Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Press Releases

For the Year 2009

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Radon Action Alert

Governor Huntsman Declares January “Radon Action Month”

January 5, 2009

Contact:

Christine Keyser 536-0091
Radon Information Specialist

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Radiation Control alerts Utahns to make testing their homes for radon gas a high priority. In conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) National Radon Action Month and to promote radon awareness in Utah, Governor Huntsman has declared January “Radon Action Month.”

"Exposure to indoor radon is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer in the United States," warned DEQ Radon Manager John Hultquist. "Since elevated levels of radon gas can occur in three out of every ten homes in Utah, I strongly encourage all Utah residents to test for radon. Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon.”

Radon, a natural decay product of uranium, is a radioactive gas released from rock, soil, and water. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Radon is classified by EPA as a carcinogen, causing about 21,000 deaths annually from radon-induced lung cancer in the U.S.

"Winter is the perfect time to test for radon in homes," said Hultquist. "Radon test kits are inexpensive and can be ordered on our Web site at a discounted price during January. I urge all residents to go to www.radon.utah.gov or call 800-458-0145 to purchase a $6 radon test kit. Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated levels."

If elevated levels are detected, there are various methods for reducing radon concentrations to acceptable levels. While there are costs involved in fixing a radon problem, it is money well spent when considering lung cancer has only a 15% survival rate five years after diagnosis.

For information about January’s radon educational activities, hiring a radon certified professional, or how to test your home, visit www.radon.utah.gov.

Water Quality to Host Tour for Heber Valley Residents Interested in Wastewater Discharges from New Jordanelle Facility

February 26, 2009

Contacts:

Donna Kemp Spangler, PIO
Office (801) 5364484
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John Whitehead, assistant director Water Quality
Office (801) 5386053
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WHO:	Division of Water Quality Director Walt Baker and select staff
WHAT:	A tour of the Oakley Wastewater Treatment Plant to demonstrate how its state of the art membrane bioreactor system is similar to the one Jordanelle facility uses. The tour will also include a stop at the Snyderville Basin treatment facility to hear a presentation on pharmaceuticals in wastewater.
WHEN:	10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 27 – about 11:30 a.m. Snyderville Basin Treatment Plant.
WHERE:	Meet at the Oakley facility, 4449 Millrace Road, Oakley.
WHY:	The tour is being hosted for interested Heber Valley residents where concerns have been expressed about wastewater discharges from the new Jordanelle Waste Water Treatment Plant into the canal systems feeding the Heber Valley. Press is invited to join in on any part of the tour.

Air Quality Inspector to Head Air Monitoring Center

Thursday, March 5, 2009

Contacts:

Bo Call, (801) 887-0762
Manager Air Monitoring Center
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – Bowen "Bo" Call, a 16-year enforcement inspector for the Division of Air Quality (DAQ), has been selected as the manager of the Air Monitoring Center, replacing longtime veteran Bob Dalley who retired earlier this year.

"We are delighted Bo has accepted this position," said Cheryl Heying, director of DAQ. "This is one of the more important jobs as it informs people of current air pollution levels on an hourly basis. Many of us rely on that information to make choices about whether the air is healthy or not."

Call begins managing the Air Monitoring Center on Monday, March 9.
As an enforcement inspector, Call had the occasional duty on 'smoke patrol,' which means he responded to complaints about people using their wood burning stove on high pollution days during the winter when burning is prohibited.

Call said he welcomes a change from enforcement inspector to data collector.
"I am really excited about this," Call said. "The Air Monitoring Center focuses on the state of our air quality as it exists and making sure we monitor it properly to have the best and most accurate information for people to make good decisions."

Call, 44, lives in South Weber with his wife, Tamie and four children, ages 2 to 10. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Utah State in 1991. Growing up he spent most of his time in California and Las Vegas but has been here in Utah since college. He also is a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

USU Associate Dean Honored for Water Quality Work

Wednesday, April 1

Contact:

Nancy Mesner, (435) 7977541
Utah State University Associate Dean
Walt Baker, (801) 5386047
Water Quality Director, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utah State University (USU) Associate Dean of Natural Resources Nancy Mesner is the recipient of this year's Calvin K. Sudweeks Water Quality Award for her educational work to raise awareness of water quality issues throughout Utah. Mesner, a tenured professor and USU Extension Water Quality Specialist, was nominated for the prestigious 2009 Sudweeks award for assisting communities in complying with

environmental regulations, and in shaping the K12 educational systems that give students hands on activities to understanding water quality issues.

