

Protecting Public Health by Assuring Safe Drinking Water

Vol. 19 Issue 1 • WINTER 2004

www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/dwp

TASK FORCE LOOKS FOR SOLUTIONS TO DRINKING WATER PROGRAM WORKLOAD AND FUNDING

by Dave Leland

The drinking water program faces substantial challenges today. Program workload and expectations are primarily driven by national safe drinking water regulations. Since 1974, EPA established 18 final national regulations for 92 contaminants. Funding for the Oregon drinking water program has not kept pace. Needed program improvements were identified by the Oregon Secretary of State in 2001, and by USEPA Region X in 2001 and 2003. At issue is assuring an adequate state drinking water program in Oregon that is effective, credible, and sustainable. The Task Force on Drinking Water Program Workload and Funding began meeting in October 2003 to study these challenges and recommend solutions. This article summarizes the purpose and membership of the Task Force.

The Task Force was proposed in HB 2255 during the 2003 Legislature. The bill as introduced proposed a water supplier connection fee to fund drinking water program operations, and was amended after hearing to delete the fee and create the Task Force. The amended bill was not passed prior to adjournment. Recognizing the importance of the workload and funding issues, the Department of Human Services, the League of Oregon Cities, and the Special Districts Association of Oregon agreed to proceed with the Task Force prior to the 2005 Legislature.

The purpose of the Task Force is to:

- 1) Identify the workload of the Department in effectively administering the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, and
- 2) Identify the funding sources and amounts of moneys needed by the Department to carry out the effective administration of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

(Continued on page 3)

PIPELINE NEWSLETTER – 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

by Dave Leland

We note that Volume 1, Issue 1 of the PIPELINE was published in April 1984! This 20th anniversary gives us all the opportunity to take a brief look back at where we started, and reflect on the progress we have made together.

The lead article in that first issue was “Technical Assistance and Information – Top Priorities for Oregon’s New Drinking Water Program!!” The first issue chronicled the startup of the state drinking water program, with local county health departments as primary program partners. At that time, the state program had 11 staff, and agreements with 16 county health departments. Primacy for the EPA safe drinking water regulations in Oregon was still several years away, and the new state program coordinated its efforts with the separate EPA regulatory oversight of Oregon public water systems. A new five-hour workshop was announced for operators of small water systems. An independent contractor in Eugene took on the management of the voluntary operator certification effort in Oregon with funding support from EPA received through the Pacific Northwest Section-American Water Works Association.

While much has been accomplished over the years, and many changes have occurred, we intend to keep assistance and information in our list of key values. We also intend to keep the PIPELINE at the center of that effort, so be sure to read it!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR)	2
Backflow Program Continues	3
Operator Certification	4
Nitrate Testing	4
City of Pendleton	5
Training Calendar	6

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS (CCR'S)

by Dewey Darold

The requirement that community water systems develop and provide their users with an annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) is now five years old and while many community water systems have successfully implemented the requirements, others can improve. Remember the purpose of the CCR is to inform your water users, it's your chance to tell your story about what you do to protect their health.

In an attempt to clarify requirements and assist systems in complying, we have put some general information on CCR requirements as well as a couple of templates on our website for use as references. The **EPA guidance document** provides detailed instructions on each aspect of the report and provides a sample CCR called **Town Water Quality Report** at the end of the document that includes a sample Table of Detections. There is a lot of flexibility in how a system might elect to use their CCR but there are some essential elements that must be included in the CCR. These are nicely summarized in the **Quick Reference Guide** that is also on the website.

A couple of the key elements that need to be included to meet requirements are:

- A **table of detections** (along with the definitions necessary to interpret the table). This table is designed to give users a snapshot picture of what's in the water and it lists all (and only) the regulated contaminants that were **detected** in the water, even if they were at levels below the standard. Common detections in groundwater are for lead, copper, nitrates, arsenic and barium. Surface water systems may also have some disinfection by products to report. If you weren't required to test in the past year, report the most recent results you have up to five years old. Use the "Data Online" feature of our website to check on our record of your detections.
- A summary of any **violations** that occurred in the past year. There should be an acknowledgment of the violation including any health effects language, a clear explanation of what happened

and what actions were taken to remedy the violations. Use the "Data Online" feature of our website to check on our record of your violations.

- There are a couple of educational statements that are **mandatory language** in your CCR. One deals with how contaminants get into the water and one deals with health information for susceptible populations. The full text is on our website.
- If a source water assessment for your water system has been completed, the CCR must notify your users of the information and means to obtain it. The report must include a brief summary of the systems susceptibility to potential sources of contamination using language provided by the Department or written by the water system operator.

Once you get the basic information down, it's a matter of updating it annually. Most systems will be able to develop an acceptable CCR in two to four pages, including the Table of Detections.

