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Water Works delays shift to chloramine

By ERIC BAXTER
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Within the next five years, the EPA is requiring a shift from the use of chlorine to chloramine, a less dangerous alternative, to disinfect water at treatment plants.

The Manchester Water Works was set to make the transition on June 12, but Coca Cola, the city's biggest customer, requested a delay to have time to adjust its equipment. The request prompted the city agency to delay the full shift until Aug. 1.

"This also gave us time to get the word out to more of our customers," said water works administrator Dave Paris.

The Manchester Water Works provides drinking water to more than 160,000 customers in the Greater Manchester area, and administers more than 8,000 acres of watershed land around Lake Massabesic in Manchester, and Tower Hill and Clay ponds in Hooksett.

Paris said the new EPA laws were rooted in the concern the government health agency had for the potentially hazardous third-party byproducts produced when using chlorine to disinfect drinking water. EPA studies have tied an increased risk of cancer, and the release of some dangerous by-products, to the use of chlorine. The study, produced

in early 2000, indicated the risks were very small, but present.

"We're always trying to improve our safety," said Paris.

Chloramine, created by mixing very small amounts of chlorine and ammonia in the water during the second phase of treatment, has few, if any, health risks associated with it. Paris said treatment requires three parts per million of chlorine, and one part per million of ammonia, to one million parts water. A dry gin martini made in the same proportions would require one ounce of vermouth to more than 7,000 gallons of gin. While safer, there are some wrinkles to using chloramine.

Paris said chloramine does not evaporate out of water like chlorine does. Tropical aquarium owners should be aware of this and use dechlorination tablets in any tap water for tanks after Aug. 1.

"It's an easy problem to take care of, as long as they know they have to," said Paris.

The other concern lies with kidney dialysis patients, though this population is already aware of any issues.

Water Works has used chlorine to disinfect the water since 1920s, the same as most water treatment systems.

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HEARD IT ON THE STREET



De Sol lead singer and guitarist Albie Monterrosa belts out a tune with the assistance of organist Andy Letke Saturday evening as part of the closing performance of this year's Jazz and Blues Festival on Hanover Street. (Express Photo/James Cook)

\$10 million housing project coming

By DONNA NOVAK
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To help relieve Manchester's affordable housing shortage, a massive mill building located at 415 Silver St. will be converted into 57 units of affordable housing through the Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services.

"There's a huge demand and long waiting list for affordable units in the Manchester area," said Robert Tourigny, executive director of the Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services.

"This is going to certainly add nice quality brand new units to the inventory."

Set to begin this fall, the 70,000 square-foot project is estimated to cost about \$10 million and the funding will come from a number of sources. The Community Improvement Projects program will provide \$100,000. Other funding will come from the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, financing from commercial banks and funds from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston will be included.

"Folks are on waiting lists in various developments for a year or longer before they can find housing they can afford," said Tourigny. "It certainly helps families who are rent-burdened and will help them to save some of their income to hopefully have a down payment to buy a house some day."

The architectural plans for the project are complete and bidders have been screened and selected so Tourigny hopes that work will begin on schedule this fall.

The units will range in

cost from \$650 to \$900 depending on the number of bedrooms in the unit. The building will offer a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom apartments, said Tourigny.

Those eligible to live in the Silver Mills Apartments must make between \$26,000 and \$40,000 per year depending on family size or unit size.

"It's an old shoe factory that hasn't been a business factory for probably 30 years or so," said Tourigny. "We bought the building two years ago."