

Polluted drinking water is public's top environmental concern —

Concern about global warming inching up

by Joseph Carroll GALLUP NEWS SERVICE, April 20, 2007

PRINCETON, NJ — As the country celebrates Earth Day this year, Gallup's recent Environment Poll updated its annual data on Americans' personal worries about environmental problems facing the country at this time. As has typically been the case, the public is most worried with issues relating to the nation's water supply, particularly polluted drinking water. Global warming concerns have gradually increased over the past two years, and are now at their highest level ever, although not significantly higher than in past years.

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Statewide Water/wastewater Mutual Aid Agreement (ORWARN)

by Mike Gotterba

Events such as Hurricane Katrina remind us that our emergency preparedness efforts need to be ongoing and comprehensive. One of many strategies that support disaster planning is developing mutual aid agreements.

A **WARN** (Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network) is an intrastate utility-to-utility mutual aid system available to all water and wastewater utilities. In early 2006, four states (California, Florida, Louisiana and Texas) had **WARNs** in place. Work had begun nationwide to form a network in each of the 50 states. In summer 2006, a critical mass came together in Oregon and formed a steering committee. In March 2007, Oregon became the fifth state to create a **WARN**.

- ORWARN creates a resource for public and private water and wastewater utilities that did not otherwise exist in Oregon today. The network can be activated and bring in specialized resources to restore/sustain operations with or without any type of formal disaster declaration.
- There is no cost associated with ORWARN membership and utilities are under no obligation to provide assistance.
- In order to be eligible for federal reimbursement, assistance provided through mutual aid agreements requires that the agreements be established prior to the event or emergency.
- The Oregon DHS Drinking Water Program, DEQ, EPA and Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) have participated in the ORWARN steering committee and support the program.

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Flying in to discuss drinking water

by Todd Heidgerken and Paul Eckley

Communicating the value of drinking water and providing “on the ground” examples was the focus of recent visits with the Oregon Congressional Delegation in Washington, DC. The visits were conducted as part of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) “Fly-In” held the week of April 15. The Oregon participants included Paul Eckley of the City of Salem, Todd Heidgerken of Tualatin Valley Water District and Dave Leland, manager of the Oregon Drinking Water Program. Eckley and Heidgerken served as water provider representatives and Leland attended as a member of the AWWA Public Affairs Council.

While in Washington, DC, the Oregon “Fly-In” participants were warmly received by the offices of all seven members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation. The meetings provided an opportunity to sit down with members of Congress or their staff to discuss federal laws regarding safe drinking water and their implementation in Oregon. Of particular interest was the role of federal funding as it relates to Oregon’s drinking water activities and infrastructure needs.

Specifically, the participants talked about the role of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and its use in Oregon. More than \$112 million have been awarded locally for DWSRF projects that promote safe drinking water; this figure seemed to resonate with all members of the Oregon delegation. The list of Oregon communities that have hosted DWSRF projects is long, representing a wide variety in geography and demographics.

The participants had the opportunity to discuss state-level funding of drinking water programs as well. The participants provided updates about what the State of Oregon and local water providers are doing to promote safe drinking water, and noted that water providers have partnered with state and federal agencies to develop funding strategies that efficiently implement the Safe Drinking Water Act.



The visits also provided an opportunity for the Oregon delegation to ask questions related to federal drinking water legislation and its value to Oregon. Congressional members were particularly interested in getting feedback regarding local drinking water infrastructure needs, the regulation of Perchlorate, and new water conservation requirements for household appliances.

The AWWA “Fly-In” provided a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge and information with the Oregon delegation. Participation in the “Fly-In” was made possible by the AWWA and the Oregon Water Utility Council.

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The Oregon Drinking Water Advisory Committee

The Drinking Water Advisory Committee provides advice, consultation and assistance to the Department of Human Services (DHS) on matters of policy relating to protection, safety and regulation of public drinking water in Oregon. The administrator of the Oregon Health Division formed the committee prior to 1981.

