Rural Area Potential Impacts to Decatur’s Drinking Water

As part of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) requirements for completing a Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan, the City of Decatur is currently in the process of implementing management strategies that will help protect our sources of drinking water through a program of pollution prevention. Important components of our program include public education, outreach, spill prevention and reporting. The WHP Plan is available for public review at the City Hall (172 N. Second Street, Decatur, IN).

# Many landowners operate farms within the WHP area for Decatur’s public water supply wells. Any spills (i.e., herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, petroleum fuel) that would occur at or adjacent to a farm property have the potential to directly affect groundwater used for our public water supply. Decatur asks that landowners with farms located within the wellfield follow emergency notification procedures provided on the Water Works website anytime that a spill of a hazardous substance or a petroleum product occurs. Anytime that a release occurs immediately call 911 and contact the Water Department 260-724-7171 or 260-724-5345. We also ask that landowners discuss WHP concerns and these reporting procedures with tenant farmers, family, employees, licensed fertilizer and herbicide applicators, and local fuel suppliers working in the WHP area. Information regarding managing farm chemicals can be found at City Hall or on the City of Decatur’s Water Works website.

As a part of the WHP program, septic systems within the WHP area are being identified. Leachate from an improperly maintained septic system has the potential to directly affect groundwater used for our public water supply. Information regarding the proper functioning and maintenance of septic systems can be found at City Hall or on the City of Decatur’s Water Works website.

# In addition, the City of Decatur is attempting to identify active, inactive, and abandoned wells within the WHP area. Damaged wells can become a direct conduit for surface or near surface contamination to reach the underlying aquifer. We ask for your assistance in identifying active, inactive, or abandoned wells on your property. Please contact Decatur with relevant information. Information regarding plugging and sealing abandoned water wells can be found at City Hall or on the City of Decatur’s Water Works website.

We believe that a responsible program of pollution prevention is everyone’s responsibility. By assisting us in this endeavor, you help ensure that the citizens of Decatur will have a safe water supply now and in the future. If you have any questions or concerns or desire additional information on WHP, please contact me at 260-724-7171.