

**PROGRAM UPDATE**

*by Dave Leland*

**Arsenic Standard of 10 ug/L Affirmed!**

On October 31, 2001, EPA Administrator Whitman affirmed that the Maximum Contaminant Level for arsenic is set at 10 ug/L (parts per billion). The new standard applies to all community and all nontransient noncommunity water systems. The effective date for water systems to comply is January, 2006. This ends the long-running debate on the arsenic standard.

**Security Issues Still in the Spotlight!**

Water system security remains a top priority at the national level. EPA Training and funding are becoming available. Heading the list are formal security assessments for the largest U.S. municipal water systems, using federal funding, expert contractors, and a nationally-developed security assessment model. In addition, EPA issued guidance for use of the Drinking Water Revolving Fund for security improvement projects at public water systems.

In Oregon, we distributed EPA security guidance (see Fall 2001 edition of the PIPELINE), developed a mechanism to enable local health departments to assist smaller water suppliers (using groundwater sources and serving less than 3,300 people) with emergency planning development and security assessment, and are developing changes in the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund to accommodate security improvement projects. We have appointed Kurt Putnam (503-731-4317) of our staff as security coordinator, and he will be participating in national training, and serving as a resource for Oregon water suppliers and others on security issues.

**2001 Accomplishments, Drinking Water in Oregon**

- 16 Oregon communities, serving a total of 12,000 people, completed water system improvements in 2001 to meet safe drinking water standards.
- Participated in national efforts to improve water system security in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. Distributed security information and recommendations to Oregon water suppliers.
- The Oregon Drinking Water Benchmark improved to 93% (the percentage of Oregonians served by public water systems that met all health-based standards continuously during the year). No waterborne disease outbreaks were recognized in public water systems.
- In collaboration with OECDD, prepared the sixth Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund capitalization grant application (FY02). Total EPA funding available to Oregon communities for safe drinking water projects increased to

*(Continued on page 3)*

**CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS & THE NEW ARSENIC RULE**

*by Mike Patterson*

The new Arsenic rule does not become effective until January 23, 2006 but there are a few Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) requirements that become effective February 22, 2002.

The new arsenic rule published in the Federal Register on January 22, 2001 stipulates that a community water system that detects arsenic above 0.005 mg/L and up to and including 0.01 mg/L must do the following in their 2001 CCR if it is delivered to its customers on, or after February 22, 2002:

1. Include in its CCR a short informational statement about arsenic, using language such as: While your drinking water meets EPA's standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. EPA's standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing the arsenic from drinking water. EPA continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such a skin damage and circulatory problems.
2. May write its own educational statement, but only in consultation with the Primacy Agency (the state).

Community water systems that deliver their 2001 CCRs before February 22, 2002, must comply with the current regulations that require inclusion of educational information when arsenic levels are between 25 and 50 parts per billion (ppb) and mandatory health effects language when systems violate the 50 ppb standard, which remains in effect until the new standard of 10 ppb replaces it on January 23, 2006.

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## CHEMICAL MONITORING WAIVERS AND REDUCTIONS - WHEN?

by Dave Leland

Lately, we've been receiving increasing interest from water suppliers in obtaining waivers and reductions from chemical testing frequencies. This is very understandable considering that:

- expenses continue for monitoring for existing regulated contaminants (94 at last count!).
- most chemical test results are at nondetect levels, or very low detectable levels.
- additional, and probably costly, testing for new contaminants is imminent.
- costs of other water and non-water regulations are continuing and increasing.
- water user concerns about rates are rising.

Our public drinking water rules, and the EPA rules, contain multiple provisions for different types of monitoring reductions and waivers (let's call them MWRs) for various regulated contaminants. So, why haven't we been implementing MWRs? The reason is that we lack the following:

- detailed information on use and distribution of chemicals around the state that is sufficient to justify area-wide MWRs.
- sufficient staff time to process, analyze, justify, and act on MWR requests from water suppliers.
- data management tools sophisticated enough to track individualized chemical monitoring schedules for each water system.

