

Preventative Well Maintenance

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

As usual, there seems to be a lot of newer, inexperienced operators out here in this great state. I really enjoy getting to know them, provide training and answer all their questions. One question that pops up from time to time is do we really need to get our wells serviced? And my answer is always yes. I tell them your well costs close to a half million dollars, so it needs to be professionally cared for.

Several of the municipal water well drillers offer an annual well maintenance program for a very reasonable price. I guess it keeps their technicians busy in the winter months when drilling slows down. In my opinion, this is a very valuable service. After the maintenance has been done, they send you a report on their findings. I would highly recommend sharing this report with the village board.

The technicians check things like wire to water efficiency. They can tell if the motor and pump are operating efficiently. This alone is very important information. There is no reason to be spending more on electricity than necessary. Unless you have the proper equipment, this would be difficult to calculate. If the motor or pump is starting to go out you definitely want to be saving some money back for that. They also check the accuracy of the master meter. This is important when figuring water loss. I have been to several systems that thought they had a high-water loss and after looking at the well maintenance report, we discovered the master meter was not accurate. Some have been off as much as 20 percent.

Draw downs are performed and tracked with this service. Over a period of years, they will let you know if the screens are starting to plug. Acidizing the well screen may be necessary especially if you have an iron and manganese problem. This service also includes things like changing the oil on the motor of a line shaft turbine well. They will also give you a heads up if the line shaft bearings are starting to go bad.

What does all this add up to? Preventative well maintenance. It gives the system time to budget for a major repair. More importantly if repairs are needed you can schedule for a shut down. Many systems can't afford to shut down a large capacity well in the middle of August. Just as well get that well operating at peak performance for next summer this winter.