

# *Water for Living*



**2013**  
**Drinking Water**  
**Consumer Confidence Report (CCR)**  
**City of Columbus, OH**

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# How to Contact Us



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

**Division of Water**  
910 Dublin Road  
Columbus, OH 43215

### Water Quality Assurance Laboratory

(614) 645-7691

- Water Quality Monitoring Questions
- Regulatory Inquiries
- Taste/Odor/Colored Water Concerns

### Customer Service

(614) 645-8276

- Customer Billing Inquiries
- Open/Close Accounts
- Schedule Service Calls
- Process Bill Payments

### Distribution/Maintenance

(614) 645-7788

- Water Emergencies (evenings/weekends)
- Report Waterline Breaks
- Report Hydrant Damage or Leaks

**Michael B. Coleman**  
Mayor, City of Columbus

**Greg J. Davies**  
Director, Department of Public Utilities

**Richard C. Westerfield, P.E., PhD.**  
Administrator, Division of Water

This report can also be found on our website at  
[www.columbus.gov/utilities](http://www.columbus.gov/utilities). Just click on "Consumer Confidence." It meets the EPA's National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Consumer Confidence Reports.

## Sewer and Water Advisory Board



In 1984, the City of Columbus formed the Columbus Sewer and Water Advisory Board (SWAB) to oversee the operations and rate structures of both the Divisions of Water and Sewerage and Drainage. The board, comprised of city officials and six Columbus residents who represent different constituencies — such as senior citizens and the business community — meets quarterly to advise the Divisions on business decisions and best practices. Chaired by Ohio State University's Wallace Giffen, the board forwards their recommendation to Columbus City Council, who then deliberate to officially set rates or change fundamental policy.

SWAB meetings are open to the public; call (614) 645-3956 for a schedule of meeting times and dates.

# Your 2013 Water Report



The goal of the Division of Water is to ensure that any contaminants in your drinking water are restricted below a level at which there is no known health risk. This report shows the types and amounts of key elements in your water supply, their likely sources and the maximum contaminant level (MCL) that the EPA considers safe. The water delivered to your home meets ALL of the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). We use a complex multi-barrier treatment process to assure safe drinking water is delivered to our customers. If for any reason the standards are not met, the public will be notified.

## Did You Know...



Less than 1% of the world's fresh water supplies are available for human consumption.

Water is the original sports drink - it contains no fat, calories, added sugars or cholesterol.

60% of an adult's body is made up of water; 78% of a newborn's body is water.

We work 24/7 to ensure you have a ready supply of high quality drinking water. We operate and maintain 3 water treatment plants, 26 pump stations, 37 water storage tanks, 3,617 miles of water lines and nearly 27,000 hydrants. We deliver over 50 billion gallons of water a year to 1.1 million people. In an average day, 137.6 million gallons of water is pumped throughout the city with an average usage of 120 gallons per person per day.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 8 fl oz (240 mL)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 0

% Daily Value

Total Fat 0g 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Total Carbohydrate 0mg 0%

*For illustration purposes only*

## Tap Water - The Best Deal Around



On average, a gallon of tap water in the greater Columbus area costs about one-third of a cent per gallon. When compared to the cost of other products we consume every day, tap water is quite a bargain; in fact, it makes a Big Splash!

**A gallon of tap water costs \$0.00346.**

A GALLON OF



\$8.00

A GALLON OF



\$7.57

A GALLON OF

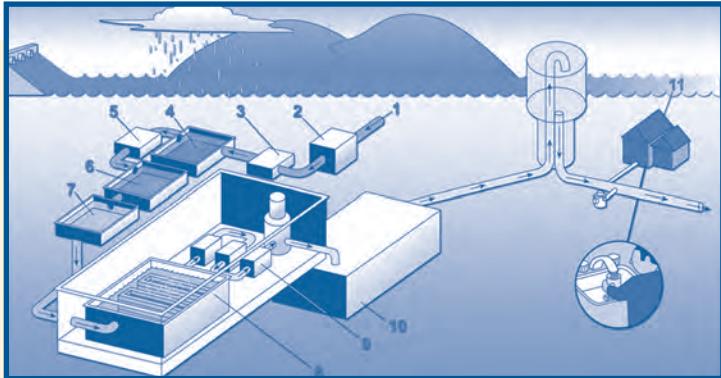


\$10.67

A GALLON OF



\$2.99



## The Water Treatment Process

Water flows (1) to the treatment plant from the reservoir or stream through rotating screens (2) to remove large debris. It is then pumped into the plant where alum is added (3) to cause coagulation. After rapid mixing, the water remains in the settling basin (4) while sedimentation of floc occurs (2-4 hours). The water treatment residual (settled floc) is pumped from the bottom of the pools and stored in holding lagoons to dry.

