

Giardia has nothing to do with Salem water issue

Written by George Browning

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There was misinformation reported in the January 20 edition of The Washington County Edition from the Salem City Council's Jan. 11 meeting.

The story stated that William Gollnitz of Wittman Hydro Planning out of Bloomington said Salem's water problem is related to giardia.

Actually what was said is that the cause of Salem's taste and odor issue is geosmin and the two are very different.

"Giardia is something we have to start sampling for this year," said Salem Water Superintendent Russell Brown. "Part of our treatment requirements are to make sure we chlorinate at high enough levels to disinfect for giardia and that's one thing that is making the taste and odor issue worse, because of where our chlorination is located in the plant. We can't change that and still maintain our compliance for the giardia level."

Brown and Salem Mayor David Bower started receiving phone calls (Jan. 21) as citizens read the article and became concerned about local water containing giardia, which is parasite that can come from dead animals that decay over time, leaves and twigs which then get into the water supply.

Geosmin is a chemical compound that is released when certain types of algae are killed. When the chlorine oxidizes that algae, it releases those compounds and that is what causes those taste and odor issues, according to Brown.

Green Banner Publications apologizes for the error.