



Media Release – For Immediate Release Thursday, November 9, 2017

Working Well Workshop Coming to the County November 16th

– Informative water well management workshop will help residents protect their water wells

Have you had your well water tested in the last two years? Have old unused wells on your property been properly sealed and decommissioned? Have you ever shock chlorinated your well? Do you know the age and depth of your well, or how it was constructed?

According to Alberta water specialist Ken Williamson, if you answered no to any of these questions, your groundwater supply could be at risk. Despite the fact that 450,000 Albertans rely on groundwater for household use, few know that proper water well construction, siting, and maintenance can help protect your well from contamination.

To ensure the safety of your water well, you should also know how far your septic system is from your well. Septic tanks should be regularly pumped and inspected. You should also disinfect your well on a regular basis.

It is also important to regularly test and document the quality and quantity of water from your well. By keeping good records you can see how water quality and well performance has changed over time. Proper well maintenance and operation can save you costly repairs and ensure your well water yields are sustained over many years.

If you'd like to find out if your groundwater is at risk and learn what you can do to protect your well, attend the free water well management workshop being hosted by the County of Grande Prairie, and presented by the Working Well Program, with technical expertise from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Health Services and licensed water well drillers on November 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the ENTREC Center at Evergreen Park. This hands-on, informative workshop is designed to help water well owners better understand and manage their precious groundwater supplies.

To attend this event, please pre-register, so the County can help you look up drilling reports for your well, by contacting Jill Henry, County Rural Extension Officer at 780-532-9727 or by email at jhenry@countygp.ab.ca.

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See attached backgrounder

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**WORKING
WELL**

Clean water.
Well protected.



Backgrounder Protecting Your Water Well

A misunderstood resource

Despite its importance, many Albertans give little thought to groundwater and where it comes from. It is a common belief that groundwater comes from fast flowing underground rivers and lakes. This is not true. Groundwater is the water that fills the cracks and spaces between soil particles, sand grains and rock. An aquifer is simply a water-bearing zone in the ground where there are interconnected cracks and spaces (e.g. sand, gravel or fractured shale) that allow groundwater to move freely.

It is also a little known fact that groundwater and surface water are connected. In some areas groundwater can be a source of recharge for streams, lakes and dugouts. In other areas water from rivers, lakes, snowmelt and rain seeps into the ground, where it trickles downward until it reaches the water table. The water table is the point at which the ground is completely saturated with water. Below the water table, the spaces between every grain of soil and rock are completely filled with water.

Water, the great 'dissolver'

Water is the world's greatest solvent: it tries to dissolve everything it comes in contact with. This means manure, pesticides and fertilizers over-applied to lawns and fields can be carried by rain or snowmelt seeping down through the soil to the water table. Sewage from poorly maintained septic systems or spilled and improperly disposed-of chemicals can similarly seep into groundwater.

If you have highly permeable soils on your land, such as sand or gravel, your groundwater could be at higher risk, because these soils are poor filters. Having abandoned, poorly constructed or infrequently maintained wells on your property is even more risky because such structures could be draining surface water and everything it carries directly into your aquifer. The water well management workshop offers all the information you need to protect and maintain your well.

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For more information on water well maintenance contact:

Ag-Info Centre
Toll free in Alberta: 780-310-FARM (3276)

For more information about the Working Well Program contact:

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Information Centre
Email: ESRD.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca
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