The award will be presented at the Utah Water Environmental Association's annual meeting in St. George today (April 1). "Nancy has developed this exemplary extension program while also maintaining an active research program in the influence of land use on water quality and in teaching courses on Oceanography and Water Quality and pollution," said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. "As part of the Western Regional Water Quality Extension Team, she has become well known for her expertise, good humor, and high energy in both the regional and national water quality programs."

Every year the Water Quality board recognizes an individual who has shown outstanding leadership in the field of water quality. The award is named for a former state water quality director who was instrumental in leading Utah through dramatic changes in water quality, including improved means of wastewater treatment and the development of protective standards. Mesner, a Cache Valley resident, has motivated students and teachers through such programs as "Utah Stream Science," and "Utah Lake Watch." She has worked for USU since 1999.

Water Quality Board OKs Stimulus Money for Sewer Projects

Monday, April 6, 2009

Contacts:

Walt Baker, (801) 5386047
Director of Water Quality
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

St. George, Utah – Several wastewater projects will move forward as part of $20 million in low interest loans and grants made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Water Quality Board, meeting in St. George last week, authorized funding for several much needed wastewater projects that met the criteria for federal stimulus funding. (Fifty percent of the funds needed to be allocated in the form of grants and 20 percent used for "green" projects.) The applications the Board received were for projects totaling $333 million. A priority was given to communities in need to upgrade sewer facilities to meet current residential needs, as opposed to planning for future growth.
"There is such an overwhelming need so the decision was difficult. The Board, however, did a good job of prioritizing by placing the projects into three different tiers based on

need," said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. "Tier 1 projects were guaranteed ARRA funds. The other tiers are the backup projects should the Tier 1 projects not meet federal deadlines for the use of the funds."

The following projects the Board gave priority are:

Duchesne, $1.2 million loan for the rehabilitation and replacement of sewer pipes and a pump station to prevent sewage from entering into the Duchesne River;
Stockton, $10.7 million loan and grant for the construction of a new collection system and treatment facility to replace septic tanks;
Salt Lake City, $6.9 million to replace the covers on existing bio solids digesters to recover energy and improve safety;
Orem City, $11.9 million to upgrade the city's wastewater treatment plant to enhance the removal of nutrients, improve energy efficiency and provide Class A bio solids that can be beneficially used by the public for landscaping;
Kerns Improvement District, $5 million loan for the ongoing relocation of sewer lines from backyards to public rights of way; and
Price, $1.7 million loan to replace failing and antiquated sewer lines.

The Board continues to seek applications to allocate $4 million for projects that will improve energy efficiency, reduce pollution to the waters of the state and assist with public outreach and water quality education. These funds will be allocated by the Board at its June meeting.

Drop Off Unused Drugs at Smith's for Safe, Proper Disposal

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Contacts:

Leah Ann Lamb, (801) 560-0464
Assistant Director, Division of Water Quality
Marsha Gilford, (801) 973-1700
Vice President Public Affairs, Smith's Food & Drug Stores

Salt Lake City, Utah – If you are like most of us, there's countless unused prescription and over-the-counter drugs in your medicine cabinets or drawers waiting to be disposed of – but where?

Because improper disposal can harm the environment and pose a health and safety risk, Smith's Food and Drug Stores has teamed up with local and state governments in a pilot program to address this issue.

The in-store medication collection event will occur on April 25 at the Smith's Food and Drug Store, located at 845 East 4500 South. Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., people can drop off their unused medications near the pharmacy where a Smith's pharmacist will be on hand to offer assistance and inventory the collections.

"We are pleased to offer this important service for our customers," said Marsha Gilford, Smith's Vice President of Public Affairs.

"This is a chance to dispose of unwanted drugs in a safe and responsible way," said Leah Ann Lamb, assistant director of the Division of Water Quality. "Flushing medicines down the toilet or sink enter the water because some wastewater treatment plants aren't designed to remove them, Lamb said.

This Take-Back Collection Event is a pilot project in partnership with the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, Millcreek Precinct, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Utah Poison Control Center and the Salt Lake Valley Health Department.

DEQ has provided grants to local law enforcement agencies to provide collection boxes. Smith's is the first in-store medication collection event to occur in Utah. For more information on proper medication disposal including a list of the collection box locations, visit: www.medicationdisposal.utah.gov.

