

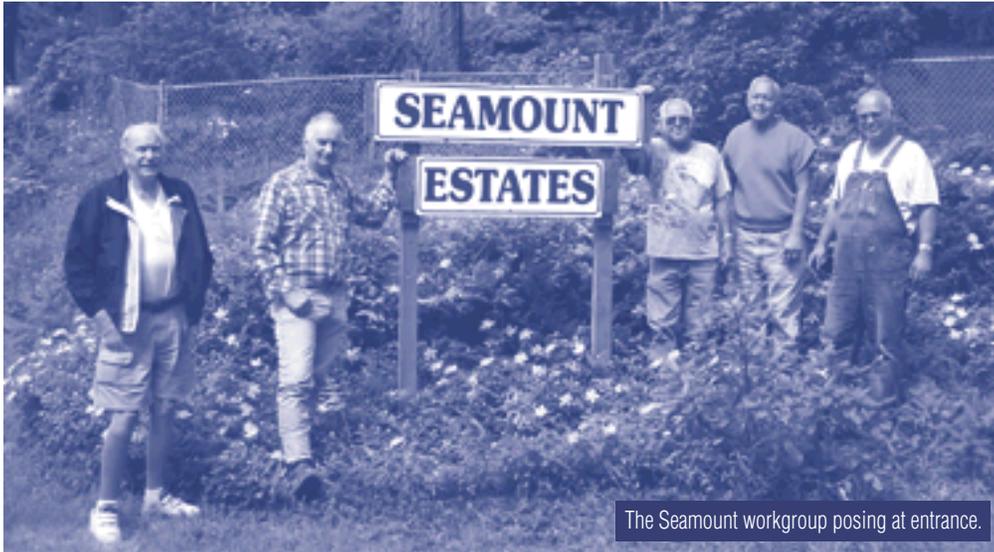


# WATER TAP

WASHINGTON'S DRINKING WATER NEWSLETTER



Volume 20, #5 - Sept. 2005



The Seamount workgroup posing at entrance.

## Efficient use of water DOES pay

By Herbert "Skip" Rand • Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Last summer Tom Bowdish, board president of the Seamount Estates Homeowners Association, contacted me and asked for technical assistance for the drinking water system. Seamount has 151 lots with about 53 active water connections.

I started by meeting with Tom and some of the board members and providing sample programs from the Department of Health's Small Water System Management Program. We also discussed the new Municipal Water Law and water use efficiency rules currently being developed.

Tom and board member Roger Ricker had recently attended an Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (ERWoW) conference, and met with Derek Zock, one of the many experienced field staff working for ERWoW.

With the advice they received from me, on-site fieldwork with Derek, and the information they learned at the conference, Tom, Roger, and contractor Ken McCain took off like an F-15 on full afterburner.

Tom Weeks (board) and Roger led the review and revision of policies and operating rules. An aggressive leak detection program was initiated, and an estimated 40,000 gallons of water is being saved *per day*.

"We were making the PUD rich because of electrical costs due to leaks!" said Tom. Seamount's electric bill was cut in half, saving over \$160 each month. They are taking these savings and using the money to fund water system improvements.

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# THE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

BY DENISE ADDOTTA CLIFFORD



What training is truly relevant for a certified water works operator? This topic has been a source of contention for as long as I've worked in the Office of Drinking Water (ODW), and probably much longer.

If training is to be relevant to the work of water system operators, it must build their knowledge in ways that help protect public health. We all know the horror stories: North Battlefield, Milwaukee, Walkerton... Additional tragedies are prevented every day by operators who take their responsibility for protecting public health seriously – and who have the knowledge to do so.

Our job, as the certifying agency, is to make sure any training used to meet an operator's professional growth requirements is appropriate to the tough job of running a safe and reliable water system.

Because this is such an important area of responsibility, for operators and for us, one of the first things I did as ODW director in 2004 was to ask staff to take a hard look at how we determine relevancy. Because of their efforts, we made two changes I believe will go a long way toward addressing the concerns operators and others have shared with us.

First, we clarified the definition of "relevant water system training" in chapter 246-292-010 of the Washington Administrative Code. The new language should clear up questions raised in recent years about the types of management training that meet the relevancy criteria, and is consistent with the policy direction established in 2002 by my predecessor, Gregg Grunenfelder.

Individual courses will continue to be evaluated for relevancy. The law says courses must relate directly to managing the operation or maintenance of a water system. Examples include drinking water

regulatory compliance, capacity development, rate setting, financial viability, water system security, and responding to drinking water emergencies. General courses do not qualify, such as time management, supervision, personnel issues and communicating with difficult people.

Second, we directed one of our staff engineers to provide a technical review of any courses denied by the Professional Growth Relevancy Subcommittee (see sidebar). This will ensure ODW has additional input evaluating courses on new or emerging subject matter, such as Municipal Water Law.

We want all certified water works operators to have an opportunity to meet their professional growth requirements. We are also responsible for ensuring certified operators are well equipped to protect public health.

## Who makes relevancy decisions?

- The Washington Environmental Training Center (WETRC) evaluates individual courses submitted for CEU (continuing education units) assignment, under the Office of Drinking Water's (ODW) direction.
- The Professional Growth Relevancy Subcommittee, consisting of three members of the Water Works Operator Certification Advisory Committee, evaluates all courses that may not meet the ODW relevancy criteria.
- A technical expert from ODW reviews training the subcommittee denies to ensure new and emerging issues are considered.
- ODW makes final decisions on all relevancy denials. To appeal a decision, follow the Water Works Certification Program appeal procedures.

## Operators and water systems

# You must report changes in writing

### Operators

Certified operators are required to submit all changes **in writing** to the Water Works Operator Certification Program. Operators must send in changes of home address, home phone number and employer information.

A change of address is especially critical for the annual renewal process. Every year, some operators lose their certification because they do not receive their renewal notices in the mail.

Please send all operator changes in writing to:

Water Works Operator  
Certification Program  
P.O. Box 47822  
Olympia WA 98504-7822

### Water Systems

If there are any changes in your water system(s), you must review and submit

an updated Water Facility Inventory form (WFI) to your regional WFI coordinator within 30 days.

Be sure to report the following changes:

- Mailing Address
- Water system name
- Water system category
- Ownership
- Management (Certified Operator or Satellite Management Agency)
- Population served
- Number of connections
- Water sources
- Storage facilities
- Filtration or other treatments

In addition, Group A systems must update their WFI annually, or as requested by the Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (ODW). Group B systems must respond when ODW periodically sends them their WFI for review update.

An up-to-date WFI – with brief explanations of all changes – is most valuable to your consumers and ODW.

For example, important information, such as water quality monitoring reports, frequently doesn't get to the right person or place because ODW has old, incorrect information.

Please send changes in writing to your regional WFI coordinator:

**Eastern Region** - George Simon  
Washington State Department of Health  
1500 W 4th Ave., Suite 305  
Spokane WA 99204

**Northwest Region** - Shasta Guinn  
Washington State Department of Health  
20435 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Suite 200  
Kent WA 98032

**Southwest Region** - Brad Brooks  
Washington State Department of Health  
P.O. Box 47823  
Olympia, WA 98504-7823

In addition, you must report any changes in the mandatory water works operator in writing to the Water Works Operator Certification Program at the address listed at left.

## Water System Capacity report available in October

The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) will submit a report to the governor in October on the state's efforts to ensure water systems have the technical, managerial and financial capacity to meet local, state and federal drinking water standards.

1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act require each state to develop and carry out a capacity strategy. Beginning Oct. 1, 2002, and every three years thereafter, states must report on their progress in carrying out their capacity strategy to the governor, the public and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Since developing its capacity strategy in 1997, ODW has made significant progress. ODW takes the following actions to achieve its overall capacity goal and to succeed in its mission to protect public health by ensuring drinking water is safe and reliable:

- Implements prioritized compliance strategy
- Issues annual operating permits
- Administers Operator Certification Program
- Reviews water system plan and other relevant documents
- Conducts sanitary surveys

- Uses new data system "Sentry"
- Administers Source Water Assessment Program
- Provides comprehensive training and outreach
- Administers Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
- Administers Water System Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program
- Implements security and emergency response program
- Partners with others who share the goal of ensuring safe and reliable water

These efforts have been successful. Washington has very few "failing" water systems or systems under active enforcement. There are, however, still challenges facing water systems and ODW. The report highlights the progress and the remaining challenges involved in ensuring Washington water systems meet drinking water standards.

In October, you can get a copy of the Water System Capacity report online at <http://www4.doh.wa.gov/dw/publications/publications.cfm> or by calling (800) 521-0323.

## New video on water system liability available

Operators, managers and board members often want to know how to reduce the risks and liabilities associated with their jobs. Last year, one of the presentations at the Drinking Water Seminars covered this subject and included a short video.

Many people requested more information on this topic. As a result, the Office of Drinking Water produced a longer, in-depth video with funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This 55-minute video in VHS format identifies some of the liability issues facing many water systems and provides ideas to reduce those risks.

**Water System Liability (331-322)** features interviews with an attorney and a risk manager and covers such topics as:

- The most common types of insurance claims.

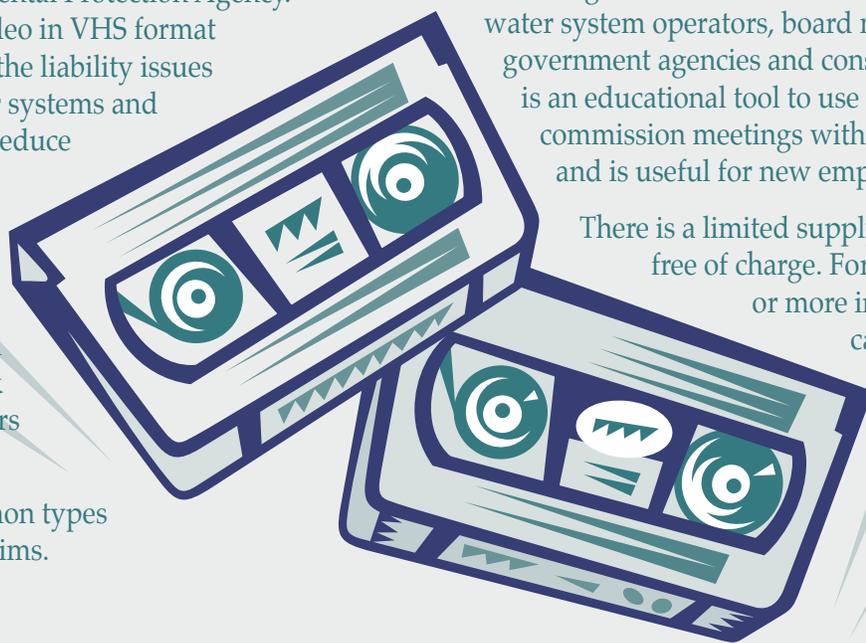
- The types of insurance a water system should have.
- Why people contact an attorney and begin civil action against their water purveyor.
- What an operator, manager or board member can do to reduce liability.

The responsibilities associated with providing safe and reliable drinking water have never been greater. The actions you take to reduce your legal risk are the very same things that will help your water system provide safe drinking water.

Preventing illness takes a lot of work on behalf of water system operators, board members, various government agencies and consumers. This video is an educational tool to use at open board or commission meetings with your customers and is useful for new employees.

There is a limited supply of videos available free of charge. For a copy of the video or more information, please call (800) 521-0323

or visit our Web site at <http://www4.doh.wa.gov/dw/publications/publications.cfm>



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### *Efficient use of water DOES pay* - (Continued from Page 1)

Since most of the serious leaks were in individual service lines, Seamount initiated a campaign to educate customers and provides assistance with finding leaks on private property. The system is not currently service metered, but the public relations effort has resulted in a *voluntary* metering program. Tom reports he has a waiting list for service meter installations.

In addition, operating costs were discussed at a public meeting. Since then, Seamount customers' voluntary contributions have amounted to about \$3,500. How often have you heard anything like that? Customers voluntarily giving a water system their money!

In summary, here's a system that took action. They have anticipated the upcoming water efficiency rules and are working hard to properly operate and maintain their water system.

*Editor's Note: The Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) is a federal nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance to small, rural communities.*



# Especially for Small Systems

## Assistance for small water system owners and operators

### Contract operators available

Operating a public water system includes many duties and responsibilities necessary to protect public health. Most Group A systems are required to have a certified operator. However, many systems do not have the resources to employ full-time certified operators, so they hire a contract operator instead.

If you need help operating your water system or developing your cross-connection control program, look for

help on the list of contract operators the Water Works Operator Certification Program developed. A contract operator is an individual responsible for the daily operational activities of three or more public water systems. The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) requires contract operators to have certification as a water distribution manager and cross-connection control specialist.

### The contract operators list

The contract operators on the list asked to be included so they could offer their services to small systems needing a certified operator. ODW publishes the list – in order by county – as a public service and not as an endorsement for the contractors.

### A signed contract

If you hire a contract operator, please be sure to develop a contract to protect your water system and your certified operator. The mandatory elements for a contract are in **Contract Water Works Operators: A guide to requirements (331-218)**. This publication is available online at <http://www4.doh.wa.gov/dw/publications/publications.cfm> or by calling (800) 521-0323.

### More information

For a copy of the list or more information, call Gael Kantz at (800) 525-2536 or (360) 236-3145, e-mail [gael.kantz@doh.wa.gov](mailto:gael.kantz@doh.wa.gov) or visit the ODW Web site at [http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our\\_main\\_pages/opcertification.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/opcertification.htm)

## ODW deploys compliance strategy for cross-connection control

In June the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) deployed a cross-connection control (CCC) compliance strategy. The compliance strategy identifies the process ODW uses to bring water systems into compliance with state cross-connection control rules.

ODW used 2004 Annual Summary Report (ASR) results to identify systems out of compliance with the rules. ODW sent letters to 45 community water systems serving 1,000 or more connections for two types of violations:

1. Failure to submit CCC forms for the 2004 reporting year.
2. Failure to comply with the mandatory premises isolation requirements for *selected* high health hazard premises.

Four water systems did not complete their 2004 ASRs. ODW notified them to complete and submit the ASRs by July 18. Of the four, two also failed to submit 2003 ASRs.

Currently, ODW is emphasizing compliance with the premises isolation requirements for the following *selected* high health-hazard premises:

- Nuclear reactors or radioactive material processing plants
- Wastewater treatment plants
- Wastewater pumping and lift stations
- Properties with both reclaimed and potable water

The CCC rules require isolation of these premises with an approved air gap (AG) or reduced pressure backflow assembly (RPBA). Forty-one water systems reported serving water to high-hazard premises not meeting this requirement. These systems must do one of the following for each of the premises by Sept 21, 2005:

- Document installation of the appropriate type of backflow preventer to isolate the premises from the public water system.
- Document they have eliminated water service to the high-hazard premises.
- Submit a CCC Action Plan describing the system's proposed schedule and plan to eliminate water service or install a backflow preventer.

The rules also require drinking water suppliers to develop and implement CCC programs to prevent water system contamination from unprotected cross connections. Preventing backflow from high health-hazard premises (by eliminating water service or installing an AG or RPBA on the water service line) is an essential part of a CCC program.

For more information on CCC compliance, call Terri Notestine at (360) 236-3133 or e-mail [terri.notestine@doh.wa.gov](mailto:terri.notestine@doh.wa.gov)

# New arsenic standard goes into effect soon

The maximum contaminant level (MCL) for arsenic officially drops to 10 micrograms per liter for all existing water sources on January 23. The standard became effective for any new sources of supply in January 2004. The lower federal standard applies to all Group A community and non-transient non-community (NTNC) public water systems.

These water systems must test their surface water sources for arsenic no later than Dec. 31, 2006, and their groundwater sources no later than Dec. 31, 2007. However, arsenic data for samples collected anytime after January 1, 2005, and analyzed by a certified lab will satisfy the initial monitoring requirement.



If a Group A community or NTNC public drinking water source has a confirmed arsenic level in excess of the MCL, the system will need to address it – either by treating it or by using an alternate, low-arsenic water source.

The Office of Drinking Water has prepared guidance for small water systems looking at physical treatment options. To get a copy of the department's **Guidance Manual: Arsenic Treatment**

for Small Water Systems (331-210), call (800) 521-0323 or visit the ODW Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/publications/publications.cfm>

# New coliform reporting forms are available

Water systems may soon start noticing a few differences in their routine coliform monitoring reports. The Office of Drinking Water recently revised the reporting form for coliform bacteria analyses. The last revision was 13 years ago.

Actually, there are two formats now available for laboratories to use. One is similar to the old form, about 4-by-11 inches but with some restructuring and a few new information boxes. The other contains the same basic format and information, but is about 5-by-8 inches. This newer size was developed to meet postal requirements for window envelopes some labs use to mail results to water systems and ODW.

The U.S. Postal Service is increasingly returning mail not conforming to strict requirements for use of window envelopes.

The forms are not scheduled for routine use until next year. However, some labs may choose to start using them now, so some water systems may see them soon.



## Health Advisory Manual

### *What to do when your water quality is at high risk*

Sometimes public water systems have incidences of poor water quality, such as bad coliform results in their distribution system, high levels of a chemical in their source water, or a compromise of their piping or treatment facilities.

When this happens, there are always additional health risks to the system's customers. The water system must evaluate these health risks and take the steps necessary to minimize the possible impacts on the people it serves.

The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) has prepared an internal guidance document to help staff and managers support water systems as they address situations posing an immediate threat to consumers. It expands upon a previous document dealing only with microbiological water quality concerns, and helps with decisions on:

- Assessing risk level
- Public notification
- Actions advised for system customers
- Developing and issuing news releases
- Lifting advisory actions

If there is a problem at your water system, staff at your ODW Regional Office stands ready to assist you.

**Eastern Region** – (509) 456-3115

**Northwest Region** – (253) 395-6750

**Southwest Region** – (360) 664-0768



# September is National Preparedness Month

The Homeland Security Department and the American Red Cross co-sponsor National Preparedness Month to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools.

Activities encourage individuals to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, be informed about different threats and get involved in preparing their communities.

“No community is truly prepared for a disaster until every individual, family and household takes personal responsibility for preparedness,” says American Red Cross President and CEO Marsha J. Evans. “Red Cross chapters across the country are helping people learn how to create a family disaster plan so each person knows what to do, where to go, and how to contact loved ones.”

For more information, or to get involved, visit the Homeland Security Web site at <http://www.ready.gov/>



## 2006 allotment for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grant

### State's infrastructure needs rise, share of grant declines

Every four years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must provide congress a Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey. EPA uses the results of the most recent survey to allocate Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (DWSRF) to the states based on their share of the total national need.

EPA's 2005 report shows Washington's needs rose from about \$4 billion, reported in both 1997 and 2001, to more than \$6.6 billion. At the same time, the state's share of the total national DWSRF grant decreased from 2.49 percent to 2.14 percent.

EPA based its 2005 report on a 2003 survey of community water systems and non-profit non-community water systems across the nation.

The survey contains information reported by states on the costs of constructing system improvements needed to deliver safe and reliable drinking water to the public. The total national 20-year need increased from about \$150 billion, reported in the previous two cycles, to more than \$275 billion.

Staff at ODW would like to thank the 61 Washington-based water systems that participated in the last survey. On their behalf, ODW submitted 4,356 projects.

For more information, please call Peter Beaton at (360) 236-3150 or e-mail [peter.beaton@doh.wa.gov](mailto:peter.beaton@doh.wa.gov)

### November Conference Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council

Training and program sessions on infrastructure, funding and technical assistance are available at the Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council's (IACC) fall conference November 8-10 at the West Coast Wenatchee Hotel.

Pre-registered technical teams include staff from a variety of federal and state programs that will join jurisdictions to discuss specific infrastructure problems for the jurisdictions.

For more information, or to register for the conference, call Bill Cole, Public Works Board at (360) 586-4125.

To locate infrastructure funding or technical assistance in Washington, visit the IACC database online at <http://www.infracfunding.wa.gov/>

**\$2 million available**

## **2005 Water System Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program**

September 26 is the deadline for jurisdictions to apply for a grant from the Water System Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program (WSARP). There is \$2 million available.

The 2005 Legislature committed the funds to help local governments maintain safe and reliable drinking water systems. Municipal water systems may use the funds to acquire and rehabilitate other public water systems that have water quality problems or have been allowed to deteriorate to the point that public health is an issue.

WSARP is managed jointly by the Washington Department of Health, the Public Works Board, and the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development. For information or applications, visit the WSARP Web site at <http://www.pwb.wa.gov> or contact:

**Public Works Board** – Leslie Hafford (360) 586-4128 or [leslie.hafford@pwb.wa.gov](mailto:leslie.hafford@pwb.wa.gov)

**Department of Health** – Chris Gagnon (360) 236-3095 or [chris.gagnon@doh.wa.gov](mailto:chris.gagnon@doh.wa.gov)

This is the second Legislative appropriation. In 2003, \$4 million funded 14 projects:

**Cedar River Water and Sewer District** to acquire Dorre Don Water System. The project will abandon a spring source and allow for a looped system. This will reduce the number of individual wells and small water systems, and redundant water supply and distribution infrastructure.

**City of Chehalis** to connect to Newaukum Village Water System. The project will provide Newaukum Village customers with safe reliable water and remedy several boil water notices, water outages and backflow hazards.

**Jefferson County P.U.D. #1** to consolidate, upgrade and eliminate several problematic Group A and Group B water systems, and numerous individual wells in the Quilcene area. The project will provide safe reliable water to the rural community, limit the need for future systems, and provide PUD management.

**Juniper Beach Water District** to acquire the Second Chance Thrift store's water system. The project will replace a water supply with an excess of arsenic.

**Mason County P.U.D. #1 (two projects)** to acquire and rehabilitate Arcadia Estates Water System. The project will provide source improvements and replace a redwood storage tank susceptible to bacteria problems. The PUD is also acquiring and rehabilitating Canal Beach Tracts Mutual Water Company and Glen Ayr Canal Resort LLC. This project will remedy existing wells vulnerable to flooding and surface water influence.

**City of Olympia** to acquire and rehabilitate Woodland Park Utility Association water system. The project may allow the city to lower water rates by eliminating a system with high maintenance and operation costs.

**Pasadena Park Irrigation District 17** to extend its water main to Orchard Prairie School District 123. The project will supply the school with water and decommission the school's well, which is contaminated with nitrate.

**Silverdale Water District 16** to acquire and rehabilitate three water systems. The project will provide a water main extension. It will abandon inadequate treatment systems, and water sources and reservoirs with a history of bacterial contamination, elevated iron, manganese and arsenic.

**Skagit County P.U.D. 1 (two projects)** to acquire and rehabilitate Skagit View Village system. The project will bring the system into compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule by installing corrosion control treatment and a treated drinking water reservoir. The PUD is also forming a satellite water system to provide drinking water to several residences and commercial properties in Marblemount. The project will decommission shallow wells to avoid drinking water contamination and reduce loss of ground water to the river.

**Stevens County P.U.D. (two projects)** to acquire and rehabilitate Dolomite Water System. The project includes source reconstruction, treatment, and improved metering and controls. The PUD is also acquiring and rehabilitating Chattaroy Springs West Water District 11. This project will allow customers to abandon their low volume spring water source and connect to a water system with lower operation and maintenance costs.

**Whatcom County P.U.D. 1** to acquire and rehabilitate water systems at three large facilities. The project will supply potable water to some 2,000 employees and contract workers.

# Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan to be reviewed

The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) will present its plan to distribute State Revolving Fund project loan and set-aside funds at a public hearing from 10 to 10:30 a.m., Oct. 3 at Building 9, 7211 Cleanwater Lane SW in Tumwater.

Public comments on the draft Intended Use Plan will be collected through Oct. 14, 2005.

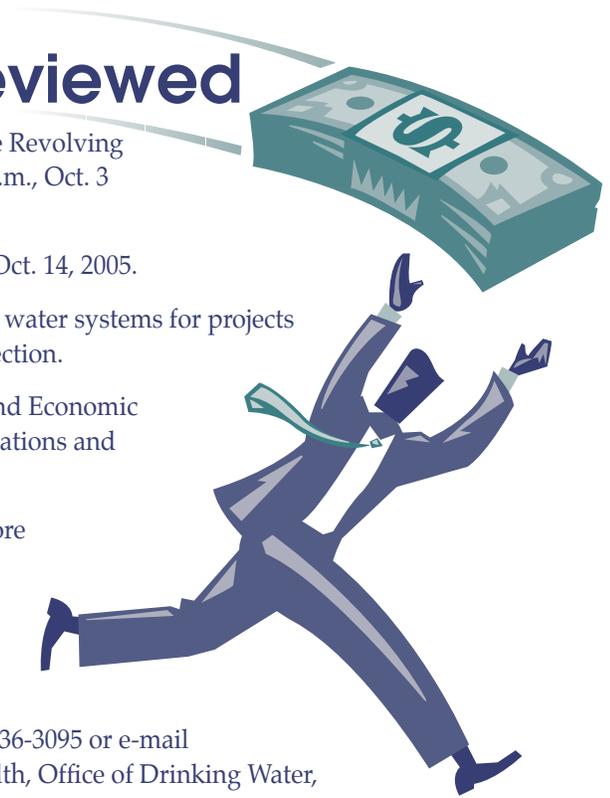
Drinking Water State Revolving Funds are loaned to municipal and private water systems for projects that improve drinking water infrastructure and increase public health protection.

ODW, the Public Works Board and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development jointly manage the revolving loan fund. ODW reviews applications and prioritizes those eligible for funding.

Fifty-one jurisdictions submitted 67 applications. The projects are worth more than \$55 million in loans. About \$20 million is available.

The draft Intended Use Plan will be online September 9th at [http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our\\_main\\_pages/dwsrf.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/dwsrf.htm) and available at the State Library in Olympia.

To submit comments or obtain a copy of the plan, call Chris Gagnon (360) 236-3095 or e-mail [chris.gagnon@doh.wa.gov](mailto:chris.gagnon@doh.wa.gov). Send mail to Chris Gagnon, Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water, P.O. Box 47822, Olympia WA 98504-7822.



## - New & Revised Publications -

**Lead and Copper Monitoring (331-111)**  
Revised. A 3-page document that provides guidance on lead and copper monitoring for public water system operators.

**Washington State's Source Water Assessment Program (331-148)**  
Revised. A 14-page report describing the state's Source Water Assessment Program.

**Lead in School Drinking Water (331-255)**  
Revised. A 2-page fact sheet that explains why lead is a concern for schools, how lead gets into drinking water, and what can be done about it.

**Preparing Water Shortage Response Plans (331-301)**  
Revised. A 59-page guidance document on how to develop short-term water shortage response plans in case of an emergency.

**Start-up and Shut-down Assistance for Seasonal Non-Community Water Systems (331-314)**  
New! This binder was created to assist with the operation of seasonal non-community water systems. It has sections related to start-up

and shut-down, operations, coliform and nitrate water quality tests, forms and records.

**Nitrate Treatment Alternatives for Small Water Systems (331-309)**  
New! This 64-page guidance document is for small water system owners and board members of water systems that have elevated nitrate concentrations in one or more of their sources.

**Arsenic in Drinking Water (331-318)**  
New! 2 pages of frequently asked questions and answers provide guidance for Group A transient non-community (TNC) and Group B public drinking water systems.

**Water System Liability (331-322)**  
New! This 55-minute video (VHS format) identifies some of the liability issues many water systems face and ideas to reduce those risks.

Office of Drinking Water publications are available on the Internet at <http://www4.doh.wa.gov/dw/publications/publications.cfm> or by calling (800) 521-0323.



# Distance Education Reminder

The only distance education classes the Washington Water Works Operator Certification Program will accept are those on the approved list of distance education courses.

Operators enrolling in an approved distance education course must also follow the Office of Drinking Water's (ODW) distance education approval and examination procedure.

To get credit for completing a distance education course, the procedure requires operators to pass a monitored, closed-book exam. This applies to online, correspondence, CD-ROM and videotape courses. The procedure also requires the examination monitor and the student to sign and submit an affidavit affirming examinations are completed in accordance with this procedure.

ODW's list of approved courses, procedures and required forms are available from the Washington Environmental Training Center (WETRC). To ensure you receive continuing education units (CEU), call WETRC before you enroll in any type of distance education course at (253) 288-3369 or (800) 562-0858.

## Don't miss out!

*Only three months left*

### Pilot program reimburses cost of distance education

A one-year pilot program to reimburse certified operators of small water systems up to \$200 of eligible out-of-pocket expenses for successful completion of approved distance education ends December 31. The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) is sponsoring the program to help operators of small water systems meet their professional growth renewal requirement by providing an alternative to attending classroom training.

The Certification Services division of the Washington Environmental Training Center (WETRC) at Green River Community College is administering the reimbursement program.

*You may qualify for reimbursement of certain distance education expenses if you:*

- Are a certified water works operator in Washington.

- Work for a water system serving a population of less than 3,300.
- Successfully complete an approved distance education course following ODW procedures (see the reminder above).
- Have not yet met your professional growth requirement.
- Have not yet exhausted your \$200 maximum reimbursement amount.

#### *To enroll and request reimbursement:*

- Contact WETRC for a list of approved distance education courses, instructions and forms **before** you enroll in a course.

- Enroll directly with the course sponsor and pay for all enrollment fees and materials.
- Successfully complete the course and examinations following ODW procedures.
- Submit the required forms to WETRC for evaluation and reimbursement approval.

#### *For more information:*

Call WETRC Certification Services staff at (253) 288-3369 or (800) 562-0858.



# Training and Education Calendar: Sept. 2005 - Jan. 2006

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Cost/CEU</u>
Sept 14	Ten Best Kept Water & Wastewater Process Mngmnt Secrets	Lacey	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	TBA
Sept 14-16	Water Distribution Exam Review	Mt. Vernon	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$180/\$230/2.2†
Sept 16	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$180/NA
Sept 16	Ten Best Kept Water & Wastewater Process Mngmnt Secrets	Ritzville	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	TBA
Sept 17	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Exam	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$180/NA
Sept 19	Water System Controls, Monitoring and Alarm Basics	Lacey	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Sept 19-20	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Sept 19-28	BAT Professional Growth Exam Review	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Sept 20	Small Water System Management	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Sept 20-22	Water Distribution Certification Exam Review	Moses Lake	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/\$275/2.1*
Sept 20-22	Cross Connection Control Exam Review	Olympia	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/\$180/\$230/2.1†
Sept 20-22	Water Distribution Exam Review	Richland	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/\$180/\$230/2.2†
Sept 20-22	Water Distribution Certification Exam Review	Moses Lake	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/2.1*
Sept 21	BAT Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA
Sept 21-23	Cross Connection Control Basics and Exam Review	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/2.1
Sept 22	BTO/WTPO OIT and Level 1 Cert Exam Review	Yakima	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Sept 26	Backflow Incident Response	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$155/0.7
Sept 27	Groundwater Management Area	Othello	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/TBA
Sept 27	Water Distribution Specialist Certification Exam Review	Spokane	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Sept 27-29	Cross Connection Control Exam Review	Mt. Vernon	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/\$180/\$230/2.1†
Sept 27-29	Water Distribution Exam Review	Olympia	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/\$180/\$230/2.2†
Sept 29	BTO/WTPO OIT and Level 1 Cert Exam Review	Mt Vernon	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Sept 30	Basic Field Operations	Wenatchee	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Oct 1	BAT Professional Growth Exam	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA
Oct 3-4	Risk Assessment-Advanced CCC Techniques	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/1.4
Oct 3-14	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Class	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$525/3.0
Oct 4	Emergency Response Planning	Richland	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Oct 4	Groundwater Management Area	Pasco	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/TBA
Oct 4-6	Basic Electrical	Everett	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/2.1
Oct 5	Emergency Response Planning	Liberty Lake	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Oct 5-6	Competent Person Cave in Protection	Everett	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$210/1.4
Oct 6	Emergency Response Planning	Chelan	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Oct 7	Water Treatment Forum	Coeur d'Alene	AWWA	425-450-6367	\$45
Oct 7	Basic Pump Operation and Maintenance	Bremerton	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Oct 10-13	Backflow Assembly Tester Exam Review	Ellensburg	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$375/\$400/3.0
Oct 11	Backflow Incident Response	Moses Lake	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$155/0.7
Oct 11	Groundwater Management Area	Ephrata	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/TBA

\*Operators of Group A small water systems serving 3,300 people or less will be charged a \$25 registration fee for these classes.

† These classes are free for Operators of Group A small water systems serving 3,300 people or less.

# Training and Education Calendar: Sept. 2005 - Jan. 2006

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Cost/CEU</u>
Oct 12-13	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Oct 13	Construc Mngmnt & Inspec for Water & Wastewater Utilities	Spokane	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/0.7
Oct 14	BAT Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA
Oct 15	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Exam	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$180/NA
Oct 17-20	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Class	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$525/3.0
Oct 17-26	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Oct 18	Basic Field Operations	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Oct 19-20	Risk Assessment-Advanced CCC Techniques	Wenatchee	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/1.4
Oct 21	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$180/NA
Oct 24	Small Water System Management	Shelton	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Oct 25	Basic Water Works Overview	Bellingham	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Oct 26	Basic Water Works Overview	Monroe	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Oct 27	Basic Water Works Overview	Bremerton	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Oct 29	BAT Professional Growth Exam	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA
Nov 3	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Class	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$525/3.0
Nov 2	Emergency Response Planning	Shelton	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 2-3	Advanced Backflow & Cross Connection Control	Bremerton	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/01.4*
Nov 3	Emergency Response Planning	Kelso	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 4	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$180/NA
Nov 4	Basic Pump Operation and Maintenance	Mt. Vernon	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Nov 7-8	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Nov 8	Automatic Control Valves	Moses Lake	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/0.7
Nov 8	Basic Field Operations	Edmonds	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Nov 8	Basic Water Works Overview	Wenatchee	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 8	Local Hydrogeology	Wenatchee	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	Free/0.5
Nov 8-10	IACC Conference	Wenatchee	Bill Cole	1-360-586-4125	\$135
Nov 9	Backflow Assembly Tester Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA
Nov 9	Basic Water Works Overview	Ellensburg	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 10	Basic Water Works Overview	Richland	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 14	Small Water System Management	Bellingham	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7*
Nov 15	Cross Connection Control & Backflow Basics	Liberty Lake	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 15	Emergency Response Planning	Mt. Vernon	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 15	Water System Controls, Monitoring and Alarm Basics	Mt. Vernon	WETRC	1-800-592-0858	\$25/0.7*
Nov 16	Emergency Response Planning	Bremerton	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 17	Emergency Response Planning	White Salmon	ERWOW	1-800-272-5981	\$25/0.7*
Nov 18	Confined Space Entry	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$140/0.7
Nov 30-Dec 1	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Dec 2	BAT Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA

\*Operators of Group A small water systems serving 3,300 people or less will be charged a \$25 registration fee for these classes.

† These classes are free for Operators of Group A small water systems serving 3,300 people or less.

# Training and Education Calendar: Sept. 2005 - Jan. 2006

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Cost/CEU</u>
Dec 5-8	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Class	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$525/3.0
Dec 5-14	BAT Professional Growth Exam Review	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.5
Dec 9	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Exam	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$180/NA
Dec 12-13	Advanced BAT Troubleshooting & Repair	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$205/1.4
Dec 14-16	Water Works Basics	Everett	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/2.1
Dec 17	BAT Professional Growth Exam	Vancouver	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$105/NA
Jan 3-5, 06	Water Distribution Certification Exam Review	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7
Jan 10-12	Cross Connection Control Basics and Exam Review	Everett	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/2.1
Jan 17-19	Water Distribution Certification Exam Review	Everett	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$25/0.7
Jan 25-27	Cross Connection Control Basics and Exam Review	Auburn	WETRC	1-800-562-0858	\$275/2.1

*\*Operators of Group A small water systems serving 3,300 people or less will be charged a \$25 registration fee for these classes.  
† These classes are free for Operators of Group A small water systems serving 3,300 people or less.*

For information about distance learning activities, call WETRC at (800) 562-0858.

### Additional Training Links:

- AWWA King County Subsection Web site—<http://www.kcawwa.org/>
- ERWOW Web site—<http://www.erwow.org/>
- WETRC Web site—<http://www.wetrc.org/>
- AWWA Pacific Northwest Section Web site—<http://www.pnws-awwa.org/>
- EPA electronic workshops Web site—<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwa/electronic.html>

**For the complete Training Calendar, visit the Drinking Water Homepage and click on Training - <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw>**

*NOTE: Links to external resources are provided as a public service, and do not imply endorsement by the Washington State Department of Health.*

## Mobile unit offers on-site training for small water systems

Small transient and non-transient non-community water systems (TNC and NTNC) in need of technical support and training can now get on-site assistance. Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (ERWoW) began operating a new Mobile Training Unit outfitted with a variety of training materials and equipment in June.

The training is appropriate for TNC and NTNC water systems and is offered in a format designed to encourage participants to interact with the instructional materials and provide a hands-on opportunity. There are a variety of training topics, including water system operations and maintenance, drinking water regulations, and water quality monitoring and sampling requirements.

The Office of Drinking Water is supporting the Mobile Training Unit with funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is outfitted primarily by donations from ERWoW associate members.

To schedule a Mobile Training Unit visit, please call ERWoW at (800) 272-5981.



# Can this water system be saved?



The developer is delighted when the narrow blacktop road winding through rural, tree-covered hills leads to the beautiful, rock outcropped ridge and hillside. He thinks it is ideal for a community of acreage lot residences. He hires an engineer to lay out the lots and design the “Rimrock Water System.”

The state Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (ODW) approves the water system, and people come to build their homes. Water is cheap. But, as more homes are built, it becomes scarce in the summer. At times, residents have low pressure or intermittent water service. Residents start receiving notices of poor water quality and many feel a need to drill their own wells.

## Why this system is failing

The water system goes through three owners who have at least one thing in common: They aren’t interested in operating Rimrock.

The developer isn’t around much. When the water system is 10 years old, he says the water shortages are due to pump failure, water-line breaks, electrical system failures, and customers using too much water. He says rates don’t cover expenses.

He hires a resident to keep an eye on the system and work out issues and complaints with the neighbors. Water rates stay the same. The water system is patched together.

A few years later, all the lots in the development are sold. The developer doesn’t want to be in the water business, so he sells Rimrock to an investor who owns a number of other water systems.

The investor is focused on his other systems and doesn’t pay much attention to Rimrock. He raises rates to support improvements on his other water systems, but doesn’t improve Rimrock. He is also a poor businessman who soon files for bankruptcy.

As Rimrock turns 20 years old, the bankruptcy court gives it to one of the investor’s creditors.

The new owner doesn’t really want the water system on the hillside. He takes it reluctantly as part of the bigger company. The system is falling apart after years of poor operations and maintenance. The new owner hires a resident to help out, but the resident is not a certified operator.

The new owner offers to give Rimrock to the customers, but they don’t want it. Next, he offers it to anyone who will take it, but there are no takers. Finally, he notifies the customers and ODW that he intends to abandon the water system in one year.

## Stepping in to protect public health

ODW conducts a sanitary survey of the system to find that few, if any, recommendations from the previous survey have been addressed. With recent water outages caused by pump failure, lack of a reliable owner, and spring sources likely influenced by surface water, ODW asks the owner to re-issue a boil water advisory.

In the following months, ODW looks for a responsible entity to take over Rimrock. None of the approved satellite management agencies is willing. The water system customers are independent types, and choose not to form a homeowners’ association. The local public utility district (PUD) is unable because the cost of upgrading the water system to PUD standards is too high.

Customers are worried about their drinking water. Many drill their own wells at a cost of \$20,000 to \$40,000.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) advises the owner he needs UTC’s permission to dispose of the water system, and threatens to file a court injunction to prevent abandonment of the system.

## Placing the system into receivership

ODW asks Superior Court to appoint Snohomish County as the receiver of last resort. A receiver is court appointed to manage a water system until a permanent solution is found. The court gives the receiver the right to set rates to cover the cost of services, improvements and system operations. (See article on page 15.)

The county agrees to operate the water system. By now, two-thirds of the customers have drilled their own wells and have disconnected from the water system. Water rates for the remaining customers rise from about \$20 to about \$100 per month during the receivership process.

## Next steps

In about a year, ODW and Snohomish County, as the receiver, will present a plan to the court identifying a new owner and a final recommendation for disposition of the system. The desired outcome is a new owner who will address customer needs and provide safe, reliable drinking water.

# Rule Making

## Operator Certification and Municipal Water Law Fees

The proposed annual fee increase for operator certification is scheduled for a public hearing in late October 2005. We plan to hold a public hearing for the Municipal Water Law surcharge at the same time. A notice will be mailed in early October with the date, time and location of the public hearings. In the interim, check our Web site at [http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our\\_main\\_pages/regula.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/regula.htm)

## Municipal Water Law Rules and Policy Development

### *Planning and engineering requirements*

We held eight stakeholder outreach meetings during July and August in Eastern and Western Washington on our first draft of proposals for addressing the planning and engineering requirements of the Municipal Water Law.

These requirements establish a utility's duty to serve its retail service area in a manner that is consistent with local government planning efforts.

Close to 200 people attended the meetings, representing local governments, utilities, businesses, environmental groups, tribes and others. The comments and responses unearthed a significant number of new issues in this complex law that will take time to address. For more information, call Michele Vazquez at (509) 456-2774 or e-mail [michele.vazquez@doh.wa.gov](mailto:michele.vazquez@doh.wa.gov)

### *Water use efficiency rule development*

Thanks to all who provided comments during the informal review of our proposed water use efficiency rule. We anticipate the rule process will be extended to adequately address these comments.

Please check our Municipal Water Law Web site for more details [http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal\\_water/municipal\\_water\\_law.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal_water/municipal_water_law.htm)

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## Are you interested in becoming a receiver?

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When a water system fails to provide safe and reliable water, the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) uses a variety of tools to bring it back into compliance. As a last resort, if the system fails to respond, the court may appoint a receiver to operate the water system until a permanent solution is found.

ODW is updating its list of entities interested in being considered for receivership. In most cases, systems placed in receivership have a long history of problems. They are public water systems with critical operational problems their current ownership is unable or unwilling to address.

The list of potential receivers includes interested and qualified individuals, municipal entities, special purpose districts, and investor-owned water companies with experience providing water service and a history of satisfactory water system operation.

To be qualified, a receiver must know how to:

- Handle water system operation.
- Coordinate repairs, capital improvements and water quality testing.
- Communicate with customers.
- Work with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC), if the system is regulated by UTC.

- Maintain compliance with applicable federal, state and local drinking water requirements.
- Obtain an engineering evaluation of system needs.
- Conduct a financial analysis of the water system.

A receiver must be prepared to meet with county and state officials to develop a strategy for water system compliance and water system users to define the problems and possible solutions. The receiver must also be prepared to take the steps necessary to bring the system into compliance.

If you are up to the challenge of serving as a receiver, and you want to help ensure citizens have access to safe, reliable drinking water, please send a letter of interest outlining your qualifications, the size of the system(s) you are willing to handle, the geographical area you are willing to cover, and any limitations on your willingness to act as a receiver to:

Department of Health  
Office of Drinking Water  
PO Box 47822  
Olympia, WA 98504-7822

For more information on receivership, visit the ODW Web site at [http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/fact\\_sheets/receivership\\_qanda.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/fact_sheets/receivership_qanda.htm)

## Office of Drinking Water headquarters moves

Headquarters staff that used to be in buildings 3 and 8 at the New Market Complex in Tumwater moved to different buildings during the first two weeks of July. The mailing address and telephone numbers remain the same. The only change is the physical location of office personnel.

You will find Office of Drinking Water (ODW) staff at the following new locations:

**Building 11** ~ Headquarters Administration (office director, headquarters and field operations deputy directors, and coordinators); Constituent Relations Section; and Program Development Section.

**Building 9** ~ Training and Outreach Section; Water Quality Section; and Water System Support Section.

ODW staff in Building 12 remained in place (Information Management Section and Financial and Administrative Section).

If you need to visit any ODW staff, please call (360) 236-3100 for driving instructions, or get directions online at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DOHDirections/default.htm>

ODW will move again next summer into a new building the agency will be leasing. Stay tuned for updates.



The old headquarters building was demolished in August.

## In This Issue

The following people contributed articles to this issue of Water Tap: Herbert Rand, Denise A. Clifford, Leslie Thorpe, Gael Kantz, Peter Beaton, Chris McCord, Ronni Woolrich, Terri Notestine, Jim Hudson, Scott Decker, Chris Gagnon, Linda Waring (editor), Peggy Barton, Amy Swecker, Sarah Brallier, Derek Pell, Donna Lynch, John Aden, Paula Smith.

The Department of Health Office of Drinking Water publishes Water Tap quarterly to provide information to water system owners, water works operators and others interested in drinking water.

Mary Selecky, Secretary of Health

Janice Adair, Assistant Secretary of Health,  
Environmental Health Division

Denise A. Clifford, Director  
Office of Drinking Water

Comments, questions, story ideas, articles and photographs submitted for publication are welcome. Please address correspondence to Linda Waring, Water Tap, Office of Drinking Water, P.O. Box 47822, Olympia, WA 98504-7822, or e-mail [linda.waring@doh.wa.gov](mailto:linda.waring@doh.wa.gov). Past issues are available by contacting the editor or visiting the Web site at [http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our\\_main\\_pages/watertap.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/watertap.htm)

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