There are two key dates to remember. Your CCR needs to be distributed to users by **July 1** of the following year and you need to send us a Certificate (also on the website) certifying that the CCR was distributed to users and the method whereby it was done no later than **Oct. 1** of the same year. As a practical matter, it seems to work best for most systems to send us the CCR and Certification form at the same time you distribute it to your users. You can check the data online feature on our website to see the records we have of your past CCR submittals as well as detailed information about your particular water system.

Dewey Darold, RS, is in the Monitoring & Compliance Unit of the Drinking Water Program / (503) 731-4381 or dewey.darold@state.or.us

BACKFLOW PROGRAM CONTINUES*by Mary Leverette*

The Backflow Program continues under the direction of the Office of the State Public Health Officer in the Department of Human Services-Health Services.

The new Program Coordinator is Kathryn Mattimore. You can contact her at (503) 731-4007, fax (503) 731-4078.

Prior to the 2003 Legislature, the Department met with an Ad Hoc Backflow Prevention Committee, made up of key stakeholders. The committee developed a consensus around the program scope and direction, and needed revisions to the backflow rules. That effort led to Senate Bill 343, which proposed fees paid by water suppliers to provide additional funding to operate the program. The bill did not pass, however, the Department will proceed with adoption of recommended rule revisions in 2004, and begin preparations for a funding request to the 2005 Legislative Session.

Mary Leverette, MS, is Special Development Manager and Acting Program Manager in DHS Health Services / mary.s.leverette@state.or.us or (503) 731-4002 ext. 233

SAD NEWS

We recently learned that Joe Bogart passed away. Joe worked with the Drinking Water Program from 1990 to 1996. Joe was initially hired to help implement the 1989 law requiring testing of Domestic Wells. He set up a computerized tracking system for the data coming in, designed forms, and compiled informational packets for homeowners, buyers and real estate agents.

From 1991 to 1996, Joe was Administrative Assistant for the Operator Certification Program, handling applications and exams during a period of significant growth in the number of certified operators. Joe approached his work with energy and enthusiasm. He was a caring and fun co-worker. We are all saddened by this loss.

TASK FORCE*(continued from Page 1)*

The Task Force will report its findings to the Department and to an interim committee of the Legislature in early Spring 2004.

The Task Force is made up of 13 members appointed by key stakeholders, and chaired by Roger Jordan, City Manager of Dallas. The Task Force members are listed below. We appreciate the time and energy that each of the members is contributing to this important effort.

Dan Bradley, Oak Lodge Water District (Special Districts Association of Oregon)

Chuck Carpenter, Manufactured Housing Communities of Oregon (Private-owned Public Water Systems)

Dave Crider, Crescent Water Association (Private-owned Public Water Systems)

Jason Green, Oregon Association of Water Utilities (Small Public Water Systems)

Todd Heidgerken, Tualatin Valley Water District (Special Districts Association of Oregon)

Roger Jordan, City of Dallas (League of Oregon Cities)

Mike Meszaros, Curry County Health Department (Department of Human Services)

Tom Penpraze, City of Corvallis (League of Oregon Cities)

Louise Questad, League of Women Voters (Department of Human Services)

Amanda Rich, Special Districts Association of Oregon

Gail Shibley, Office of Public Health Systems, Department of Human Services

Richard Sowa, US Forest Service-Public Water Systems (Federal Agency Representative)

Willie Tiffany, League of Oregon Cities

The Task Force welcomes attendance at meetings by the public. The Task Force meeting schedule and meeting minutes can be found on the drinking water website at <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/dwp>

Dave Leland, PE, is Manager of the Drinking Water Program / (503) 731-4010 or david.e.leland@state.or.us

OPERATOR CERTIFICATION CORNER

by Deb Weatherford

Drinking Water Operator Exams (Grades 1-4 Distribution and Treatment)

Exam applications can be printed from our website: www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/dwp/ Be sure to read the instructions before completing the application.

Regular exams are held the 3rd Thursday of May and October. Regular sites include Portland, Eugene, Bend, Roseburg, and Pendleton. Sites may be changed depending on the number of applicants. Pendleton will hold an exam in conjunction with their Short School in April instead of May—see date below. Pendleton will **not** hold a May exam.

Exam Deadlines for 2004:

Application Deadline: 3/1/04 Exam Date **April 8** (Pendleton Only)

Application Deadline: 4/1/04 Exam Date **May 20** (regular sites except Pendleton)

Application Deadline: 9/1/04 Exam Date **October 21** (regular sites)

2004 Late Renewals Needing CEUs (Grades 1-4)

If you haven't sent in your 2004 Renewal yet, include a late fee. Late fees are based on the date we receive the complete renewal. A complete renewal includes the correct fee, CEUs if listed on renewal, and late fees when needed. If complete renewal is received between 1/1/04 and 3/31/04, a late fee of **\$10** is added. When a complete renewal is received after March 31, the late fee is **\$50**. **2004 CEUs used for 2004 late renewals cannot be used again.** Send a copy of CEUs (if needed), regular and/or late fees due, along with a copy of renewal or incomplete renewal letter to: Cashier—DHS Drinking Water Program, PO Box 14260, Portland, OR 97293-0260.

