

# GRANT COUNTY

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# HEALTH DISTRICT

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## GRANT COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT Third Quarter 2008

### **FTE's in Environmental Health**

The Environmental Health staff changed from 5.8 FTE to 5 FTE on October 24 with the departure of Jennifer Jessen. Jennifer was responsible for the programs of Solid Waste, Water Recreation, and school plan reviews as well as food program work. These responsibilities will now be divided among the remaining staff members.

All EH staff have completed requirements for registration with the Washington Board of Registered Sanitarians. 5 FTE includes 1 program facilitator, 1 Spanish speaker, and the Director. In addition, we had a person doing inspections for temporary food permits at the Flea Market in Mattawa on Saturdays from May through October.

Each environmental health staff member has multiple responsibilities. Sometimes routine work is delayed when more urgent unplanned activities require attention. Each staff member strives to set priorities of service to the public based on the potential risk to human health and the needs of individual clients.

At the beginning of each year, a report of environmental health goals for coming year is prepared. The intent of this report is to show in qualitative and quantitative terms what progress is being made to realize those objectives.

### **WATER PROGRAM**

The GCHD is responsible to verify that the water supply for each new home or business requiring a building permit from the Grant County Building Department is adequate as regards both quantity and quality. The other major activity is the survey of assigned Group A and Group B water systems. Fees are received for both activities.

**Goal:** To assure that water consumed for domestic use is not a source of disease by providing education to the public to assure that minimum water quality standards established by the Washington State DOH are followed.

### **Objectives for 2007-2008 contract year:**

- A. Originally we planned to complete 13 Group B water systems surveys by June 30. The revenue from other contract activities reduced the number to 9. The Health District has obtained additional funds for 5 additional surveys to be completed by June 30. All of these

surveys have been completed. Because of additional contract funds, the Health District has added an additional 9 Group B surveys to be completed by Dec 31.

- B. Conduct a workshop for operators of Group B water systems.  
This was held Feb 26, 2008.
- C. Send notification of monitoring requirements to Group B water systems. This was sent to 239 systems for which the contract allowed \$10/system.
- D. Complete a sanitary survey for 21 assigned Group A water systems during 2008. Sixteen of these have been completed.
- E. Allow staff members to attend training required to maintain certification to conduct water system surveys. 5 staff members are certified by the Washington Department of Health as qualified to conduct public water system sanitary surveys. Certification training is required every 3 years. 2 people attended in April. Two others attended in June.
- F. Review applications and approve creation of new Group B water systems having less than 5000 gal/day withdrawal. One new system was approved in March and 3 others in May and June.

### **FOOD PROGRAM**

The GCHD is required by WAC 246-215 to license and inspect all food establishments within Grant County. Permit fees support this and related work such as illness investigation.

**Goal:** Provide education to the public and to food establishments regarding safe methods to prepare, store, and serve food. Prevent the occurrence of illness resulting from consumption of food from public food establishments.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Establish a monthly food inspection goal for each staff member and complete that number throughout the year.  
For complex food service establishments requiring two annual inspections, 282 of 285 were completed Jan-June, 2008. During the third quarter, 153 of these received a 2<sup>nd</sup> annual inspection.  
During Jan-Sept, 2008, 218 of 287 food establishments requiring one inspection/year were visited.
- B. Inspect the operation of all temporary food establishments requiring a permit.
  - 648 temporary food permits were issued from Jan-Sept, 2008.
  - 633 temporary food permits were issued in 2007. Approximately 90% of temporary food permits are normally applied for from April through September.
- D. Review plans, conduct pre-opening inspections, and issue permits for new businesses.  
As of Sept 30, 43 food service businesses either changed owner ship or opened for the first time during 2008.

Food worker cards

- 3564 people were issued a food service worker permit as of Sept 30, 2008.
- Proportionally this represents an increase of approximately 10% in the cards given in 2007 and 2006, 4041 and 4297 respectively.
- For most employees, the food worker card class is the only instruction they receive. This requirement receives emphasis during all food inspections.

Re-inspections

- Of the 221 food inspections completed Jan-Mar, 2008, 16% required a re-inspection and 4% a second re-inspection.
- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter the re-inspection rate was 18% and 5% respectively.
- During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the percentages were 21% and 8%.

**SEWAGE PROGRAM**

Septic system permit work and land development evaluations are generally fee supported. This activity is the largest source of revenue for Environmental Health and requires the greatest amount of time.

**Goal:** There will be no illness resulting from exposure to effluent from on-site sewage disposal system

**Objectives:**

- A. Septic systems are designed according to requirements of WAC 246-272.
  - The designers’ report of soil conditions is reviewed on site for each application.
  - All submitted designs are reviewed for accuracy before a permit is issued.
- B. Septic systems will not fail within 10 years of installation
  - An operation and maintenance manual is required for all new alternative septic systems.
  - The installer of the septic system is required to have a copy of the permit and the design at the site available to him during all phases of construction.
  - An as-built drawing is required from the installer at the time of final inspection.
  - An inspection of the completed installation is done by staff member before any portion of it is covered
- C. Applications for plats and other land development will not be recommended for approval until suitability for water and sewage treatment facilities are established.

	New Permits	Repairs	Site Evaluations Only	Existing System
Total Jan-Sept, 2008	**238	*21	212	88
Total 2007	363	43		138
Total 2006	433	42	185	151

\* 3 of these repairs were for systems less than 10 years old

\*\* This number represents a decrease of approximately 25% from 2006 and 2007.

## **SOLID WASTE PROGRAM**

There are two primary activities

- 1 Permitting of the landfills and land application sites. These require a review of new applications and inspections before and during operation.
- 2 Enforcement of Grant County and Washington regulations regarding illegal dumping and other solid waste complaints.

