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Beaver's H2O blows rest of U.S. out of the water

Water wonder: The 15 springs, two wells and lack of chemicals make it the tastiest, clearest and best smelling

By Jason Bergreen
The Salt Lake Tribune

Thomas Ahey thinks he knows why the water in Beaver was named the best in the nation during a taste testing contest.

"Maybe the water tastes so good because I mix a little bit of scotch in it," the 15-year Beaver resident joked.

That's probably not it, but Beaver's water, a mixture of spring and well, took the top honor at the National Rural Water Nationwide Taste Test held in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday. It beat water from Mossy Head Waterworks in Florida and Murdale Water District in Illinois on taste, clarity and smell.

Beaver City Council member Roland Yardley and City Manager Steve Atkin were on hand in the nation's capital to accept the first-place trophy - and bragging rights.

"We were very surprised," Atkin said by phone Wednesday. "We're grateful to live in a little community with such great benefits."

Beaver has about 15 springs and two wells that supply water to the city's 2,400 residents, Atkin said. In addition to its new liquid celebrity, the city was originally known and named for the large number of beaver colonies in its river.

Patricia Baker, who grew up in Beaver, heard about the news of Beaver's water win on television.

"I was shocked," she said. "My husband was in Salt Lake City and I called him and said, 'Guess what we have in Beaver? The best water.'"

Baker, who lived in Pittsburgh, Pa., for three years before returning to reside in Beaver, knows what water in other areas tastes like.

"I think the water [in Beaver] is good," she said. "... It's just clear water that you don't feel like you're getting chemicals. And it's cold."

In March, Beaver's water went up against the water from 46 other Utah cities and water districts during a state taste test in St. George. Utah actually has about 500 water districts, said Rural Water Association of Utah

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executive director Dale Pierson. Beaver held off White City as Utah's best water.

“Small rural water systems that have good wells and springs just naturally have good tasting water,” Pierson said. “My guess is because they did not treat it at all [with chemicals] that it tastes so good.”

Water from Utah has been entered in the national

contest for the past five years, since the contest began, Pierson said.

Beaver's entry is the state's first national winner.

“It's really great,” Baker said. “We have something to put us on the map.”

And though Beaver water may taste, smell and look good, it apparently doesn't have any magical bathing qualities.

“I don't think it makes you any cleaner,” Baker said.

Baker also said Evian water representatives have not been knocking on her door since Beaver's win.

“Not yet, I expect it shortly, however,” she said.

Atkin wasn't sure if bottling Beaver water for distribution was an option the city was contemplating, but “it is definitely worth thinking about,” he said.

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