

Culligan donates water filter to home

By: Bob Montgomery, Environmental Writer, Greenville News

South Carolina has tapped into private industry to install filtration system at a Harrison Hills subdivision home to remove high levels of uranium in the drinking water.

DHEC spokesman Thom Berry said the well water will be tested before and after installation to determine the unit's effectiveness and whether additional filtration units should be installed at other homes with contaminated water.

Culligan of the Piedmont has agreed to donate the system, at a cost of more than \$1,000, as a gesture of good will, according to Randy Leathers, general manager.

"It's a situation where a lot of homeowners are in a tough situation," Leathers said. "We have the experience and we want to help our community."

DHEC has tested wells within a two-mile radius of the Jenkins Bridge Road since uranium was discovered in the area in January. DHEC said 36 samples out of 111 tests show uranium levels above the federal standard of 30 micrograms per liter.

While 11 samples of radium, a byproduct of uranium, were found at safe levels, several homes have been found with high levels of radon, also a byproduct of uranium. Radon can cause lung cancer.

Leathers said the system to be installed contains a combination of several filtration techniques.

If successful, the system — which could remove uranium, radium, and radon — will be offered for sale to other homeowners at a discounted price, he said.

Lowe's in Simpsonville also is offering a filtration system to DHEC, Berry said.

In addition, Culligan plans to donate water coolers to some residents and offer water delivery at a discounted price, Leathers said.

Meanwhile, DHEC officials are talking with Greenville Water System officials about extending water lines in the area of Harrison Bridge, Jenkins Bridge and Fairview roads and State 14.

John Crabtree, of the Harrison Hills Homeowners Association, said he wants to see DHEC obtain the funds to extend public water lines.

So far, the state has ear-marked some \$350,000 for the water line extension, which is expected to exceed \$500,000.