The committee is made up of 13 members. Eleven members represent specific organizations:

- American Council of Engineering Companies-Oregon — Robert L. Fuller, CH2M Hill
- Oregon Environmental Laboratory Association — Beth Myers, Waterlab Corp.
- Conference of Local Environmental Health Supervisors — John McEvoy, Linn County Environmental Health
- Conference of Local Health Officials — Vacant
- League of Oregon Cities — Steven Weaver, City of Carlton
- League of Women Voters of Oregon — Sarah Chaplen
- Oregon Association of Water Utilities — Edward Butts, 4B Engineering
- Oregon Environmental Health Association — Gregg Baird, Clackamas County Public Health
- Oregon Public Health Association — Vacant
- Pacific Northwest Section-American Water Works Association — Brian Stahl, City of Gresham
- Special Districts Association of Oregon — Michael Kurtz, Suburban East Salem Water District

DHS solicits two additional members representing specific groups of public water systems that are not represented by specific organizations:

- Large water systems (>100,000 population: City of Portland, Tualatin Valley Water District, Eugene Water and Electric Board, Salem) — Todd Heidgerken, Tualatin Valley Water District
- Private-owned water systems (represented by the Public Utility Commission) — Kathy Miller, Public Utility Commission

The department solicits nominations from represented organizations prior to the end of member terms. The department directly solicits members not representing specific organizations. Each organization nominates its member to the Public Health Director, Department of Human Services, who appoints the member to the committee. Each represented organization may also nominate an alternate to represent the member in their absence.

Committee members serve three-year terms, beginning in the month of July. Approximately one-third of the member terms shall be completed each year. Members may serve consecutive terms as nominated by their organizations.

The committee meets quarterly. The committee may meet more often, based on volume and timing of committee business. The committee chair determines the time and location of meetings based on members convenience and to minimize travel.

The Drinking Water Advisory Committee welcomes attendance at meetings by the public, and includes time on meeting agendas for public input. DHS assists the committee in publicizing meeting dates and agendas, maintains an interested parties mailing and e-mail list, and distributes committee meeting agendas, minutes and other materials as appropriate and requested, to that list as well as to others upon request.

2006 Consumer confidence report

by Tom Mitchell

Reminder: By now, all community water systems should have prepared and delivered a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) to their customers to meet the July 1, 2007 deadline (OAR 333-061-0043). Community systems are public water systems that serve at least 15 service connections or at least 25 year-round residents. If you have not as yet prepared and distributed your CCR and supplied a copy to the Drinking Water Program (DWP), do so immediately.

Community water systems must complete the following annually:

- Before July 1, send a copy of your CCR (for the prior calendar year) to the DWP, and distribute a copy of the CCR to all persons served by the water system; and

- Before Oct 1, send a certification form to the DWP indicating the CCR was distributed and the information is correct. It is recommended that the certification be sent at the same time the CCR itself is sent to the DWP, if you have distributed the CCR to your customers.

For a detailed description of the CCR Rule requirements, you can check out the DWP's web site at www.oregon.gov/dhs/ph/dwp. If you need further assistance in preparing your CCR, contact Tom Mitchell at (971) 673-0417. Thank you for complying with this regulation.

Tom Mitchell is in the Protection, Planning & Certification Unit of the Drinking Water Program / (971) 673-0417 or thomas.j.mitchell@state.or.us

Public concern about drinking water — continued from cover

Overall results

The March 11-14, 2007 poll asked Americans if they personally worry a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all about 10 different environmental problems. A majority of Americans say they worry “a great deal” about four different environment problems involving water: 58 percent are concerned about pollution of drinking water; 53 percent worry about pollution of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs; 52 percent are concerned about contamination of soil and water by toxic waste; and 51 percent worry a great deal about the maintenance of the nation’s supply of fresh water for household needs.

At least four in 10 Americans say they worry a great deal about air pollution (46 percent), damage to the earth’s ozone layer (43 percent), the loss of tropical rain forests (43 percent) and the “greenhouse effect” or global warming (41 percent). Thirty-nine percent of Americans worry about the extinction of plant and animal species. Only 25 percent of Americans worry a great deal about acid rain.

Environmental worries

March 11-14, 2007 — Based on the percentage saying they worry a “great deal” about each problem.