OESAC Approves Courses for Drinking Water CEUs

Always check www.oesac.com to see if a course is approved for Drinking Water. Be sure to look at the column headings. The Drinking Water CEU column (DWP CEU) lists the total amount of CEUs available for drinking water credit, and the Wastewater column (DEQ CEU) lists the total available for wastewater. If there is nothing in a column, no CEUs are accepted. Note the OESAC ID number and Course Name and use this on your renewal application to ensure proper credit.

Check Out Your System's Online Information

Go to our website: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/dwp/> On the left column, click on "Data Online." Find your water system either by name of system or PWS ID. We have now added the system's certification requirements and a link entitled "Certified Operator(s)", where you will be able to see the operators we have listed for your system. Since operators and DRC operators change, Supervisors or Public Works Directors should call, write, or e-mail us with new information.

Name Change in Op Cert Personnel

Carrie Trachsel got married and is now Carrie Hutchcraft. Congratulations, Carrie!

Deb Weatherford is in the Monitoring & Compliance Unit of the Drinking Water Program / (503) 731-4899 or deborah.a.weatherford@state.or.us

ANNUAL NITRATE TESTING – KEEP IT CURRENT!

by Dave Leland

Regular testing for nitrate and assuring that nitrate levels are below maximum levels is one of the most important requirements for providing safe drinking water. Nitrate has the potential for immediate health effects – short-term exposure above 10 milligrams per liter can especially affect infants. Nitrate is the most frequently detected chemical contaminant in Oregon water systems. Although relatively few water systems have found levels above 10 mg/L, continued vigilance is both necessary and required.

Nitrate testing frequencies were increased years ago by USEPA. All public water systems must test and report ANNUALLY! Yet in 2002, 800 Oregon water suppliers failed to report their nitrate test results! Evidently, 2003 may not be much better. Nitrate testing is our largest single area of reporting violations, and makes safe drinking water regulatory compliance in Oregon look especially poor. Expect serious efforts by the drinking water program this year to improve compliance, and expect consequences for future nitrate reporting failures.

Please take the annual testing and reporting of nitrate levels seriously! Let's solve this problem!

PENDLETON'S NEW MEMBRANE FILTRATION PLANT

The City of Pendleton brought its new membrane filtration treatment plant on line on June 13, 2003, treating water from the Umatilla River. This plant and source combination replaces an historical spring supply that was under the direct influence of nearby surface water. The new system is rated at 6 million gallons per day (at 42 degrees F). About 3 million gallons per day of excess treated water is produced in the winter months, and that water is introduced into two aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells. In the summer, the City will be limited to drawing 1.6 million gallons per day from the river, and draws its remaining supply from its well sources including the stored ASR water. The total cost of the project including ASR was over \$12M, including nearly \$5.9M in state revolving loan funds.



← The membrane filter piping is shown, located above two filter basins. Pictured is Bob Patterson, Pendleton Public Works Director (left), and Gary Burnett, DHS drinking water program.

The membrane modules are shown with the water level in the basin lowered for membrane citric acid cleaning. The membranes are operated under vacuum. Water is drawn from the basin through the outside of the small diameter membrane tubes, and the filtered water is siphoned through the tubes. ⇒



← Chemical feed includes coagulant for color removal and sodium hypochlorite for disinfection. Citric acid and sodium hypochlorite are used for periodic membrane cleaning.

Sodium hypochlorite is generated on site, ⇒ producing a 0.8% solution (8,000 ppm).





Department of Human Services
 Drinking Water Program
 PO Box 14450
 Portland OR 97293-0450

PERIODICALS
 POSTAGE
 PAID
 PORTLAND, OR

TRAINING CALENDAR

CEUs for Water System Operators Check www.oesac.com for new offerings approved for drinking water.

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. 19-23 Portland (B)
 June 7-11 Oregon City (C)
 June 7-11 Portland (B)

Cross Connection Inspector
 Course
 Apr. 12-15 Oregon City (C)
 Apr. 26-29 Portland (B)

Water System Training Course
 Department of Human Services
 Marsha Fox / (503) 731-4899
 March 23 Eagle Point
 April* Salem, Clackamas
 and Hillsboro
 May* The Dalles
 June* Coos Bay
 * Dates to be announced

PIPELINE is published quarterly free of charge by the staff of the Department of Human Services, Drinking Water Section, 800 NE Oregon St., Portland OR 97232, Phone (503) 731-4010. Periodicals postage paid at Portland OR.
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PIPELINE, PO Box 14450, Portland OR 97293-0450
 ISSN: 1072-4028

PIPELINE is intended to provide useful information on technology, training, and regulatory and policy issues to those involved with the state's public water systems to improve the quality of drinking water in Oregon. PIPELINE may be copied or reproduced without permission provided credit is given.