The softening process (5) involves the addition of sodium carbonate (soda ash) or caustic soda and hydrated lime to remove calcium and magnesium ions that are responsible for water hardness. This process takes an additional 2-4 hours. For each pound of chemical used in the treatment process, two pounds are removed.

After an additional sedimentation process, carbon dioxide is added (6) to lower the pH level to approximately 7.8. Water is held in a stabilizing basin (7) for another 2-4 hours.

Water then flows through large dual-media rapid sand filters made up of layers of gravel, sand and antracite coal (8).

Addition of chlorine to disinfect the water, fluoride to protect teeth and a corrosion inhibitor take place at the end of the process (9) before water enters large underground clearwells (10) to be held until needed by the community (11).

Please note: When ground water is used (as in the case of the Parsons Avenue Water Plant), neither screening (2) nor initial sedimentation (3,4) is needed.

## Source Water Assessment Information

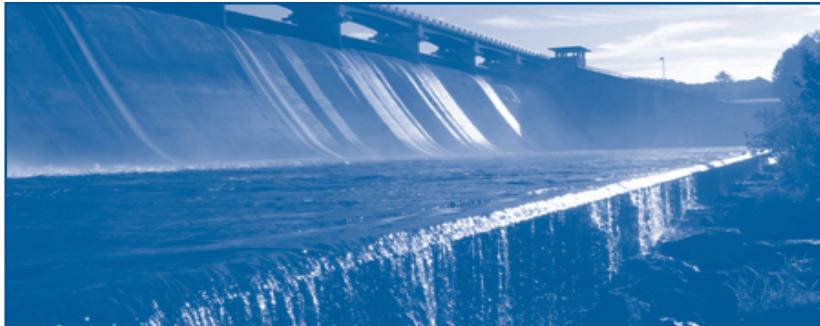


A high-quality source water supply allows the Division of Water to provide consumers with quality water at a reasonable cost. Protecting our raw water sources requires investments to secure the needs of a growing population, now and in the future. As part of its on-going efforts to maintain regulatory compliance and monitor our water supply, the Division of Water has completed a Source Water Assessment process. Below is a synopsis of the results.

The City of Columbus water system uses surface water from the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek, as well as ground water pumped from sand and gravel deposits of the Scioto River Valley. All three sources of water have a relatively high susceptibility to contamination from spills or releases of chemicals. The ground water pumped at the Parsons Avenue plant is susceptible (compared to other ground water systems) because there is no significant clay overlying and protecting the aquifer deposits. The Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek are even more susceptible because they are more accessible and less protected from spills.

The drinking water source protection areas for the City of Columbus' three water sources contain numerous potential contaminant sources, especially the protection area for the Dublin Road Water Treatment Plant (extending along the Scioto River). These include industrial activities, storm water runoff from developing areas, and a heavily traveled transportation network running alongside and over the water bodies. Run-off from agricultural fields is a concern in both the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek watersheds.

Columbus treats the water to meet drinking water quality standards, but no single treatment protocol can address all potential contaminants. The City has been proactive in pursuing measures to further protect its source waters. These include land stewardship programs and incentive-driven programs to reduce erosion and run-off of pesticides and fertilizers into the Scioto River and Big Walnut Creek and their reservoirs. More detailed information is provided in the City of Columbus' Drinking Water Source Assessment Report, which can be viewed by calling the Watershed section at (614) 645-1721. Visit [www.columbus.gov/watershed/](http://www.columbus.gov/watershed/) for more about watershed management and the land stewardship program.



# Common Water Quality Concerns

## Rusty Water

It is important to note that when rusty water is experienced it is normally not a health concern but one of aesthetic quality. Rusty-brown, orange, or light yellow water can be caused by a variety of reasons including: water main breaks, fire-fighting operations, hydrant flushing or broken hydrants, construction work or damage, system depressurizations, and corroding iron pipes. Normally rusty water events dissipate in 4-6 hours but could last longer depending on water usage in the area. If the event lasts more than 24 hours please call distribution maintenance at (614) 645-7788.

