

Elburn approves water treatment plan for wells

By Darryl Mellema Daily Herald Correspondent
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When Ron Dollar from WRT, LLC first called Elburn mayor James Willey to discuss his company's system for removing radium from village wells, Willey thought he was being called by a radio station and didn't immediately return the call.

Dollar, vice president of marketing at Water Remediation Treatment (WRT) and Willey eventually discussed WRT's proposal for removing radium, and determined that Dollar's company had something positive to offer Elburn.

Monday, Elburn's village board unanimously approved a 20-year lease with WRT and disposal company RMD Operations LLC to operate their radium removal process in two and eventually three of the village's wells.

"We had, as a board, come to a consensus that ion exchange was our only viable option," Willey said. "When we came across (Dollar's) proposal and they rushed a pilot plan out here to prove they could get the radium out of the water, we all looked at this and said that we had to look at this. Everything's gone well since we've done that."

The agreement involves the village's Well No. 3, 714 N. 1st St., Well No. 4, 399 E. North St., and the now under construction No. 5 well, 814 S. Anderson St. Well No. 5 was included in the lease, although it must still be built and then undergo the water testing process. The process is expected to be operational by the end of 2005.

WRT's system involves taking water through a vessel and passing that water through a filter which removes the radium. The water then returns to the normal village water system. The radium is stored in the filter, which is replaced once a year. The radium is then moved out of area to an approved disposal site.

As part of the lease, Elburn will pay \$575,000 installation costs. The village has discussed a 34 percent water rate increase to fund the process. However, this process would not involve additional sewage rate increases as some other processes would, said village administrator Dave Morrison.

Dollar said his company broke ground this week for radium removal work in Oswego and that other communities are following the lead of that community and Elburn.

"It's a very conservative industry, the water treatment industry," Dollar said. "We appreciate you guys that step up early and allow us a chance to show what you can do."