

ABANDONED WELL PLUGGING PROJECT

Unplugged abandoned wells can threaten the quality of drinking water that is obtained from privately owned and community public drinking water supply wells. Plugging abandoned wells protects the drinking water aquifers that supply nearly one-half of Michigan's citizens. The City of Jackson and Summit Township have joined forces to try and locate as many abandoned wells as possible in the recharge area for the municipal wells and to properly plug those wells at no cost to the property owner. It will be necessary for representatives of the City and Township to contact the residents within the recharge areas. Personnel from STS Consultants will be working with the City of Jackson and Summit Township. They will be making an effort to talk to everyone that has received a letter.

We have agreed to provide an incentive payment to each property owner in this project. The incentive payment details will be explained to the property owner by STS consultants. It is hoped that all residents that have an abandoned well on their property will participate in our effort to protect the communities' water supply.

For more information contact the City of Jackson Department of Public Services Department of Water Services (Jackson Water Department) at (517) 788-4090 or Summit Township DPW at (517) 788-4113.

Eligible areas can be seen on the map located at the Jackson Water Department offices 515 Water Street or at Summit Township offices at 2121 Ferguson Road. For further convenience, the maps are available online in Adobe PDF format:

- [Summit Township Target Area 1](#)  (132 KB)
- [All City of Jackson and Summit Township Target Areas](#)  (1.87 MB)

Unplugged abandoned wells are a safety, health and environmental threat.

- They are a **safety** hazard. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has received reports of people, mostly children, falling into old wells. Injury or death can result.
http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3675_3689-7996--,00.html
- They pose a **health** concern by acting as conduits for contaminants to move from the surface, through the earth's protective formations, into deeper aquifers. Drinking water contamination has been caused by abandoned wells.
http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3675_3689-7993--,00.html
- They threaten the **environment** and can degrade water quality. Deteriorated well casings or open, uncased boreholes allow water to move between previously separated aquifers. Abandoned wells have also been used for illegal waste dumping.

This project will utilize registered water well drilling contractors to plug abandoned wells. They have the specialized training and equipment needed to do the job properly.

If the property is connected to a municipal water system, what can be done?

1. **Properly Plug the Well.**
 - Properly plugging the well is the preferred option. This will protect the drinking water aquifer and limit the property owner's liability for ground water contamination.
 - The Groundwater Quality Control Act Part 127, 1978 PA 368 (state well code) requires that a well that is abandoned when municipal water is installed be plugged.
2. **Restore the well to operating condition.**
 - To retain the existing well for irrigation, car washing, or other uses, it must be restored to operational condition.
 - Plumbing changes are required to physically separate the domestic municipal water piping from the piping connected to the well.
 - A cross connection inspection and approval from the public water utility or local health department is required when water service is initiated.

- Where existing well will be used for nonpotable purposes, construction upgrades are recommended, but not mandatory.
3. **Retain the well for future use.**
To be classified as “temporary abandoned,” a well casing must be:
- Securely sealed with a threaded, welded, or solvent welded cap to prevent access into the well and eliminate openings into the well.
 - In compliance with all construction and isolation distance requirements.
 - Physically disconnected from any water distribution piping.

The property owner is responsible for assuring that all abandoned wells on his or her property are properly plugged. A property owner may plug a well only at his or her residence. A registered water well drilling contractor or his or her employee may plug a well at any residence, farm, industry, business, or other public water supply.

Further information regarding locating, preparing wells for plugging, and approved well plugging methods can be obtained from your county or district health department or:

http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3675_3689---,00.html

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Water Bureau-Lansing Operations Division
Drinking Water & Environmental Health Section
Well Construction Unit
Abandoned Well Management Program
P.O. Box 30273
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7773
Phone: (517) 241-1377 Fax: (517) 241-1328
Website: www.michigan.gov/deq