During such an event, it is of little to no value for you to run your water until it turns clear; this is wasteful and costly to you as a consumer. During such events, use of hot water should be kept to a minimum, as it will draw cold rusty water into your hot water tank. If your hot water tank does have rust in it, use caution and please follow the manufacturer's directions for shutting down, draining, and re-starting your hot water tank.

Clothing washed in rusty water can become stained. Should this occur, it is important to not dry the clothing. Instead, leave the wet clothing in the washer and apply an iron removal product as soon as possible to prevent the iron stain from setting. Please follow the manufacturer's instructions.

## Chlorinous Taste & Odor

The City of Columbus has a long and successful history of water treatment involving the chemical chlorine. The Water Quality Assurance Laboratory and the city water plants check the chlorine



content throughout the city daily to insure the highest quality control. Without proper initial disinfection and continuing residual protection in the distribution system, the city's entire water distribution system would become vulnerable to bacteriological organisms.

If the taste or odor is found to be objectionable, it should be noted that you could eliminate the taste of chlorine in your water by setting an open pitcher in your refrigerator overnight.

## Musty Taste & Odor

Occasionally Columbus water has an earthy, musty or fishy taste and odor. These seasonal phenomena can be caused by the bi-annual turnover of our city reservoirs, or with the presence of varied algal blooms in the reservoirs or rivers. It is important to note this taste and odor poses no health concern. Treatment techniques involving powder activated carbon and remote real-time sensors are being used to help mitigate this problem when it occurs.

## Cloudy Water

Cloudy water is usually caused by temperature change and the presence of dissolved air in the water. It is very common in the winter and can last for quite a long time.

When water appears to have a milky white, gray, or carbonated appearance a simple test may suffice to denote its origin. Fill a clear glass with tap water and observe it over a minute or so. If the glass clears from bottom to top, then it is dissolved air escaping into the atmosphere. There is no health risk associated with this situation.



## Primary Drinking Water Standards

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	What's allowed? (MCL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Dublin Road Water Plant		Hap Cremeen Water Plant		Parsons Avenue Water Plant		Violation?	Where did it come from?
				Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range	Level Found	Range		
Fluoride (ppm)	2013	4	4	1.00	0.80 - 1.00	1.04	0.80 - 1.04	0.97	0.82 - 0.97	No	Water additive – protects teeth
Nitrate (ppm)	2013	10	10	8.8	<0.5 - 8.8	1.6	<0.5 - 1.6	<0.5	<0.5 - 0.5	No	Agricultural fertilizer runoff
Simazine (ppb)	2013	4	4	<0.10	<0.10 - 0.17	0.10	<0.10 - 0.20	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Atrazine (ppb)	2013	3	3	0.22	<0.10 - 0.93	0.26	<0.10 - 0.98	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Alachlor (ppb)	2013	2	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Metolachlor (ppb)	2013	No set level	No goal set	<0.20	<0.20 - 0.25	ND	ND	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Metribuzin (ppb)	2013	No set level	No goal set	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	No	Agricultural herbicide runoff
Chloroform (ppb)	2013	No set level	70	34.0	N/A	31.0	N/A	2.2 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Bromodichloromethane (ppb)	2013	No set level	0	5.9	N/A	8.2	N/A	3.7 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Dibromochloromethane (ppb)	2013	No set level	60	0.5	N/A	1.2	N/A	4.1 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Bromoform (ppb)	2013	No set level	0	< 0.5	N/A	< 0.5	N/A	1.6 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)	2013	80	No goal set	59.3	17.3 - 83.5	54.3	24.8 - 89.3	15.1	12.0 - 16.5	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	2013	60	No goal set	42.4	28.9 - 55.6	47.4	12.6 - 56.3	4.7	3.7 - 6.7	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Organic Carbon	2013	TT (removal ratio >1)	No goal set	2.46	2.01 - 3.04	2.24	1.90 - 2.80	N/A	N/A	No	Naturally present in environment
Total Coliform Bacteria	2013	Present in <5% of monthly samples	0%	0.0%	0.0 - 0.0%	0.0%	0.0 - 0.0%	0.0%	0.0 - 0.0%	No	Bacteria present in environment
Total Chlorine (ppm)	2013	4 (MRDL)	4 (MRDLG)	1.53	0.49 - 2.70	1.46	0.36 - 2.50	1.02	0.65 - 1.81	No	Disinfectant
Turbidity (NTU)	2013	TT (<1 NTU) TT (% meeting Std.)	No goal set No goal set	0.24 100%	0.03 - 0.24 100% - 100%	0.38 99%	0.04 - 0.38 99% - 100%	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	No	Soil runoff

<sup>1</sup> 2011 Data, Not Required to monitor in 2013.

