loans to avoid having any debt on the system. If successful, the only estimated cost to the property owners would be the water bill with the estimated cost range mentioned earlier. ***We will provide more information at upcoming public outreach meetings along with a future mailer which will include a commitment survey for each property owner. We now need your support for the project.***



Map depicts the service area of the Village of Pellston limits