The GCHD receives 75% grant funding from DOE for both of these activities

**Goal:** To avoid contamination of ground and surface water resulting from improper disposal practices, and protect the public from the nuisances of insects, rodents, and odors and other environmental hazards associated with illegal solid waste activities.

### **Objectives:**

- A. For the contract period 2008-2009, all permitted facilities will require one annual inspection. This is a change from previous years during which quarterly landfill inspections were required.
- B. During this contract period, the Health District will be responsible to respond to 20 solid waste complaints each quarter. Some of the complaints require additional time because of the difficulty of correction or unwillingness of the landowner cannot to correct the problem. 5-10 complaints have been received during each quarter of 2008. Jan-Sept approximately 400 other actions and contacts were made regarding this program.

## **VECTOR PROGRAM**

Vector refers to animals including insects, arthropods, which is capable of transmitting a disease to people. West Nile virus, Hantavirus, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Rabies are examples.

**Goal:** Zero cases of vector-born diseases.

### **Objectives:**

- A. GCHD protocol for "Human Rabies Exposure" will be followed for all reported animal bites.
  - Animal bite reporting form was sent to health care providers.
  - 116 animal bites were investigated in 2007.
  - The total number reported Jan-Sept is 113.
    - 2 animals was tested for rabies, and both were negative.
    - Of the 113 animals, there were 84 dogs, 24 cats, 1 gopher, 1 mouse, 1 squirrel, and 2 unknown.
- B. Provide information to the public regarding disease prevention. An example is the information given regarding reports of dead birds and the procedure for evaluating the ones to be tested for West Nile Virus.

In 2006 nearly 1000 human cases of West Nile virus were reported in Idaho. Despite the expectation, no human cases were reported in Washington in 2007. In 2008, WNV was found in 57 mosquito samples, 22 birds, 40 horses, and 2 people. Of this number, 2 mosquito pool samples, 1 bird, and 10 horses were in Grant County.

One case of relapsing fever was investigated this quarter. It appears likely that the tick exposure was near Coeur d'Alene, ID.

## **CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL HAZARDS**

This program involves 2 types of work:

1. One is to evaluate the severity and relative risk to the environment and human health from spills of toxic chemicals.
2. The other is to identify sites used for manufacture of illegal drugs and assist the property owner in determining when the level of risk is acceptably low.

**Goal:** Zero disease or injury from chemicals in the environment.

### **Objectives:**

- A. Post all sites identified by law authorities as illicit drug labs when notified by law enforcement with a warning, evaluate the property, and post with a second notice if determined unfit. Three drug labs were posted during 2007. No new drug labs were reported Jan-Sept, 2008. One lab from 2007 was remediated in 2008.
- B. Contact the owners of posted property to verify that dwellings are not reoccupied until the level of chemical residue within the dwelling is at an acceptable level.
- C. Identify and characterize sites affected by chemicals harmful to health and to the environment. Five sites were visited and evaluated during the first 3 quarters of 2008.

## **LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

This program exists to prevent disease or injury in areas where people congregate or reside. In the GCHD, this involves work with public swimming pools and with schools. Schools plan reviews and siting must be approved.

Public swimming pools are permitted and evaluated annually. Regulation of smoking in places of employment is also included in this program.

- Goal:**
1. Zero injuries or illness resulting from the use of water recreation facilities.
  2. Restrict smoking from all indoor places of employment.
  3. Assure that environmental conditions of classrooms in public schools meet the standards of "Primary and Secondary School Regulations" for Washington State.

### **Objectives:**

- A. Perform 2 regular inspections of indoor swimming pools or spas and 1 regular inspection of seasonal water recreation facilities. Of licensed water recreation facilities, 21 are indoor and 36 outdoor. Jan- Sept, 2008 the following work was completed:  
52 first inspections of which 22 were closed

29 second inspections of which 15 were closed

- B. During the summer of 2008, write a news release for local media regarding water safety.
- C. Review and authorize all plans for construction in schools that require a building permit.
- D. Use education and enforcement policy to restrict smoking where people work indoors.

### **EPIDEMIOLOGY**

This program involves the investigation of any disease which may have food, water, sewage, solid waste, vectors, or toxic substances involved as a possible cause. The Health District is responsible to learn the cause of illnesses, and to track the number and occurrences of reportable diseases.

**Goal:** Zero secondary cases of any communicable cases.

**Objectives:** Investigate all reported cases of reportable diseases including secondary cases to learn the cause of the illness and educate those affected to prevent further occurrence.

- A. Illnesses related to food, sewage, or water are referred to environmental health staff for investigation.

During Jan-Sept, 2008, the following number of cases were reported and investigated.

▪ Salmonella,	7
▪ E. coli	2
▪ Campylobacteriosis	11
▪ Listeriosis	2

- B. Information collected for each illness investigated is recorded in the Public Health Information Management System (PHIMS).

This has been done for each of the cases with the exception of Noro virus for which the information is reported as part of the investigation.

### **WELL DELEGATION**

This is the second year of this contracted program with the Department of Ecology. Our responsibilities are to verify that wells are properly sealed, a DOE identification tag is put on the well casing, and that wells are properly sited.

**Goal:** Inspect half of the wells drilled in Grant County. Of those visited, a minimum of one-fourth will be visited when the well driller is present.

### **Objectives:**

- A. All wells are sealed to a minimum depth of 18 feet with the result that the well casing will not serve as a conduit for surface water to reach the aquifer.
- B. If the well location is designated on a plat, the well driller is aware of the location and places the well accordingly.
- C. Wells are adequately separated from sources of contamination.

The Health District has agreed to visit half of the wells drilled in Grant County of which we are notified. Jan-Sept 70 new wells were reported 28 were visited.