Poison in the Well
Crestwood officials cut corners and supplied residents with tainted water for 2 decades

By Michael Hawthorne
STAFF REPORTER

The first time in more than 20 years, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency tested the water for residents of Crestwood, a south suburban community of 11,000 in Cook County. The well water was “good to taste but not to waste,” state and village records show. 

Crestwood kept drawing well water from a contaminated well, apparently to save money. Officials kept using the well even though state environmental laws, yet has failed to notify people who drank the water of the contamination, a national reputation for pinch pennies, and sending out fliers proclaiming Crestwood water was “Good to taste but not to waste!” state and village records obtained by the newspaper show they secretly were drawing water from a contaminated well, apparently to save money.

The village avoided scrutiny by telling state regulators in 1986 the well was still contaminated and would use the well only in an emergency. But records show Crestwood kept drawing well water on a routine basis—relentless.

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Like many towns across the nation, Crestwood officials trumpet a nation's page 2. 

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