## Other Water Quality Parameters of Interest

Substances we detected (units)	When we checked	Action Level (AL)	What's the goal? (MCLG)	Concentration at 90th percentile		Range		# of sites found above the Action Level		Violation?	Where did it come from?
				Annual Avg.	Range	Annual Avg.	Range	Annual Avg.	Range		
Lead (ppb)	2011	15	0	< 1	< 1 - 44.8	1 out of 50		No	Corrosion of household plumbing		
Copper (ppm)	2011	1.3	1.3	0.069	0.003 - 0.215	0 out of 50		No	Corrosion of household plumbing; Erosion of natural deposits		

If you have any questions about this data please call the Columbus Water Quality Assurance Lab at (614) 645-7691, or [www.columbus.gov/PublicUtilities/](http://www.columbus.gov/PublicUtilities/).

## Definitions and Terms

Action Level (AL) ..... The concentration of a contaminant, which if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) ..... The level of a contaminant in drinking water, below which there is no known or expected health risk. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) ..... The highest level of contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLG as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Secondary MCL (SMCL) ..... A nonenforceable numerical limit set by the USEPA for a contaminant on the basis of aesthetic effects to prevent an undesirable taste, odor, or appearance.

N/A ..... Not Applicable

ND ..... No Detect

NTU ..... Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (a measure of particles held in suspension in water).

Parts per Billion (ppb) or Micrograms per Liter (ug/L) ..... Are units of measurement for concentration of a contaminant. A part per billion corresponds to one second in roughly 31.7 years.

Parts per Million (ppm) or Milligrams per Liter (mg/L) ..... Are units of measurement for concentration of a contaminant. A part per million corresponds to one second in roughly 11.5 days.

Grains per Gallon (gpg) ..... A non-metric unit of measurement for hardness used in North America.

MRDL ..... Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level: The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

MRDLG ..... Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal: The level of drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

The ">" symbol ..... This symbol means "greater than."

The "<" symbol ..... This symbol means "less than." For example, a result of < 5 means that the lowest level that could be detected was 5 and the contaminant in that sample was not detected.

Treatment Technique (TT) ..... A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water. For Total Organic Carbon (TOC) the level must be above 1. For turbidity the level must be under 0.3 NTU 95% of the time, and always < 1 NTU.

Turbidity ..... A measurement of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indication of water quality and the effectiveness of our treatment process.



**The City of Columbus has a current, unconditioned license to operate our public water system.**



## The Water Service Area Map

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. Each home, school and business in the greater Columbus area receives water from one of the following three water plants:

[Blue square] **Dublin Road Water Plant (DRWP)** serves western and southwestern residents using water from Griggs and O'Shaughnessy Reservoirs.

[Yellow square] **Hap Cremeen Water Plant (HCWP)** serves OSU and northern residents. The water source is the Hoover Reservoir.

[Orange square] **Parsons Avenue Water Plant (PAWP)** draws water from wells and serves residents in the southeast.

## What's NOT in Your Water

 Reports on TV and in the press often raise concerns about the health risks associated with the presence of certain minerals, chemicals, or other contaminants in your food or water. The Columbus Division of Water performs tens of thousands of tests each year to ensure drinking water quality. Many substances for which the Division tests never appear in this report because they are not found in the drinking water. For example, there are 51 volatile organic chemicals as well as arsenic, perchlorate, asbestos, MTBE, radium 228, and ammonia (just to name a few) that are **not** found in your drinking water.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include: microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife; inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming; pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses; organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems; and radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, USEPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in drinking water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1(800) 426-4791.

## Lead in the Home

 If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The City of Columbus is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for thirty seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. A list of laboratories certified in the State of Ohio to test for lead may be found at [www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw) or by calling (614) 644-2752. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1(800) 426-4791 or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

The lead concentration in the drinking water leaving our water treatment plants is below the level of detection. Most homes in the Columbus area do not have lead service lines and have little to no detectable levels of lead in their tap water.