For some Utah Businesses, Earth Day is 'Business as Usual'

Wednesday, April 22

Contact:

Paul Harding, (801) 536-4108
Business Assistance, Office of Planning and Public Affairs

Salt Lake City, Utah – About a dozen Utah businesses are taking the Earth Day message a step further by reporting significant reductions in waste, water and electricity that make them a shining example of how going green can also improve their bottom line. Intermountain Health Care (IHC), Rio Tinto/Kennecott Utah Copper, Autoliv, Artspace, Xanterra Bryce Canyon Lodge, Lorraine Press, Swire Coca-Cola and Hexcel are being honored this fall at the non-profit Utah Pollution Prevention Association's annual luncheon for outstanding achievements in conducting business in an environmentally friendly way.

Those businesses and other Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Clean Utah Partners have collectively reduced pollution by recycling over 6,800 tons of material, reducing electrical use by 7 million kilowatts, saving 25.6 million gallons of water, reducing 34.4 tons of smog-forming nitrogen oxides and over 6,300 tons of carbon

dioxide, the primary ingredient in greenhouse gas emissions – enough to keep more than 1,000 vehicles off the road each year.

"These businesses go beyond the regulatory requirements and serve as a model for all of us," said Bill Sinclair, acting executive director of DEQ.
The 2009 Pollution Prevention Association's Outstanding Award Winners are:

> IHC for developing multiple programs to reduce electricity, natural gas, water and solid waste.
> Rio Tinto/Kennecott Utah Copper for instituting a new pilot project, that is now a formal program, that reduces idling time and increases fuel efficiency of its light, medium and heavy duty vehicles at several of Kennecott's plants.
> Autoliv for partnering with Malt-O-Meal to reuse its vegetable oil to package the various reactive wastes at its manufacturing facility in Tremonton.
> Non-profit Artspace for purchasing the former Utah Barrel and Scrap site and implemented a Voluntary Cleanup Program that removed tons of lead and arsenic contaminated soil to make way for a green-building work space for artists.

Four other businesses are receiving meritorious awards. Xanterra Bryce Canyon Lodge for waste reduction and recycling, including the development of a glass recycling program; Lorraine Press for reducing its solid waste by 50 percent; Swire Coca-Cola for reductions in water (Swire saved 17,000 million gallons of water in 2008), electric use, solid waste through recycling and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through an anti-idling policy; and Hexcel for projects that improved energy efficiency.

Many of the award winners are Clean Utah Partners, a DEQ program that provides incentives for businesses going beyond regulatory requirements. Other Clean Utah Partners include Circle Four Farms, Firestone Building Products, Utah Transit Authority and Zion Lodge.

For more information visit: http://www.deq.utah.gov/cleanutah/index.htm.

DEQ Scientist Honored for Work in Underground Tanks

Thursday, April 23, 2009

Contact:

> Robin Davis, (801) 5364177
> Scientist, Division of Environmental Response and Remediation

Salt Lake City, Utah – Robin V. Davis, scientist for the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation (DERR) recently received the prestigious Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lifetime Achievement Award for work in underground storage tank sites.

Davis has worked as a scientist for DERR since 1990 analyzing the risks associated with Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites, evaluating soil vapor data and developing screening criteria for vapors associated with dissolved petroleum hydrocarbons.

"This award was presented to Robin from her friends and colleagues with thanks for her years of dedication and significant contributions to the science of site assessment, risk evaluation and vapor intrusion for LUST sites," said Matt Small, hydrogeologist with EPA Region 9. Davis, who lives in Salt Lake City, was thrilled to be among the recipients who have received the award. "This is such an honor to be recognized nationally for a job I enjoy," said Davis.

Previous award recipients include John Wilson of U.S. EPA Kerr Laboratory and Bruce Bauman of American Petroleum Institute.

Utah Communities get Stimulus Money for Drinking Water

Monday, April 27, 2009

Contacts:

Ken Wilde, (801) 5360048
Assistant Director, Division of Drinking Water
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – Several Utah communities are moving forward with improvements to their drinking water systems after the Drinking Water Board recently authorized $32.2 million, including federal stimulus funding, for construction of drinking water projects. These funds will be combined with other sources of revenue to construct $78.7 million worth of projects. The Board infused the $18.9 million in stimulus funding with non stimulus money to authorize $23.4 million in loans and $8.7 million in grants to help fund much needed drinking water systems.

Needs were much greater, however. The applications the Board received were for projects totaling $426 million. A priority was given to communities faced with public

health risks or those not complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act and not meeting the current residential needs.

