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City honored for excellence of Water Treatment Plant

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Have you ever thought about how the water coming out of your faucet got there? Well, the Harrisonburg Public Utilities Department has thought about it... A LOT. That's why they keep winning awards for it.

The Virginia Department of Health – Office of Drinking Water will honor Harrisonburg with a 2019 Excellence in Waterworks Operations/Performance Award at a special ceremony in April. The award is given annually by the state to localities that excel in their performance of delivering clean drinking water to customers.

This has become a common occurrence for the Public Utilities Department, which has a standing record for this award. But they aren't in it for the yearly congratulations – they are in it to make sure Harrisonburg has clean, safe and reliable water service every day.

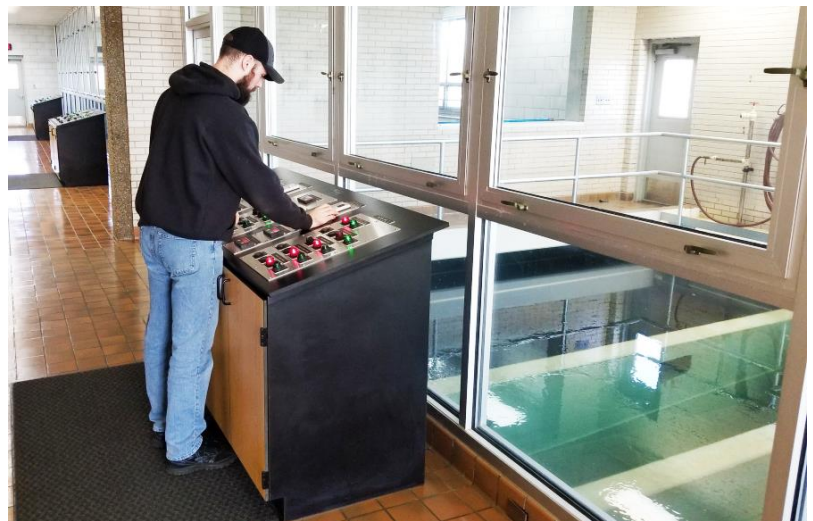
"The Water Treatment Plant staff works diligently to produce the best quality of water our facility is capable of," Water Treatment Division Superintendent Dennis McGuffin said. "We don't do it for the awards or recognition – we do it for our customers."

So, how does that water get to your faucet? The process begins at the source – currently the Dry River and the North River. Another source, the South Fork of the Shenandoah River, will come online in the next few years. The raw water travels through underground pipes until it reaches the Water Treatment Plant, where it is purified and disinfected before being tested for a number of health indicator parameters.

There's also a lot to pay attention to along the way. That includes chemical addition, mixing, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, drought and weather conditions, water levels, pumps, pipes, water storage tanks, monitors, sensors, water quality, usage, natural contaminants, manpower to work around the clock and state and federal mandates.

An average of more than six million gallons of water a day heads to thousands of customers throughout Harrisonburg, or to one of a number of water tanks across the city.

So next time you get a glass of water, or shower, or water your garden or any number of things you do every day without even thinking about it, know that you've got a team behind you who is really good at thinking about it.



(Above) Kyle VanOrden turns on a filter inside the Harrisonburg Water Treatment Plant. The plant was recently honored with a 2019 Excellence in Waterworks Operations/Performance Award.