



News Release

March 9, 2009

**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

IT'S TIME TO SCHEDULE YOUR ANNUAL WATER WELL CHECKUP

March 8 - 14, 2009 is National Ground Water Awareness Week, which recognizes ground water as one of our most valuable and renewable natural resources. Southwest District Health reminds private well owners the importance of testing their private well water annually to better ensure safe drinking water. In Idaho, nearly 95% of the population receives its drinking water from private wells.

“Water from private wells is not monitored, tested, or regulated by any public entity so the ultimate responsibility to protect your family against potentially dangerous contaminants rests with you, the private well owner,” said David Loper, Director of Environmental Health Services for Southwest District Health.

According to Loper, if you use water from a well, you are also responsible for keeping the water well in good working order. Testing your well water by a state certified lab every year, especially if there is a change in taste, odor, or appearance; when your water system is serviced; and if there is an infant in the home are proven best practices. In addition, ensuring all potential contaminants on your property are kept away from your drinking source and taking measures to protect your well head are also very important.

“Just as periodic checks of furnaces and smoke detectors are recommended, we strongly suggest private well owners test their well water annually. Spring is especially timely before peak water use begins,” said Loper.

A check of your well may include:

- A flow test to determine system output, along with a check of the water level before and during pumping (if possible), pump motor performance (check amp load, grounding, and line voltage), pressure tank and pressure switch contact, and general water quality (odor, cloudiness, etc.).
- A well equipment inspection to assure it's sanitary and meets local code.
- Testing for coliform bacteria, nitrates, and anything of local concern. Southwest Idaho has had high levels of arsenic, fluoride, and uranium in many areas. If you have old plumbing with lead soldering, check the lead and copper levels in your water. If you have problems with staining, water appearance, and odor test for iron, manganese, water hardness, and sulfides.

-MORE-

MEDIA CONTACT

Laurie Boston
(208) 455-5325
(208) 899-1268 cell
laurie.boston@phd3.idaho.gov

Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington Counties

IT'S TIME TO SCHEDULE YOUR ANNUAL WATER WELL CHECKUP

Page Two

March 9, 2009

SWDH also recommend that well owners:

- Keep hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from your well, and maintain a “clean” zone of at least 50 feet between your well and any kennels and livestock operations.
- Maintain proper separation between your well and buildings, waste systems, and chemical storage areas.
- Periodically check the well cover or well cap on top of the casing (well) to ensure it is in good repair and securely attached. Its seal should keep out insects and rodents.
- Keep your well records in a safe place. These include the construction report, and annual water well system maintenance and water testing results.

Ground Water Awareness Week is sponsored by the National Ground Water Association (NGWA) as the nation’s leading authority on the use and protection of ground water.

If you need help in deciding what to test, locating a certified lab, or understanding your water test results, call Southwest District Health at (208) 455-5400.

#####

2009-08

NOTE TO EDITOR: Additional resources include: Southwest District Health, <http://www.swdh.org/private-public-water.asp>; DEQ, http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/prog_issues/ground_water/wells/overview.cfm or http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/prog_issues/drinking_water/faqs.cfm; http://www.wellowner.org/Eight_Tips.pdf; and <http://www.wellowner.org/awellmaintenance/annualcheckup.shtml>