Federal law requires states to provide 50 percent of the stimulus money as grants and to give preference to projects that are ready for construction or are defined as “green” by the Environmental Protection Agency.

“The Board used their established procedures to give more grant monies to needy systems using a comparison of the resident’s median adjusted gross income as compared with the resident’s water bill as a means to identify needy systems,” said Ken Bousfield, director of the Division of Drinking Water. “The Board used this system to identify disadvantaged communities when taking into account the allocation of grants.”

The following projects the Board gave priority are:

Austin, $454,000 grant for storage, waterline and backup well;
Blanding, $358,000 grant for a 3 million gallon microfiltration treatment and raw water pipeline;
Cannonville, $333,333 grant for storage tank repair and waterline upgrades;
Central Utah Water Conservancy District, Ashley Valley, $4 million loan for water treatment plant capacity expansion;
Corinne, $2.6 million loan and $1 million grant, for water storage tank and pipelines;
Daniel, $1 million loan and $1 million grant, for a new well, pump station, storage and pipelines;
·Dixie Deer Special Service District, $498,000 loan and $1.37 million grant, for a new well and waterline;
Duchesne, $824,000 loan for waterline upgrades;
Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, $3 million loan for distribution system repairs;
Logan Turbne, $1 million loan and $400,000 grant for microturbine generator;
Manila, $556,000 grant for waterline upgrades, new tank and meters;
Mountain Regional Special Service District, $500,000 loan and $1.5 million grant for pretreatment;
Park City, $2.5 million loan for raw water supply pipeline;
Price, $1.9 million loan for pipeline replacement;
Salt Lake City, $1.5 million loan and $153,600 grant for microturbine generator and replace valves;
Ticaboo Special Service District, $502,500 grant for new well, meters and pipelines; and
Washington Co. WCD – Quail Creek, $4 million loan and $1 million grant for a 20 million gallon storage tank.

Some additional projects that could receive stimulus money will be considered when the Board meets on June 4.

Summer Signals Start of Ozone Alerts

May 20, 2009

Contacts:

Bo Call, (801) 8870762
Manager, Air Monitoring Center
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – With temperatures heating up, the Utah Division of Air Quality's (DAQ) "Choose Clean Air Red Light Green Light" program is now focusing on alerting people of summer smog. DAQ is tracking ozone levels, which is emitted mainly from vehicle emissions and industrial sources. Ozone pollution becomes more troublesome on hot summer days and can make it difficult for people to breathe.

"Summer is a great time to be outdoors," said Cheryl Heying, director of DAQ. "Smoggy conditions, however, can make it unpleasant and even unhealthy at times. That's why the Choose Clean Air program is crucial to inform residents when the air is unhealthy and help them make choices to prevent the pollution from getting worse."

Last year, the federal Environmental Protection Agency tightened the ozone standard, reducing the allowable amount of ozone from 80 parts per billion to 75. "This makes it even more crucial for people to check conditions because we may be asking people to limit their vehicle use even more this summer, depending on weather conditions," said Bo Call, manager of the Air Monitoring Center. Call replaced longtime manager Bob Dalley who retired early this year. Just click on www.airquality.utah.gov to find a color coded three day forecast for Salt Lake, Davis, Cache, Weber and Utah counties. "Green" means air quality is good and people are encouraged to make clean air choices to help keep air pollution levels low. "Yellow" means the pollution is building and people are encouraged to take proactive steps by voluntarily carpooling, consolidating vehicle trips, and avoiding idling or mowing the lawn in the middle of the day. "Red" means pollution levels are critically high, and residents should avoid using gasoline and diesel powered engines.

Governor Appoints Department of Environmental Quality Director

May 19, 2009

Contact:

Lisa Roskelley
Governor's Spokeswoman
Office (801) 538-1503, Cell (801) 560-0137

Salt Lake City – Governor Jon Huntsman has appointed Amanda Smith as the Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality. The position has been unfilled since Rick Sprott retired from the position in December. There was a national search conducted for the new director and Governor Huntsman selected Smith last week, advising the Senate of the appointment. Smith currently serves as Legislative Affairs Director for Governor Huntsman.

"This department is critical to maintaining our State's quality of life," Governor Huntsman said. "Amanda has been a dedicated public servant, focused on maintaining and improving the only true legacy we have – our land, air and water. I am grateful to her willingness to serve in this important capacity."

