

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Date: March 7, 2013

Contact: Mayor David A. Hanks

On March 6, 2013, a court order was issued requiring the Village of Sauk Village to continue to use temporary air stripping equipment to provide its residents with safe and clean drinking water. This concludes years of litigation between the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and Sauk Village.

In 2009, vinyl chloride was detected in the Village’s water system, specifically Well #3. The Village shut down Wells #3 and supplied its residents water from Wells #1 and #2. The EPA directed the Illinois Attorney General to file a compliance lawsuit against the Village in April 2010, requesting an overhaul of the Village’s water system. The Village made some improvements to the water system and reviewed all options to supply its residents with the safe and clean drinking water. One option suggested by the EPA was the installation of temporary air strippers to remove vinyl chloride from the water.

During the summer of 2012, vinyl chloride was detected in Wells #1 and #2 and continued to rise to levels which required the Village to send notices to its residents and businesses. Residents were advised not to consume water from Wells #1 and #2 and bottled water was distributed by the Village. In August of 2012, temporary air strippers were installed with the assistance of multiple state agencies, and the Village has provided safe and clean water and continues to do so today.

The Village is in the process of purchasing and installing permanent air strippers to provide safe and clean water for years to come. The Village’s long term plan is to obtain Lake Michigan water. This is only possible after major infrastructure improvements can be made to the water supply system. The Village’s plan to install permanent air strippers, repair the Village’s leaking water supply lines and other infrastructure work has been reviewed and approved by the EPA. The Village’s approval plan is contained in the March 6, 2013 court order.

The EPA lawsuit carried a potential fine of \$50,000 per count of the Complaint, plus a maximum fine of \$10,000 for every day the violations existed. The Village fines could have easily exceeded \$1,000,000 based upon the length of this litigation. In concluding this litigation the Village has agreed to pay a fine of \$2,500, a significant savings to the Village and its taxpayers.

The resolution of this complex matter was made possible by the cooperative efforts of our consultants, Village Attorney Odelson and Sterk, Village Engineer Robinson Engineering, Village Contractor Schrader Environmental Systems and the Illinois Attorney General’s Office.

A copy of the court order can be reviewed on the Village’s website www.saukvillage.org.