

## **Village of Dysart Pits Local Water Against World's Best**

By Kristen McLeod / Morgan Beaudry Leader-Post, March 22, 2007, page A5

The Village of Dysart thinks an awful lot of their water - so much, in fact, that they were ready to pit it against the world's best at the prestigious annual Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting event.

"I'm not from Dysart originally, but when I moved I was impressed with the water from day one," said Gerry Bury, administrator for the village.

"My family likes to think of it as super water." The quality is such that residents don't use water softener, something many residents in other municipalities use to improve local water quality.

So what's the secret of Dysart's uncommonly tasting tap water?

The village's water source is a naturally filtered sand aquifer.

The result is water so clean and element-free that the taste is pure, clean and refreshing.

The village decided to shine the spotlight on their water and proudly pit it against a host of municipalities from across North America. And, since the Town of Canora finished fourth in 2003 for their municipal water, why not enter Dysart — whose own water, tested by the Saskatchewan Research Council in 2003, came up just about as pure (with elements registering less than .0001 mg/l) as water gets?

"We've been looking at entering this for a few year's time," said village mayor Gary Kayter, who had read about the competition in a magazines and on-line. "We're also looking at ways to promote our village and we thought that highlighting the quality of our water would be one way of doing that."

Located between Southey and Fort Qu'Appelle on Highway 22, this village of 200 is a commuter-friendly bedroom community ideal for families and recreation enthusiasts.

Bury knew of Canora's win because he lived there before moving to Dysart a few years ago.

"I've lived all over Western Canada and the water in Dysart just can't be compared to water anywhere else," said Bury. Win or lose, they knew they'd be facing stiff competition from an international field of competitors from across North America and around the world.

"I believe there are 29 entries in the municipal category this year. Even if we finish in the top half of that, that's quite a feather in our cap," said Kayter. The Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting competition, now in its 17th year, attracts entrants from all over the globe vying for medals in five categories: municipal water, non-carbonated bottled water, carbonated water, purified drinking water and package design. On February 24, 2007, the judges awarded the gold medal for municipal water to Montpelier, Ohio. Canada did have a very strong showing

however, with three municipalities in the top five: Clearbrook, B.C. earned silver medal, Elkford, B.C. took bronze and Campbell River, B.C. notched a respectable fourth place finish. The most recent Canadian gold medal winner for municipal water was the Town of Gibsons, B.C. The last Saskatchewan community to rank in the top five for municipal water was the Town of Canora who placed fourth in 2003. In past years, other Saskatchewan waters have taken top honours in the purified drinking water category. In 2005, Imibe Water of Broadview won a gold medal in the purified drinking water category. In 2004, Saskatchewan Clear of Saskatoon took bronze while Imibe and Clear Creek Water Company of Farmington, NM tied for fourth place. Although the winning entries have been announced, the Village of Dysart hasn't yet received their official standing or the exact number of points awarded. Regardless of where they finish, however, Kayter and Burym plan to enter Dysart's water in the competition in the years to come. Sharing their pure, clean water through bottling it is a possibility that the village is still considering. "Ten years ago, people weren't buying bottled water like they are today," said Kayter. "Ours is excellent and it comes right out of the tap that way and we'd be pleased to share it.

”(Kristen McLeod is a Regina-based freelance writer. Morgan Beaudry is the editor of Creative Services at the Leader-Post. Used by permission.)