Smith received her bachelors degree from the University of Utah and earned her juris doctorate from Gonzaga University School of Law. She previously worked as the government relations director for The Nature Conservancy. In her role in the Governor's office, she has worked on critical issues like energy development, rural affairs, water and public lands. "I am honored that the Governor has the confidence in me to lead our State's efforts in protecting our environment," Smith said. "I look forward to working with the strong team of experts at the Department of Environmental Quality."

Smith's appointment is subject to Senate confirmation.

Energy Conservation Can Help Keep Costs Down

June 10, 2009

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in partnership with Utah's electric utilities, has begun its summer energy conservation initiative aimed at promoting efficient use of electricity during the summer peak season. At the heart of the campaign is the PowerForward alert system. This color-coded system notifies people along the Wasatch Front and Dixie region when additional conservation measures are needed. "Green" means normal, common-sense conservation should be practiced, such as turning off lights and TVs when you leave a room or running your dishwasher or washing machines only when fully loaded. "Yellow" means extra conservation measures are urged, such as reducing electrical use as much as possible during peak hours from noon to 8 p.m. "Red" means conservation is critical to reducing electric usage to avoid involuntary outages.

"The PowerForward campaign empowers consumers with common sense, cost saving actions they can take to conserve electricity during peak times when electrical power is the most expensive to produce or purchase," said Amanda Smith, acting executive director of DEQ.

For more information on ways to conserve electricity and to sign-up for PowerForward conservation alerts, visit www.powerforward.utah.gov.

WQ Board Allocates $4 Million in Stimulus for Nine Water Projects

Salt Lake City, Utah – Water quality improvements to popular waterways in the state will move forward as part of $4 million made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Water Quality Board on Wednesday authorized funding for nine "green" projects that met the criteria for federal stimulus funding. The Board received applications for 87 projects totaling $102 million. Priorities were given to projects that improved energy efficiency, reduced pollution to the waters of the state and assisted with public outreach and water quality education.

"There were so many great projects it was difficult to prioritize them, but in the end much needed waterways will be improved as a result of the funding," said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality.

The following projects the Board funded are:

Ogden River, $1 million to restore the river's channel as part of a major redevelopment.

Cutler Reservoir, $500,000 to reduce the phosphorus in Logan's wastewater lagoons by harvesting the algae to convert into biofuels that would power the city's garbage trucks.

Sevier River, $206,000 for stream restoration to remove phosphorus.
Utah Lake, $251,600 to remove 1.2 million pounds of carp using commercial seines.
Jordan River, $577,500 and $484,200 to remove sediment and restore the stream channel. Another $150,000 will be used to help build a storm water biofilter to treat runoff from a new "green" education building before it enters the Jordan River
Strawberry Reservoir, $520,788 to restore the stream and remove phosphorus.
East Canyon, $300,000 to remove sediment and phosphorus.

The Board in April awarded $40 million in ARRA funds for much needed wastewater project improvements. Summaries of the projects are contained in the Water Quality Board Packet at:

http://www.waterquality.utah.gov/WQBoard/2009_06-24_WQB_Packet.pdf.

Drop Off Unused Medications During the U's Health Fair

June 25, 2009

Contact:

Leah Ann Lamb, (801) 538-6057
Assistant Director of Water Quality

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utah families will have an opportunity to drop off their unused prescription and over-the-counter drugs during the Be Well Utah health fair on Saturday, September 12 at the University of Utah campus from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Officers from the Salt Lake City Police Department will be present to collect unused medications at the "Using Medications Safely" booth, Tent #15, located outdoors on the lawns immediately north of the Jon M. Huntsman Event Center (basketball arena).

Pharmacists and nurses from University Hospital will also be present to answer questions about medications.

"Free medication disposal is one of the many activities being offered during Be Well Utah, the largest, free health fair in the state aimed at encouraging families to make healthy choices," said Mary Talboys, LCSW, chair of Be Well Utah and service director for the University's Neuropsychiatric Institute.

"Proper drug disposal is so important for the environment and for our health and safety," said Leah Ann Lamb, assistant director of the Division of Water Quality. "Flushing medicines down the toilet or sink enter the water because some wastewater treatment plants aren't designed to remove them. And, medications could be stolen if they are thrown away in the garbage," she added.

Be Well Utah: A Family Health Week, September 8-12, 2009 is presented by University of Health Care and Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah. Events are located at various University of Utah Health Care locations, culminating with the fair on Saturday, Sept. 12 at the University of Utah campus. All activities are free. For a complete list of Be Well Utah events, visit www.healthcare.utah.edu/bewellutah.