<i>Environmental concern</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Pollution of drinking water	58
Pollution of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs	53
Contamination of soil and water by toxic waste	52
Maintenance of the nation’s supply of fresh water for household needs	51
Air pollution	46
Damage to the earth’s ozone layer	43
The loss of tropical rain forests	43
The “greenhouse effect” or global warming	41
Extinction of plant and animal species	39
Acid rain	25

Public concern about drinking water — continued

Environmental worries trends

Overall, Americans' concern about global warming has not generally shown much fluctuation since Gallup first asked the question in 1989. Still, concerns about global warming are up slightly this year and are at their highest level recorded by Gallup (albeit by only one percentage point). In 1989, roughly one in three Americans worried a great deal about global warming. This sentiment decreased in the mid-1990s, falling to as low as 24 percent in 1997. Then, concerns gradually increased over the next few years, reaching 40 percent in 2000 before dropping again during the earlier part of this decade. But, worry has been on the rise again in the past two years, with about four in 10 Americans expressing a great deal of worry about the issue.

Americans are slightly more likely now than last year to say they worry a great deal about the extinction of plant and animal species. In 2006, 34 percent of Americans said they worry about this problem, five points lower than in the latest poll. Americans expressed a higher level of concern, 45 percent, when Gallup included this problem in its 2000 survey.



The 51 percent of Americans who say they are worried about the maintenance of the nation's supply of fresh water for household needs is also at its highest point. But, it is not significantly higher than it was last year or at other times in the past seven years that Gallup has asked this question.

The latest poll finds little change over the past few years in Americans' concerns about drinking water pollution; the pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs; toxic waste contamination; air pollution; ozone layer damage; tropical rain forest loss or acid rain.

Survey methods

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,009 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted March 11-14, 2007. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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Statewide Water/wastewater Mutual Aid Agreement (ORWARN) — continued from cover

It is anticipated that virtually all of Oregon's major water/wastewater/stormwater utilities and many small utilities will become ORWARN members.

ORWARN welcomes the Oregon DHS Drinking Water Program support. If your jurisdiction or utility is interested in learning more, contact Mike Gotterba, Salem Public Works at 503-588-6347 or mgotterba@cityofsalem.net.

certification corner by Dottie Reynolds

Operator

Following are the exam passing rates by type and level for all of 2006:

Distribution	Number passing/ Number of examinees		Passing rate for 2006
Level 1	77/95		81%
Level 2	50/65		77%
Level 3	28/40		70%
Level 4	22/28		79%
Totals	177/228		77%
Treatment	Number passing/ Number of examinees		Passing rate for 2006
Level 1	61/69		88%
Level 2	24/40		60%
Level 3	8/11		73%
Level 4	8/13		62%
Totals	101/133		76%

Summary

The national average in 2006 for Distribution passing rate was 53 percent. The national average in 2006 for Treatment passing rate was 40 percent.... so, congratulations Oregon Drinking Water Operators! Good job on your exams! In Oregon, the passing rate for 2006 decreased for distribution but stayed the same for treatment from past years: 2005 passing rates for Distribution were 82 percent and Treatment, 75 percent. The 2004 passing rates for Distribution were 82 percent, and Treatment, 77 percent.

You may now go to our Web site at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/dwp/certif> for passing results on exams up to the past six months. Results will be posted four to six weeks after taking the exams. In the future we hope to download exam results from ABC for instant posting.

There are exam references and study materials with sample questions that prepare you for the exams. You may acquire material for the exams by going to our Web site at www.oregon.gov/dhs/ph/dwp or to the ABC Web site at www.abccert.com. We recommend that you utilize the Need-to-Know criteria to determine the study materials for the core competencies for the type of certification you hold. We would like to see future passing rates at 80–100 percent, and eventually all of you passing the exams! Take pride in your choice of profession in knowing that your continued competence is protecting the public health and the environment and providing a much needed and valuable service to your community!

Dottie Reynolds is the Operator Certification Program Coordinator in the Drinking Water Program / (971) 673-0426 or dottie.e.reynolds@state.or.us

Training calendar

CEUs for Water System Operators

Check www.oesac.com for new offerings approved for drinking water.