As you know, the drinking water program is insufficiently funded to fully carry out all of our oversight responsibilities under the drinking water rules. We've had to choose between spending our limited time and energy on MWRs to save water suppliers and users money, and spending time and energy on efforts to correct actual water quality problems that affect health. While we are appreciative of and sensitive to water costs, as a public health agency we must be committed first to reducing drinking water health risks.

However, help is on the way:

- DHS and DEQ are working together to complete Source Water Assessments for all public water systems. These assessments delineate source water areas and identify contaminant sources in those areas. Surface water sources will be completed by 2003, and groundwater sources by 2005.
- A statewide pesticide use reporting system is in development.
- We are implementing a new EPA data management system that will have the capabilities needed to track individualized chemical monitoring schedules.
- We are hopeful about increased resources to carry out the drinking water program in 2003-05.

But when will all this result in MWRs? I am hopeful that we may be able to start processing MWRs early in 2003, about a year from now. In the meantime, water suppliers need to stick to the standard monitoring frequencies. If you think you have a waiver

from us already, keep track of it and try not to get too upset with us if we send you a standard nonreporting notice that you don't think you deserve. And, hang in there!

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## RADIONUCLIDES RULE: SAMPLE NOW AND SAVE LATER!

By Kari Salis

The new Radionuclide Rule was finalized on December 7, 2000. States must adopt the rule by December 8, 2002. It applies to ALL community water systems and requires monitoring of more contaminants than in the past, but ultimately at a lesser frequency for most systems. Certain Radionuclides have been found to cause cancer and toxic kidney effects. Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) have been set as follows:

Gross Alpha:	15 pCi/L
Combined Radium 226/228:	5 pCi/L
Uranium:	30 ug/L

Initial Compliance Monitoring must be done. This includes sampling at the entry point for Gross Alpha, Combined Radium 226/228, and Uranium during 4 consecutive quarters between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2007. An MCL has also been set for Beta and Photon emitters (4 mrem/year), but this applies to very few public water systems in Oregon located near nuclear facilities.

The Drinking Water Program is able to accept data collected between June 1, 2000 and December 8, 2003 to substitute for the Initial Compliance Monitoring. The water system must monitor once at each entry point for Gross Alpha, Combined Radium 226/228, and Uranium by December 8, 2003. Samples must be analyzed by an Oregon-certified laboratory, and the system must apply to the State for the data to be grandparented. This will save the water system 3 additional rounds of sampling!

Future monitoring requirements and frequencies are based on the initial or grandparented data. If there are no detections, as is expected in most of Oregon's communities, the system will not have to monitor again until sometime between 2008 and 2016, and every 9 years thereafter. If any result is more than detection level but less than half the MCL, sampling will be required every 6 years (2008 – 2013). If any result is more than half the MCL but less than the MCL, sampling will be required every 3 years (2008 – 2010). If any result is greater than any MCL, the system must continue to sample quarterly until results are reliably and consistently below the MCL, or until a violation is determined and treatment is required. Reverse Osmosis and Ion Exchange are among Best Available Technologies, with several alternatives allowed for small water systems.

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## CITY OF TALENT CONNECTS TO MEDFORD

by Scott Curry

The City of Talent recently completed its connection to the Medford Water Commission as a part of the TAP (Talent-Ashland-Phoenix) intertie project. This 7 million dollar project was several years in the making, and was assisted through the State Safe Drinking Water Program Revolving Loan Fund.

More than 8 miles of pipeline, one regional pumping station, and two reservoirs were included in this project. The reservoirs are each 1.0 million gallons, with one located in Phoenix and the other in Talent. The City of Ashland did not receive immediate benefit from this project, but now has a provision in place for a possible future connection to the Medford supply.

Talent still relies on Wagner Creek and its treatment plant to provide water to approximately 50 homes located in an upper pressure zone. Planning is underway for a booster pump station that will distribute Medford water to this zone as well, and the Wagner Creek treatment plant will no longer be needed.

