



# Glencoe gets bragging rights for tap water



By **Donald Liebenson** Special to the Tribune

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A toast to Glencoe for having the best-tasting drinking water in Illinois, as recognized by the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association.

Glencoe took home these bragging rights after prevailing over five regional winners from throughout the state that competed in the Association's 17th Annual Water Taste Contest, which was held this spring in Springfield.

Glencoe, representing the West Shore Water Producers Association, had previously prevailed over Evanston, Highland Park and the Central Lake County Joint Action Water Agency to get to this plateau.

Glencoe now prepares itself for the next round and the chance to be proclaimed the best water produced in North America at the 7th Annual AWWA Water Taste Content to be held June 12-16 in Washington, D.C.

Stevens Point, Wis., won last year, but Nora Bertram, chair of the Water Taste Contest Committee for the Illinois section, likes Glencoe's chances. Illinois, as represented by the Illinois American Water Company-Champaign District, won back-to-back National Competitions in 2005 and 2006, she said.

Glencoe's water flows from Lake Michigan. It was deemed superior over other entrants for its clarity, odor and taste, Bertram said. Not that Glencoe is going to keep Perrier up nights. The contest is more about local pride.

"It's a good opportunity to communicate with residents to let them know they have really good tasting water and they should be proud of that," she said.

Tom Weathers, Glencoe water plant superintendent, said the honor is a testament to his staff.

“It’s the water plant operators who maintain those systems and make sure everything is running as it should,” he said. “I have to give all the credit to them.”

People tend to take their drinking water for granted; turn on the tap and there it is. They may not appreciate the painstaking water filtration process that has evolved over the decades. Perhaps the biggest aesthetic challenge, Weathers said, is chlorine, which is used to disinfect contaminants.

“That’s the most common complaint about the drinking water in this area,” Weathers said. “But that chlorine taste is usually removed by letting a pitcher of water sit in a refrigerator overnight in an open container so it will dissipate. That’s what I suggest to our residents. Rather than spend hundreds of dollars on bottled water, either get a filter unit or let it air out. That’s the method I used before I submitted the sample (for the contest).”

Clearly, 2011 is a good year for Glencoe water. Keith Akers, a wine specialist at Binny’s Beverage Depot in Northbrook, took a taste test.

“It tastes pretty good,” he said. “not at all funky like the water downstate tastes. This tastes like good tap water like it came from a filter.”

Cheers.