You can also call (614) 645-8276 for your free copy of "What You Need to Know About Lead in Drinking Water." This information can also be found online at [www.columbus.gov/drinkingwater/](http://www.columbus.gov/drinkingwater/) in the Common Water Quality Concerns feature, "Lead in Drinking Water."

## Turbidity

 Utilities that treat surface water and/or filter the water are required to monitor for turbidity which is a measure of the cloudiness of water and is an indication of the effectiveness of our filtration system. The turbidity limit set by the EPA is 0.3 NTU in 95% of the daily samples and shall not exceed 1 NTU at any time. The highest recorded turbidity for HCWP was 0.38 NTU and the lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the standard was 99%. The highest recorded turbidity for DRWP was 0.24 NTU and the lowest monthly percentage of samples meeting the standard was 100%.

## Total Organic Carbon

 The value reported under "Level Found" for Total Organic Carbon (TOC) is the lowest running annual average ratio between the percentage of TOC actually removed to the percentage of TOC required to be removed. A value of greater than one indicates that the water system is in compliance with TOC removal requirements. A value of less than one indicates a violation of the TOC removal requirements. The value reported under "Range" for TOC is the lowest monthly ratio to the highest monthly ratio.

## Newborns and Nitrate

 Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 10 ppm is a health risk for infants less than six months of age. High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. Local television, radio and print media will be notified within 24 hours if the level of nitrate rises above 10 ppm. The media will similarly be notified once the level decreases. If you are caring for an infant you should seek advice from your health care provider. Additional information about nitrates can be found online at [www.columbus.gov/nitrate/](http://www.columbus.gov/nitrate/) or visit [www.columbus.gov/drinkingwater/](http://www.columbus.gov/drinkingwater/) and look under Common Water Quality Concerns for the Elevated Nitrate Levels feature.

*None of the water supplied by the Columbus water plants exceeded the nitrate MCL in 2013.*

## Health Concerns



Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised individuals such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, persons with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infection. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water.

*Cryptosporidium* ("Crypto"), for example, is a microscopic organism that, when ingested, can result in diarrhea, fever, and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Crypto comes from animal waste in the watershed and may be found in our source water. Crypto is eliminated by using a multi-barrier water treatment process including coagulation, sedimentation, softening, filtration and disinfection. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1(800) 426-4791.

Columbus' water is regularly tested for organisms that could be harmful to people – including *Cryptosporidium*. Crypto was detected 5 out of 23 times in the Scioto River and 10 out of 23 times in Big Walnut Creek. Also, Crypto was detected in 1 out of 12 times in both the DRWP tap water and in the HCWP tap water. It should be noted, the presence in tap water was minimal and current testing methods do not enable us to determine if the organisms are dead or if they are capable of causing disease.

## Water Quality Assurance



The City of Columbus' Water Quality Assurance Laboratory (WQAL) is a large modern water lab with a long history of distinguished public service starting under the noted water quality chemist Charles Hoover. The lab continues to maintain that tradition of excellence and technical innovation in the ongoing use of state-of-the-art equipment for water analysis, while continuing to research the latest advancements in water treatment techniques.

The WQAL performs water quality monitoring and treatment research to ensure that Columbus' drinking water meets or is better than all federally mandated Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) standards. The WQAL also provides water quality information to the water treatment plants and addresses customer complaints and inquiries regarding water quality. In 2013, the WQAL's EPA licensed and certified laboratory staff completed over 40,000 analyses relating to 29 different organic, inorganic, and microbiological water quality parameters.

To maintain compliance with current SDWA regulations, WQAL activities in 2013 were again directed at developing information regarding new and upcoming rules. These include the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR), Stage 2 of the Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproducts Rule (D/DBP), and the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2ESWTR). Additionally, the lab has been closely involved in planning the improvement of watershed and water distribution system surveillance and detection measures for security concerns in the wake of 9/11 and the associated heightened security protocols.

As with the WQAL staff, the State of Ohio licenses and certifies the water plant operators who are charged with running and maintaining each of the three water treatment plants. These operators also perform the critical task of treatment and process monitoring to insure that the water leaving the plant is of the highest quality. In order to stay current in the ever-changing technical field of water purification, these operators spend many hours of continuing education in the classroom every year.

**These operators, the Water Quality Assurance Laboratory staff, and all of the Division of Water employees are dedicated to providing WATER, a life-sustaining resource, for the well-being and economic vitality of the community.**

**This is our mission.**