The Department of Environmental Quality has provided grants to local law enforcement agencies to provide collection boxes. For more information on proper medication disposal, including a list of the collection box locations, visit: www.medicationdisposal.utah.gov.

Utah Students Encouraged to Enter National Radon Poster Contest

September 2, 2009

Contact:

Christine Keyser (801) 536-0091 Information Specialist

Salt Lake City, Utah – It's that time of year again when students statewide have an opportunity to be creative when it comes to spotlighting the dangers of indoor radon by entering the National Radon Poster Contest. The national winner, a parent and a teacher (or sponsoring organization's representative) win an all-expenses paid trip to our nation's capital. Utah contest winners will be entered in the national contest and will receive a cash award for their artwork.

The contest is sponsored by the National Safety Council, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and administered in Utah by the Department of Environmental Quality. To be eligible, children, ages 9 to14, must be enrolled in a public, private, territorial, tribal, Department of Defense, or home school—or belong to a sponsoring club or organization such as scouting, art, computer, 4-H, or science club. There is no entry fee, and only one entry per student is allowed. The entry deadline is October 15, 2009**.** Contest guidelines, criteria, and submission forms are available at: www.nsc.org/issues/radon.

The contest is designed to raise awareness for radon testing. Radon is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. This radioactive element moves through the ground to the surface, and can easily enter homes, schools and buildings. There is no way to detect the amount of radon present unless it is tested.

The state's first-place contest winner will receive $300, with $400 awarded to his or her school or organization. Second- and third-place winners will be awarded $200 and $100, respectively.

Last year's state winners were Emma Sorensen, 1st Place, from Centennial Middle School; Taite Haynes, 2nd Place, from Centennial Middle School; and Courtney Morgan, 3rd Place, from South Jordan Middle School.

For more information about radon, please visit www.radon.utah.gov or call 800-458-0145.

Groups Recognized for Pollution Prevention

Thursday, September 17, 2009

Contact:

Paul Harding, (801) 536-4108
Business Assistance, Office of Planning and Public Affairs

Salt Lake City, Utah – Intermountain Health Care, Rio Tinto/Kennecott Utah Copper, Autoliv, and Artspace will be honored for outstanding efforts to reduce pollution at the Utah Pollution Prevention Association's annual awards luncheon held Tuesday, September 22.

The ceremony, hosted at Intermountain Health Care, Auditorium West, 5121 S. Cottonwood St. Murray, begins at 10:30 a.m. with award recipients giving a brief presentation about their pollution efforts.

The 2009 Outstanding Award Winners are recognized for the following:

IHC for developing multiple programs to reduce electricity, natural gas, water and solid waste.
Rio Tinto/Kennecott Utah Copper for instituting a pilot project, which is now a formal program that reduces idling time and increases fuel efficiency of its light, medium and heavy duty vehicles at several of Kennecott's plants.

Autoliv for partnering with Malt-O-Meal to reuse its vegetable oil to package the various reactive wastes at its manufacturing facility in Tremonton.
Nonprofit Artspace for purchasing the former Utah Barrel and Scrap site and implemented a Voluntary Cleanup Program that removed tons of lead and arsenic contaminated soil to make way for a green-building work space for artists.

Four other businesses will receive meritorious awards. Xanterra Bryce Canyon Lodge for waste reduction and recycling, including the development of a glass recycling program; Lorraine Press for reducing its solid waste by 50 percent; Swire Coca-Cola for reductions in water (Swire saved 17,000 million gallons of water in 2008), electric use, solid waste through recycling and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through an anti-idling policy and Hexel for projects that improved energy efficiency.

The Utah Pollution Prevention Association, a nonprofit organization made up of Utah businesses and institutions dedicated to reducing pollution through practical, cost-saving methods, each year recognizes the achievements of businesses that make outstanding efforts to reduce risk to the environment and public health.

Environmental Response Director Named Deputy Director of DEQ

Monday, October 26, 2009

Contacts:

Brad Johnson, (801) 536-4170
Director, Division of Environmental Response and Remediation
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – Amanda Smith, executive director of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) announced today that Brad Johnson, the Director of the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation (DERR), will be the deputy director, replacing Bill Sinclair, who plans to retire on December 11.

“I am confident that Brad’s extensive experience with the Department and his strong management style give him the tools to be a very successful Deputy Director,” Smith said. He was chosen after an extensive search from a field of qualified applicants. Johnson has been with DEQ for 26 years. He began his career in the Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste before moving to DERR, where he has served as director for the past six years.

Johnson said he welcomes the change.

"I'm very excited about this," he said. "I look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders, legislators, and the public on DEQ issues in my position as Deputy Director," Johnson said.

Johnson will assume his Deputy Director duties on November 9 where he will work alongside Sinclair for the weeks preceding Bill's retirement.

Johnson, 54, lives in Kaysville with his wife, Annette and four children, ages 14 to 19. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree and Master's of Science in Geology from Brigham Young University in 1981 and 1983.

Choose Clean Air Switches to Winter Pollution Alerts

October 29, 2009

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer
Bo Call, (801) 887-0762
Manager, Air Monitoring Center

Salt Lake City, Utah – The arrival of winter weather is a reminder that the Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ) is switching on its 'Red Light Green Light' program to alert people of winter air pollution conditions.

This is the time of year when DAQ's three-day forecasts track the hard-to-see particles caused primarily by vehicle emissions, wood burning stoves and fireplaces that can shroud the valley in pollution-trapping inversions. On Nov. 1, the wood-burning restrictions go into effect.

"It's crucial for everyone to heed pollution alerts now that the state is in the midst of drafting a plan to meet tougher federal pollution standards," said Cheryl Heying, director of DAQ. "When the air quality is unhealthy we need to drive smarter, and limit, or prohibit firing up wood-burning stoves."

DAQ monitors air pollution hourly and provides a three-day forecast on its Web site: http://www.airquality.utah.gov/. Under "green" conditions, wood burning is allowed. When pollution builds, "yellow" signals for voluntary no wood burning and efforts to limit driving. When pollution levels approach unhealthy, a "red" mandatory no burning is used and the elderly, children or anyone with respiratory problems are advised to stay indoors.

"Obviously some inversions are difficult to avoid because of meteorological conditions," said Bo Call, manager of the Air Monitoring Center. "But if we all work together and reduce air pollution emissions we could prevent the pollution from getting worse." Winter air pollution can pose serious health problems when fine particles become lodged in lung tissue, decreasing lung function, increasing susceptibility to respiratory infections and aggravating breathing problems like asthma and chronic bronchitis. Children and older adults and those with existing heart and lung conditions are most sensitive to particulate air pollution. For more information on winter pollution and tips, visit Choose Clean Air at http://www.cleanair.utah.gov/.

Three State Radon Poster Contest Winners Announced

November 10, 2009

Contact:

Christine Keyser, (801) 536-0091

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Radiation Control today announced three state winners for the 2010 National Radon Poster Contest. Congratulations to first-place winner Emily Pinnock from Olympus Jr. High, second-place winner Anna Pinnock from Cottonwood Elementary, and third-place winner Joshua Basilio from Spring Creek Elementary.

Students (ages 9 – 14) from eleven different schools throughout the state rose to the challenge by creating 61 posters. Posters illustrated the dangers of radon, where it comes from, how it gets into our homes, and how residents can test their home for this invisible, radioactive gas.

The creative artwork was displayed on the division's website for public voting. Winning posters were selected on content accuracy, visual communication of a specific topic, poster reproducibility (with title/topic on the front) for possible publication, and originality.

The 2009 state winners and the first-place winner's school will receive a cash award. The winning posters will be sent to Washington D. C. to be entered in the National Radon Poster Contest. The national winner, a parent, and teacher will win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to participate in an awards ceremony, in January 2010.

"The poster contest is a great way to educate people about the dangers of radon gas, the second leading cause of lung cancer," said John Hultquist, radon program manager with

the Division of Radiation Control. “Testing for radon in homes and schools is the only way to find out if a radon problem exists.”

For more information about radon, please visit: www.radon.utah.gov.

Depleted Uranium Public Comment Period Cancelled

November 12, 2009

Contact:

John Hultquist, (801) 536-4263
Dane Finerfrock, (801) 536-4250
Utah Division of Radiation Control

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Radiation Control today announced that the Public comment period regarding the thirty-day public comment period that commenced on October 26, 2009 by publication in the Salt Lake Tribune, the Deseret News, and the Tooele County Transcript-Bulletin has been cancelled due to actions taken by the Radiation Control Board at its Tuesday, November 10, 2009 meeting.