OAWU

(503) 873-8353	
Aug. 20-22	Summer Classic XIII
Oct. 3-4	Water Treatment/Distribution Certification Review
Oct. 10-11	Water Treatment/Distribution Certification Review
Oct. 15	Safe Drinking Water Act
Oct. 16	Safe Drinking Water Act
Oct. 17	Safe Drinking Water Act
Oct. 23	Source Water Protection Planning

Cross Connection/Backflow Courses

Backflow Management Inc.
(503) 255-1619

Backflow Assembly Tester Course

Sept. 24-28 Portland

Cross Connection Inspector Course

Oct. 8-11 Portland

Water System Training Course

Department of Human Services
Marsha Fox/(971) 673-0408

Sept. * Klamath Falls & Bend

Oct. * Newport & Dallas

* Dates to be announced

Oregon's drinking water operator certification workforce survey

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain the number of drinking water operators in the state of Oregon who will soon be retiring. Nationally, it is estimated that 50 percent of the drinking water and wastewater operators will be retiring in the next 5–7 years — and they will need to be replaced. The Drinking Water Program is very interested in the percentage of retirees for the state of Oregon. We would like you to mark on the survey how many years until you plan to retire. Cut along the dotted line and return the survey to me at the address below. Please return the survey by **September 15, 2007**. As a suggestion, place your survey and your co-workers in one envelope for mailing. We will post the results in a future *Pipeline* newsletter! No names please!

To recruit/invite new people into the profession, both the DHS Drinking Water and the DEQ Waste Water programs are producing a joint Career Opportunity brochure. We hope to offer the brochure to senior high school students on Career Day and place the brochures with colleges.

Workforce survey

Due by **September 15, 2007**

Your certification level: Treatment: _____ Distribution: _____

Years of experience: Treatment: _____ Distribution: _____

I will be retiring in:

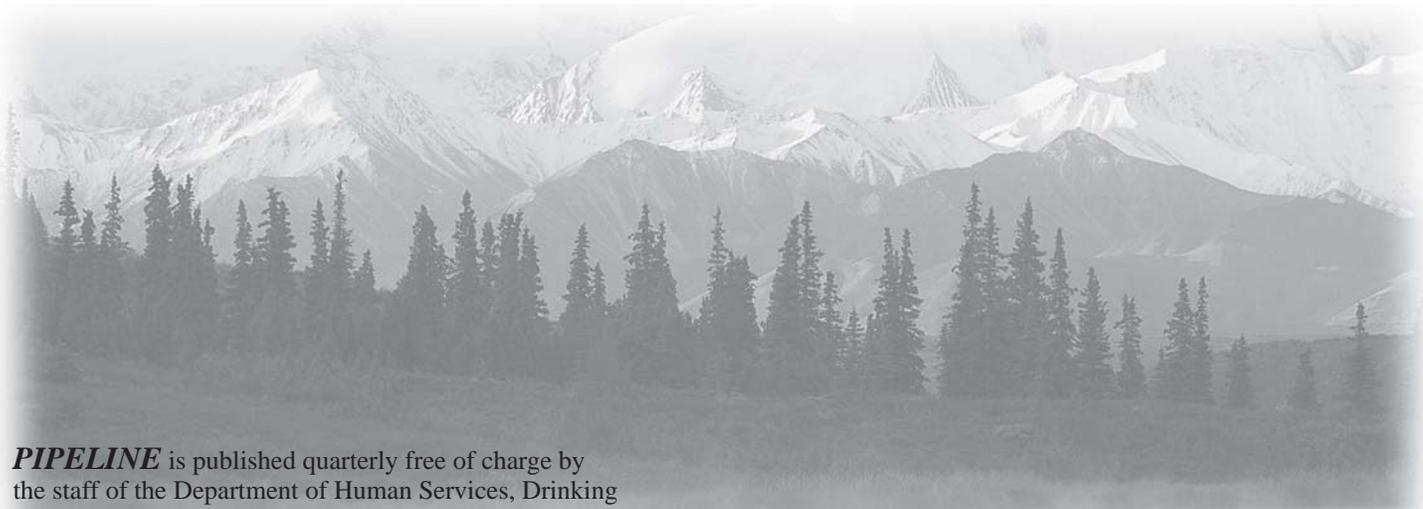
- Fewer than five years
- 5–8 years
- 9–11 years
- 12–15 years
- More than 15 years

Mail to:

DWP
Workforce survey
Attn: Dottie Reynolds
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