

OKLAHOMA DRILLER'S LOG

NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA WELL DRILLER PROGRAM

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Coordinator's Corner

Kent Wilkins, OWRB
Drillers Program Coordinator

The summer of 2006 was busiest for the groundwater industry in my sixteen years with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB). We have received numerous telephone calls regarding depleted aquifer levels, wells going dry and the need for a water well driller or pump installer.

The OWRB has even had to develop a drought response team just to respond to the ongoing, devastating drought impacting virtually every region in the state. We are working with citizens and the state's water use community in an attempt to alleviate water supply problems.



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Drillers Program Coordinator

If you need assistance with locating groundwater information, please check out the OWRB's new search/mapping program appropriately named Water Information Mapping System (WIMS). All available information such as well records, lakes, streams, water quality data can be found by using this search program. The WIMS website address is <http://www.owrb.state.ok.us/maps/server/wims.php>.

The Oklahoma Ground Water Association (OGWA) has announced the dates and location for the next drilling conference and exhibition. The 5th annual conference will be held at the Clarion Hotel in Oklahoma City on February 22 and 23, 2007. Please plan on attending to support this organization and gain some useful information for your business. The OGWA website address is <http://www.ogwa.biz>.

Drought Means Business for Oklahoma Drillers

The lives and livelihoods of many Oklahomans have been impacted by the drought of 2006, and Oklahoma's water well drillers have seen an unprecedented surge in activity. Groundwater supplies from water wells across the state have been severely depleted, which means drillers have been extraordinarily busy replacing wells and establishing new and more dependable sources of supply.

Oklahoma's Drillers take great pride in completing safe, productive water wells. Many of these professionals operate second or even third generation family businesses. Whether drilling a well for domestic, municipal, irrigation, commercial, or livestock watering purposes, drillers are dedicated to finding the best source of supply to meet their customers' needs.

Because of the drought, many drillers are working 12 hours or more each day, often in extreme weather conditions. Drilling wells under these conditions and at this pace is a demanding task. Several firms must place new customers on a waiting list, which ranges anywhere from six weeks to three months. The drillers work all day and come home at night to an answering machine full of new requests or a page-long list of new prospective clients. With this flurry of activity, I fully expect that the number of wells drilled in 2006 will increase by more than 30 percent from the number drilled in 2004 or 2005.



Lugert-Altus Lake in southwestern Oklahoma. Many critical surface water sources have been hit hard by drought, leaving farmers willing to pay more to drill new wells and bear the cost of pumping for irrigation.

I recently visited with Clark Giles, owner and primary driller for Giles Environmental Services in Inola. Clark told me that he has never been busier. His clients from all over Oklahoma range from

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Drought Means Business (continued)

individuals to businesses to municipalities. He takes great pride in his work and gets tremendous personal satisfaction from drilling and completing wells for his fellow Oklahomans, many of whom are in desperate need of water. As is typical of most Oklahoma water well drillers, in spite of the demand, he has not raised his drilling prices and he vows to continue responsible well construction at a reasonable cost. Providing water for Oklahoman's in need, especially during a drought, is a gratifying career for Oklahoma drillers like Mr. Giles, and we are grateful to have such dedicated professionals in our program.

Reasons to have well water tested:

Conditions or Nearby Activities:	Test for:
Recurring gastrointestinal illness	Coliform bacteria
Household plumbing contains lead	pH, lead, copper
Corrosion of pipes, plumbing	Corrosion, pH, lead
Nearby areas of intensive agriculture	Nitrate, pesticides, coliform bacteria
Coal or other mining operations nearby	Metals, pH, corrosion
Gas drilling operations nearby	Chloride, sodium, barium, strontium
Dump, junk yard, landfill, factory, gas station, or dry cleaning operation nearby	Volatile organic compounds, total dissolved solids, pH, sulfate, chloride, metals
Objectionable taste or smell	Hydrogen sulfide, corrosion, metals
Stained plumbing fixtures, laundry	Iron, copper, manganese
Salty taste or a heavily salted roadway nearby	Chloride, total dissolved solids, sodium
Scaly residues, soaps don't lather	Hardness
Rapid wear of water treatment equipment	pH, corrosion
Water softener needed to treat hardness	Manganese, iron
Water appears cloudy, frothy, or colored	Color, detergents

Adapted from Drinking Water From Household Wells, USEPA publication EPA 816-K-02-003. For a full copy of this 19-page brochure, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/booklet/index.html.

How to Test Your Well Water

The State Environmental Laboratory, operated by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), will test your well water for most of the substances listed on the table at the left. Below are some testing prices. For a complete list of prices, see *Laboratory Services Rules (Chapter 305)* at www.deq.state.ok.us/rules/305.pdf.

Routine Chemical Analysis -includes alkalinity, chloride, nitrate/nitrite, specific conductance, pH, sulfate, total dissolved solids, & total hardness	\$137
Coliform bacteria (total and e. coli)	\$20
pH	\$10
Lead	\$20
Copper	\$20
Nitrate/Nitrite	\$23
Chloride	\$20
Sodium	\$20
Barium	\$20
Strontium (Gross Alpha/Beta)	\$60
Volatile Organic Compounds	\$150
Total Dissolved Solids	\$29
Sulfate	\$15
Iron	\$20
Manganese	\$20
Hardness (total)	\$15
Color (apparent)	\$10

For more information about testing your water or interpreting test results, contact the State Environmental Laboratory at (405) 702-1000 or go to www.deq.state.ok.us/CSDnew/sel.htm.

