



Calcasieu Parish Waterworks District 1 makes fluoridating water a successful habit

For Calcasieu Parish Waterworks District 1 Superintendent Gerald Hoffpaur and his operators, keeping their community's drinking water at an optimal fluoridated level is simply a matter of routine. Yet through this routine, District 1 has earned the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Water Fluoridation Quality Award for seven years running.

The CDC presents their Water Fluoridation Quality Award each year to communities that achieved excellence in Community Water Fluoridation by maintaining a consistent level of fluoridated water throughout the year. District 1, which provides water to more than 20,000 residents in the communities of Moss Bluff and Gillis, received the award in 2014 and has continued to receive it each year through 2020.

Plant Operator Kevin Simmons noted that District 1 has been fluoridating the water for more than 30 years. Their daily routines of checking fluoride samples and ensuring the equipment is working enables them to keep the water at an optimum level of fluoride for preventing tooth decay. Simmons likens the process to being a long-haul truck driver who always keeps fuel in his truck: being prepared eliminates unnecessary problems and leads to success.

Superintendent Hoffpaur agrees, saying that following up on routine water sampling and doing preventive maintenance on all of their equipment has led to District 1's fluoridation success. Hoffpaur is also grateful for the second waterworks plant in his district, which is helpful in day-to-day operations but was especially important after hurricanes Laura and Delta severely damaged Lake Charles and the surrounding areas in 2020.

"We are fortunate to have that redundancy," Hoffpaur said of the two waterworks plants. "It helped to bring us back online just five days after Hurricane Laura."

While Hoffpaur and Simmons both say that the Calcasieu Parish Waterworks District 1 is not doing anything special by monitoring and maintaining optimal fluoridated water for their community, they are both grateful for the acknowledgement by the CDC through their Water Fluoridation Quality Award.

"It's always an honor to be recognized for our work, and it shows our residents that we care not only about the quality of their drinking water, but also about their overall health," said Hoffpaur.

Water fluoridation is the single most effective and inexpensive public health measure to fight bacteria in the mouth and prevent tooth decay. Only 44% of Louisiana residents receive the benefit of community water fluoridation, compared to almost 75% nationally.

Well-Ahead Louisiana maintains an [online toolkit](#) to help public water systems understand, implement and maintain Community Water Fluoridation. Our Oral Health Promotion team also provides training, assistance and, when available, grant funding to help communities who want to fluoridate their water.



Photo:

