

April
May
June
2003

Kent Wilkins, OWRB
Drillers Program Coordinator



Coordinator's Corner

*Kent Wilkins, OWRB
Drillers Program Coordinator*

The hot days of summer are just beginning for us. I hope the first half of the year has gone well for everyone. Theda and I have been busy trying to stay up with new firm applications and the renewals for this year. Theda has been out on medical leave, and I am extremely happy to have her back now.

New Rules and Regulations for Chapter 35 will be going into effect July 11, 2003. Be sure to obtain a copy of the latest standards when they become available. It seems that change is the only constant and the Board is already proposing additional emergency rules for heat exchange wells to be effective in August 2003. I appreciate the Well Driller and Pump Installer Advisory Council for all of their assistance on developing the proposed rule changes.

The Oklahoma Ground Water Association is really going strong with approximately 150 current members. The OGWA Board has met once a month since inception and is already planning next year's trade show and conference. If you haven't joined up yet, an application can be downloaded from

their website at www.ogwa.biz. Supporting the Association can only strengthen the well drilling industry in Oklahoma.

Everyone is looking forward to the new online filing system for well logs and online well search program. Both programs should reduce the paperwork burden for the drillers and also help assist citizens and drillers search for well information. Unfortunately, two of the computer programmers working on that project have resigned and it appears that the project will be delayed another two months. But we should still be up and running by September.

I hope everyone has a safe summer! If I can be of any assistance, please contact me!

OWRB Sponsors Panhandle Plugging Demonstration

On May 2, the Water Board, in cooperation with the Cimarron County Conservation District and Boise City officials, conducted an abandoned irrigation well plugging demonstration at an abandoned well located north of Boise City. Since Boise City withdraws groundwater from beneath this property, properly plugging the well greatly reduces the risk of pollution.

Duane Smith, OWRB Director, and Kent Wilkins, Well Driller Program Coordinator, provided technical assistance during the demonstration to illustrate proper plugging procedures for an abandoned irrigation water well.

According to Wilkins, abandoned, uncapped wells can provide an ideal conduit for contamination to reach groundwater supplies. While contamination at the surface may require years to leach through soils to underlying groundwater formations, contamination transported through an unplugged well bore can potentially reach groundwater in a matter of seconds.

Abandoned wells can also be a physical hazard. According to Wilkins, animals or humans can accidentally fall into unplugged wells, even through boreholes of moderate size, as evidenced by the story of the Texas child, baby Jessica, a few years ago.



Kent Wilkins with OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith

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Plugging Demonstration . . . continued

In general, proper plugging procedure for an abandoned, uncontaminated well consists of the following:

- Filling the well bore with clay, bentonite or other impervious material to within 14 feet of the surface
- Installing cement grout from 14 feet to 4 feet.
- Cutting off the casing 4 feet below ground level
- Placing soil from 4 feet to the surface.

The Board would like to thank the Cimarron County Conservation District, city officials, and others who participated in and attended the demonstration. A special thanks goes out to Mike Ritter for donating his time, manpower, and equipment for the plugging event. If you would like more information on plugging abandoned water wells, please contact Kent Wilkins at (405) 530-8800.

Renewal Reminder

Renewal period is here again. This year, odd numbered DPC licenses for well drilling and or/ pump installer firms will expire **June 30, 2003**, if the OWRB does not receive the completed renewal application and fees. Until the license is renewed, the company and any certified operators working under the authority of the company will no longer be authorized to drill wells and/or install pumps in Oklahoma. In accordance with OWRB rules, a 30-day grace period will begin July 1 for licenses that have yet to be renewed, but a **\$200** late fee will be added to the renewal fee. After **July 31, 2003**, the license will become invalid and it will then be necessary to submit an application for a new license, take the appropriate examination, pay applicable fees, and obtain approval from the OWRB.

If you have any questions, please contact Theda Adkisson, DPC Licensing at (405) 530-8800.

Amnesty Period Begins for Submittal of Past Due Well Logs

As an incentive to obtain information from drillers from missing water well logs, an amnesty period for submittal of past due logs has begun. The decision to allow drilling firms an extra six months to contribute critically important groundwater data results from a recent agreement between the OWRB and Well Drillers and Pump Installers Advisory Council and applies to firms that did not submit well logs from January 1, 2000, to the present.

The amnesty period began July 1 and will continue through December 31, at which point licensed firms identified as drilling and completing a water well and/or monitoring well without properly submitting a well log can be fined \$50 per well and be required to file an acceptable report within 30 days. For the second and additional times that the penalties are assessed against a licensee, \$250 per well fine can be assessed. This new penalty will not impact licensed firms that comply with the current requirement of submitting well logs within 60 days following the completion, plugging, and/or reconditioning of a well.

Staff Discuss Groundwater Pollution with 5th Graders

Kent Wilkins and Kelly Self of the OWRB recently met with 200 Haskell County 5th grade students during a Natural Resource/Earth Day presentation in Stigler. Wilkins and Self discussed the important ways we use good, clean groundwater, and the water quality problems associated with groundwater in Oklahoma. Wilkins also provided the students with suggestions on ways they could prevent water pollution around their community and home, such as recycling used motor oil, properly disposing of solid waste, and properly applying chemicals.



Kent Wilkins and Kelly Self discuss ways to prevent groundwater contamination with Haskell County 5th grade students.

Oklahoma is underlain by 23 major and numerous minor groundwater basins, which contain over 320 million acre-feet of water. A large number of municipal, irrigation, industrial, commercial, and domestic users utilize groundwater as their primary source of supply.