The primary benefit of the project is that Talent will no longer rely on Bear Creek as its primary water source. Bear Creek has historically demonstrated poor raw water quality due to periodic flooding and upstream sewage bypasses during wet weather, and summertime flows that at times have been critically low. The City will also benefit from increased fire fighting flows and capacity for future development.

*Scott Curry, PE, is in the Technical Services Unit of the Drinking Water Program / (541) 776-6229 ext. 284 or [scurry@oregonvos.net](mailto:scurry@oregonvos.net)*



*Regional Pump Station*

### RULES AND WEBSITE MATERIALS AVAILABLE ON CD!

The drinking water rules are now available on CD. The CD also includes all the informational material that is posted on our web page. To get your CD, contact Marsha Fox at (503) 731-4899.

## SOUTHERN OREGON OFFICE MOVES TO MEDFORD

The Southern Oregon regional office of the Drinking Water Program has moved from Grants Pass to Medford. The address and phone number are as follows:

Department of Human Services  
Drinking Water Program  
2860 State Street  
Medford, OR 97504  
Telephone: (541) 776-6229 ext. 284  
FAX: (541) 776-6013

The office is located in the Senior Services Building, and is staffed by Scott Curry, P.E.

### PROGRAM UPDATE *(continued from page 1)*

\$64M. \$40M have been loaned to 32 communities. Loan applications are pending or in preparation by 17 additional communities (\$19M).

- Nearly completed initial installation of the EPA-designed SDWIS-State compliance database to improve support of regulatory compliance and enforcement efforts, as recommended by the 2001 Audit prepared by the Secretary of State.
- Aligned administrative rules for chemical testing frequency with EPA requirements, as recommended by the 2001 Audit prepared by the Secretary of State.
- Obtained legislative authority to certify operators of small public water systems (HB 2239). Adopted temporary rules, began initial certification work, and drafted permanent rules. Met deadline for submitting operator certification program review package to EPA for their approval.
- Secured legislative authority to staff the "Oregon Capacity Strategy", designed to improve the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of public water systems to provide safe drinking water. Submitted the first progress report to EPA.
- Continued efforts to help local health departments expand the expertise, capability, and funding of their drinking water programs.
- Drinking water program and DEQ staff completed about 1/2 of a statewide effort to assess all sources of public drinking water systems for contamination potential.
- Helped develop a nationwide state drinking water program resource needs self-assessment tool to project staffing needs to implement the federal Safe Drinking Water Act from 2002-2010.

Good work, everyone!

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**TRAINING CALENDAR**

**Oregon Association of Water Utilities**

(503) 873-8353  
 Mar. 19 SDWA Update/System Conservation  
 Apr. 9 Water Rights/System Conservation  
 Apr. 24-25 Water Treatment Certification Review  
 May 1-2 WT/WD Certification Review  
 May 8-9 WT/WD Certification Review  
 May 13 Math for Operators

**American Public Works Association**

(541) 926-0044  
 May 9-10 Pump Station Design Seminar

**Cross Connection/Backflow Courses**

Backflow Management Inc. (B)  
 (503) 255-1619  
 Clackamas Community College (C)  
 (503) 657-6958 ext. 2388

**Backflow Assembly Tester Course**

Apr. 15-19 Portland (B)  
 Jun. 10-14 Oregon City (C)

**Backflow Assembly Tester Recertification**

Jun. 7 Oregon City (C)

**Cross Connection Inspector Course**

Mar. 11-14 Redmond (B)  
 Apr. 15-18 Oregon City (C)  
 May 20-23 Portland (B)

**Cross Connection Inspector Update**

Apr. 19 Oregon City (C)

**Water System Training Course**

Department of Human Services  
 Marsha Fox/(503) 731-4899  
 Mar. 20 Salem  
 Apr. 16 Eagle Point  
 Apr. 22 Hillsboro  
 Apr. 25 Clackamas  
 May 8 The Dalles  
 Jun.\* Coos Bay

*\*Dates and exact locations to be announced*

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