

# Water wells replaced because of age, officials say



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A suspicion promulgated by Arcada Township residents that new public water wells have left some private residential wells bone-dry is a fallacy, officials say. There are four water wells and the latest two, wells 10 and 11 constructed off Ennis Road, are part of the St. Louis water replacement project.

Wells 10 and 11 are slated to go online in early January, St. Louis City Manager Kurt Giles said last week.

Giles also chairs the Gratiot Area Water Authority, which the cities of Alma and St. Louis created to oversee construction of the project.

For more than a year, Giles and engineer John Willemin of Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, have fielded complaints about residential wells.

“We’ve had no indication wells 10 and 11 have played any role in the retirement of these wells,” Giles said.

He stressed that the engineers “look into every single” complaint because “we want to know and investigate these.”

It is true a number of residential wells or pumps have been replaced.

But these have more to do with those wells or submersible pumps reaching their normal life expectancy.

New water well logs in the state-required Wellogic Database lists 37 well installations from 2000 thru 2017 within and bordering Section 5 of Arcada Township.

The years 2002, 2005 and 2016 recorded the highest number of well replacements: five in 2002, seven in 2005 and six in 2016.

A website for the U.S. Geological Survey explains a well goes dry when water levels drop below a pump intake. These submersible pumps last eight to 10 years on average.

It’s possible when the aquifer feeding a well is recharged by precipitations that a dry well will be replenished.

At a GAWA meeting, engineer Willemin talked about one residence where groundwater levels provided by the [health](#) department were nearly identical to prior years.

“When new wells come online, they won’t be pumping any more than what they pump today,” Willemin said.

The process involves rotating water extractions from the different wells.

“Until we get the new wells going (10 and 11), there will be concern,” he added.

A drawdown from one or more wells is temporary. Levels typically return to normal when wells aren’t pumping.

Giles said test wells have been closely monitored. A plan is in place if there is any indication a problem occurs from a GAWA pump, he said.