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WATER: Widespread availability

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cavities. The prevalence of dental cavities increases with age, as almost 80 percent of 17-year-old children and 85 percent of adults 18 and over have at least one cavity or filling.

If left untreated, dental decay can lead to pain, infection, hospitalization and tooth loss. In turn, this contributes to loss of school and work time, loss of function and loss of self-esteem.

Studies prove water fluoridation is effective

in reducing tooth decay by 20 to 40 percent, even in an era with widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as toothpaste. In the past 40 years, fluoride has been the primary factor in saving some \$40 billion in oral health care costs in the United States.

The Department of Health and Hospitals—Office of Public Health would like to acknowledge the Honorable Greg Jones, mayor of Crowley; Dr. John Taylor, local dentist and member of the Fluoridation Advisory Board; and the staff and administration of the Louisiana Water Company of Crowley for their help and support in bringing this important public health project to the citizens of Crowley.

Please call the Office of Public Health at (225) 342-7973 or (225) 342-9047 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this issue.

Crowley water is now fluoridated

CROWLEY—Dental health should improve for Crowley residents, since the city began adding fluoride to the water supply on May 1, 2008.

Fluoride in children and adults inhibits the bacteria that cause tooth decay and strengthens enamel that has been damaged by bacteria. The greatest benefit of fluoride comes from small frequent doses like those administered in community water fluoridation, such as the effort made in Crowley.

Water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the naturally-occurring level of fluoride to a concentration sufficient to protect against tooth decay.

Because the fluoride level in the water is being raised, it is no longer necessary or recommended that fluoride supplements be given to children who drink from the city's water supply. If a child consumes strictly bottled water, then fluoride supplements may be recommended by a pediatrician or dentist. These conditions apply only to those who use Crowley city water.

Water fluoridation is an important public health measure because tooth decay is at epidemic levels in Louisiana. A Louisiana study showed that six percent of third-grade school children have