



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Rowan County Reminds Northeast Water System (NEWS) Customers to Test for Lead in Their Drinking Water**

**SALISBURY, NC, February 25, 2021:** Rowan County would like to take this opportunity to remind customers on the Northeast Water System (NEWS) to use the FREE Lead and Copper Testing Kits provided by the County that were shipped earlier this month by 120Water.

Out of approximately 160 Lead and Copper Testing Kits provided to customers, 40 samples have been analyzed. Of the 40 analyzed samples only (1) one found elevated lead levels that exceed the action level. This (1) one elevated sample is in addition to the previous (4) four samples that contained lead levels that exceed the action level.

“Testing your water is very important. Lead can cause serious health problems and the NEWS customers water may contain lead and copper,” said Aaron Church, Rowan County Manager. “We respectfully ask customers to take advantage of the opportunity they have to help ensure their water is of the highest quality for years to come.”

Rowan County would like to ask NEWS customers to take advantage of the testing being offered. The testing kits were shipped following the January 14, 2021 vote by the Rowan County Board of Commissioners to provide every active connection on the NEWS system with free Brita pitchers, filters, and testing kits. Barring mail delays or returned mail, the majority of the Lead and Copper Testing Kits arrived at NEWS customers’ homes or buildings this month. Approximately 10 kits have not been delivered to customers and Rowan County is taking appropriate steps to make sure that these kits are delivered. If any customer has not received their Lead and Copper Testing Kit please contact Aaron Church at 704-216-8180.

The Board took action in the interests of fully protecting public health as Rowan County continues its work with the State of North Carolina and Virginia Tech University to determine the best, long-term treatment solution to the discovery of elevated levels of lead in drinking water in (4) four out of (20) twenty homes tested on the NEWS system.

The source of lead is limited to privately owned materials as determined by knowledge of the distribution system materials and inspections completed on (2) two of the (4) four homes exceeding the Action Level.

The Lead and Copper Testing Kits were shipped to customers on the NEWS system to gain a complete assessment of the situation, which is why Rowan County is taking this opportunity today to remind NEWS customers to take advantage of this free testing program.

Included with the Lead and Copper Testing Kits is helpful information from Rowan County that provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions. A certified laboratory is conducting the lead and copper tests and the results will be shared with the customers. Included in the testing kits will be pre-paid delivery packets so customers can return their samples FREE of charge.

The testing program is the best way to ensure we choose the correct long-term solution that will reduce the levels of lead for years to come. To thank our customers for their help, Rowan County is offering a \$72.00 credit on their water bill if they return a water sample following the enclosed instructions and using the pre-paid delivery packet.

Rowan County is taking these precautionary steps because lead can cause serious health problems. Customers can reduce their consumption of lead by doing the following:

- Properly use the Brita water pitcher and certified filters provided by Rowan County. We ask that customers carefully read the BRITA LONGLAST User's Guide before using the pitcher and filters to ensure they work properly.
- Customers should have their water tested. Take part in the FREE Rowan County Testing Program when your kit arrives.
- Let cold water run at the faucet for at least three minutes before using it for drinking or cooking.
- Use only cold water. Hot water has the potential to absorb more lead from the piping. Heating or boiling water does NOT remove lead from drinking water.
- Regularly clean faucet aerators. Lead particles can collect in the aerators.

For more information on our Lead and Copper Testing Program, and other information about the current situation, we invite our customers to visit our website at [www.rowancountync.gov/water](http://www.rowancountync.gov/water).

For additional information, please contact County Manager Aaron Church at 704-216-8180.

###