

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe
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PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jeremy Zidek (907) 441-2337

Water service restored in Unalakleet after disruption due to frozen system

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska – The City of Unalakleet restored water service in their community after issuing a local disaster declaration Feb. 26, in response to extreme cold temperatures and high winds that compromised their water treatment and distribution system.

A Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM), emergency management specialist visited the community last week to meet with community leaders, tour the city's water treatment and distribution facilities, and identify areas where DHS&EM can help the community implement their current water system update plan.

The City of Unalakleet, Norton Sound Health Corporation, Department of Environmental Conservation, DHS&EM, and others are working together to address all water issues.

The community's water treatment plant is online, distributing water to most of the community. Three of the community's four water distribution circuits are functioning, and work continues to restore the last circuit.

A well at the Native Village of Unalakleet's Elders Assisted Living Facility provided potable water during the interruption of water service, and the community organized water delivery to those who could not gather water for themselves. Several other community wells are also available as a source of potable water.

The community's four-mile-long transmission line is producing water and the one-million-gallon water tank is being filled. Once sufficient water is in the tank, a sample will be sent to the Department of Environmental Conservation in order to determine if the boil water notice can be rescinded.

The City of Unalakleet is engaged in a multi-year process to upgrade their water system. This effort is funded through a Village Safe Water Capital Improvement Project. In 2018 and 2019, several wells were drilled, but not connected to the community's water treatment or distribution system. Efforts are being made to expedite this process.

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