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The Town of Elon has notified the public of non-compliance with Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) in the drinking water over the last year. This fact sheet was prepared to provide additional information and to answer frequently asked questions concerning TTHMs.

Question: Where does the Town of Elon's drinking water come from?

Answer: The Town of Elon's water is purchased from the City of Burlington. The purchased water from Burlington is supplied by the Lake Mackintosh and Stoney Creek Reservoirs and is treated at the J.D Mackintosh, Jr. Water Plant and the Ed Thomas Water Plant. Water purchased from the City of Burlington goes through a series of purification processes at the Burlington Water Treatment Plants.

Question: What are trihalomethanes (TTHMs)?

Answer: TTHMs are disinfection by-products formed when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic matter in one of the City of Burlington's Lakes. Chlorine is required to be used in the treatment plant process to disinfect the treated water to control possible disease causing microorganisms in the water.

Question: Why are TTHMs in the drinking water?

Answer: TTHMs result from disinfecting the drinking water with chlorine. Adequate disinfection is essential for protecting consumers from possible life threatening diseases, such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, or giardia. The health risks from TTHMs are extremely small compared to the risks associated with inadequate disinfection. It is the primary responsibility of the water treatment plant operators to provide adequate disinfection and that such disinfection should not be compromised in an attempt to decrease the disinfection by-products.

Question: What are the compliance standards for TTHMs and what were the recent sampling results?

Answer: The US Environmental Protection Agency and the NC Public Water Supply Section currently establish a compliance standard for TTHMs at 0.080

"The Town of Elon desires to build upon its distinguished heritage by providing for responsible growth while maintaining its small-town characteristics."

mg/L (or 0.080 parts per million) on a running annual average (RAA) based on quarterly sampling. Elon's RAA in the last year has ranged from 0.093 mg/L to the current level of 0.076 mg/L after the March 2010 sampling. The Town is now in compliance with the TTHM standards; however the Town is notifying citizens of previous non-compliance during the calendar year 2009.

Question: What is being done to improve the TTHM levels in the drinking water?

***Answer:** The Town of Elon has begun a Town-wide flushing program that is part of a plan to reduce the TTHM levels in the water system. This program has seen reductions in the TTHM levels since it's inception in December 2009. This flushing program is going to continue for the foreseeable future. Additionally the Town will increase its sampling around town to insure that the TTHM levels around Town are within EPA and NC limits.*

Question: What should I do?

***Answer:** According to EPA and NC Public Water Supply Section sources, you do not need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply. There is not an immediate risk as the last two quarterly sampling results indicate the drinking water is well below the compliance standard (0.055 mg/L and 0.043 mg/L compared to the 0.080 mg/L standard). Some people who drink water for many years containing elevated TTHMs may experience some health issues. Additional information on the possible health impacts may be found at the EPA Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or by reviewing materials on the EPA web site at <http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/>.*

If there are any additional questions concerning this fact sheet, please contact Donnie Wood, Town of Elon Public Works Department at (336) 584-9600 or through email at dwood@ci.elon.nc.us.