

Kent

From page A1

The plant pumps between 3.2 and 3.5 million gallons of water a day and employs about 10 workers.

Once the water gets to the plant it goes into a rapid-mix tank where soda ash (sodium carbonate) and lime (calcium hydroxide) are mixed in as part of the regular softening process. The soda ash and lime have a chemical reaction with the calcium and magnesium in the water.

"The calcium and magnesium in the water cause hardness, and we're removing that hardness," Kordinak said.

The water then goes to a flocculation tank, where the water is mixed further to ensure complete chemical reactions. The next step is a primary settling tank, where the minerals settle to the bottom and the water begins to clear.

In a secondary settling tank, carbon dioxide is added to bring the alkaline level down and regulate the water's stability (pH level). Chlorine and fluoride are added, which is mandated by the state. The fluoride helps prevent tooth decay, and the chlorine is a disinfectant added as a precaution against possible contaminants in the water.

The water then goes through a sand filter and is pressure-pumped out to storage tanks, where the distribution is taken up by the city's central maintenance department.

The three tanks are located on Fairchild Avenue, Mogadore Road and the Kent State University campus. The tanks tend to fill up during the nighttime and drain during the day because the usage level rises, according to Steve Hardesty, central maintenance division manager.

About 20 central maintenance workers monitor and repair water lines, chlorinate and disinfect new lines, and handle water breaks. Lines are flushed at least once or twice a year, and water is distributed to more than 6,000 meters in the city. Once the water completes the long journey to the homeowner's curb, the individual plumbing systems take it up from there.



Robert Seton/Record-Courier

Laboratory technician Nolan Cross runs a water quality test at the Kent Water Plant.

Hardesty said he was not surprised when Kent's water was announced the winner.

"I worked at the water plant 24 years before I took this job, so I knew what kind of water we have," Hardesty said.

Kordinak said the city's well-head protection program and the Kent Safe Water Campaign also contribute to the water's good quality.

"We're fortunate in Kent. The city council, administration and service director are all supportive and make a difference. A lot of projects we work on in this town are leading edge and progressive," Kordinak said. "Kent has, from top to bottom, really good employees working for them and they make an effort everyday to do a good job."

He said he has received a lot of positive response to Kent's award from his colleagues in the water industry.