

October 22, 2003

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Jann Hook
Information Services
Oklahoma Water Resources Board
(405) 530-8800

***Water Board Provides Online
Water Well Search Feature***

The Oklahoma Water Resources Board has instituted an online program allowing the public to search the agency's extensive database of water wells drilled in Oklahoma. The new Web-based system, in development since last February, became operational October 1.

"This free and easily accessible water well search feature culminates many months of work by Water Board staff. It not only greatly enhances our customer service by providing information to citizens in a more timely fashion, but it frees up staff for other important programs and tasks," says Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director.

Establishment of the system was enabled through joint partnership between the OWRB and developers at YourOklahoma, the state's government Web portal. Funding was provided through the Oklahoma Well Drillers Indemnity Fund. The Oklahoma Water Well Drillers Council authorized expenditures from the Fund.

Visitors to the Water Board site can search water wells—including monitoring, geothermal and other types of wells—by county, legal description, or identification number. The available database also includes current and historical water well level information gathered through the Board's statewide groundwater level measurement program, which measures the depth to water for more than 1,000 wells each year. Search results can be printed out or downloaded directly into many spreadsheet or database programs.

"This is just one of many useful Web site applications we have planned to better serve the citizens of Oklahoma," Smith adds, pointing out that a geographic mapping program is in the early development stage.

The OWRB's database of well logs contains more than 80,000 records of historical and existing wells. A typical log includes the well location and type, depth to water, well yield, construction data, lithology encountered by the driller at varying depths, plugging information, and proximity to pollution sources. The agency's new well search program will provide a mechanism for citizens to freely access this information from the comfort of their homes or offices. A second, perhaps more valuable, component of the search program provides a mechanism for Oklahoma's water well drillers to submit online logs of their individual water well drilling operations.

“In a little over two weeks since the launch of this new application, the drilling community has already made frequent use of the system. They seem generally pleased with the interface, which makes it relatively easy to enter the required information,” according to Jann Hook, supervisor of the OWRB’s Information Services Section. A very useful online help page is also available.

Prior to formal development of the program, Hook reveals that Board staff surveyed Oklahoma’s drillers to gather information on the type of product that would work best for both users and agency data processors. Several drillers also visited Board headquarters in Oklahoma City and accessed the Board’s server to user test the application during the latter stages of its development.

“Every one of the drillers surveyed indicated that they would utilize the online completion report feature. And, although larger drilling firms typically generate about 90 percent of the state’s well logs, many smaller firms also indicated a willingness to participate,” she says.

Prior to implementation of the new online program, OWRB staff were required to verify, image and index all incoming well logs, as well as search and copy well records requested by the public. (The agency charges a nominal fee for that service.) Savings to the OWRB and state will amount to many thousands of dollars and hundreds of staff hours each year, Hook points out.

“The well completion report application has also been designed to ensure the accuracy of well log data—that completion reports are filled out accurately and completely,” says Bob Fabian, head of the Board’s Technical Studies Section. “The program is not only relatively easy to use, but it contains many built-in features that check the data supplied by our drillers. In many instances, it will ‘flag’ wells that fail to meet state well construction standards, which could lead to potential pollution of our groundwater resources.” Fabian added that the OWRB has already received more than 100 well logs through the online service.

The online well log filing program is available only to licensed drillers who have requested a user account. Drillers are required to submit a signature form with a valid e-mail address, then a username and personal identification number will be e-mailed to each driller and/or firm. The form may be downloaded from the Board’s Web site or requested by mail or telephone.

To access the OWRB’s water well search feature, visit the OWRB’s Web site at www.owrb.state.ok.us.

####