In addition, the two public meetings scheduled for, Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 6 PM, at the Department of Environmental Quality, Room 101, 168 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, Utah and Thursday, November 19, 2009 6 PM, at the Tooele County Court House, 47 South Main, Tooele, Utah have been cancelled.

Water Quality Crews testing Provo River

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2009

Contacts:

Benjamin Holcomb, (801) 696-9345
Division of Water Quality
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

WHO: Benjamin Holcomb, Biological Assessment Program Coordinator, 801-696-9345 or Jim Harris, 801-541-3069.

WHAT: Division of Water Quality (DWQ) is conducting Water Quality assessments on various streams throughout Utah, including the Provo River on Thursday. Crews will collect fish, bugs and algae along with measuring habitat.

WHERE: 800 N. bridge, Provo River. Crews will be parked at North 1050 West, downstream of 800 N. bridge.

WHEN: From 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 19.

WHY: DWQ assesses surface water quality throughout the state to determine the extent of designated beneficial use attainment under the federal Clean Water Act. Beneficial uses are defined as uses such as recreation, aquatic life, agriculture, etc. The results that DWQ obtains through these assessments guide decisions to determine if a stream is meeting water quality standards.

New District Engineer for Southwest Utah

Wednesday, November, 25, 2009

Contacts:

Paul Wright, (435) 680-0163
District Engineer
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has hired Paul Wright as the new District Engineer to serve parts of southern Utah. He replaces District Engineer Randy Taylor, who retired earlier this year.

Wright, 42, received his undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University in 1993 and a master's in civil engineering from BYU in 1998. He has worked as a consultant for 19 years at Franson Civil Engineers in American Fork. He begins his duties on Monday, November 30, representing DEQ in helping Washington, Kane, Beaver, and Iron counties with environmental issues.

"I'm excited to be working for DEQ," Wright said. "I have spent my whole career tackling water issues and the fact that I get to be involved in a number of different environmental issues is very appealing."

Brad Johnson, deputy director of DEQ, is pleased Wright has joined DEQ to serve a fast-growing region. “Paul comes to us with an excellent background to meet the needs of our stakeholders in southwestern Utah.”

Wright plans to move to the St. George area with his wife, Sarah, and their four children.

Superfund Manager to Head DEQ’s Environmental Response and Remediation

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Contacts:

Brent Everett, (801) 536-4171
Acting Director of Division of Environmental Response and Remediation
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – Brent Everett, manager overseeing environmental cleanup programs, will become the director of the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation. Everett will replace Brad Johnson who was named deputy director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Executive Director Amanda Smith recently announced his appointment to begin December 15.

Everett, 49, has worked for DEQ for 19 years. He began his career as a project manager in the Superfund program. Most recently he has served as the branch manager overseeing Superfund, Voluntary Cleanup, and Brownfields programs, among other duties. He has a bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Geology from Brigham Young University and an MBA from the University of Utah.

“I look forward to working closely with our stakeholders and division staff to further the good work achieved within the programs of the Divisions,” Everett said.
“We are pleased Brent accepted the position. He comes to us with lots of experience and expertise,” said Smith.

Everett lives in Lehi with his wife, Melissa, and their three children.

EPA Honors Retiring Deputy Director for Environmental Leadership

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Contact:

Bill Sinclair, (801) 536-4403
Retiring, Deputy Director, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today recognized Bill Sinclair, retiring Deputy Director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for his outstanding leadership in environmental protection that spans three decades.

Carol Rushin, acting regional administrator for EPA Region 8, presented Sinclair with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication and environmental achievements in helping to improve the air, land, and waters of Utah.
"We at EPA appreciate Bill as a tireless advocate of the environment, his work ethic, and his fabulous sense of humor," Rushin said at an annual meeting with local health departments held here at DEQ.

Sinclair served as the acting executive director of DEQ for eight months prior to the appointment of Amanda Smith in May 2009. Since 2003, he has served as the deputy director where he has worked in partnership with local health departments and EPA on implementing state and federal environmental laws and rules, and maintaining Utah's primacy for implementing federal programs.

Sinclair began his environmental career by serving in the U.S. Air Force from 1970 to 1977. In 1980, he worked for the Department of Health in the Bureau of General Sanitation, transferring to the Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste before DEQ became an agency in 1991. In 1993, he was appointed director of the Division of Radiation Control.

During his tenure as Director of Division of Radiation Control, he helped persuade the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to do an environmental impact statement that ultimately led to the removal of the uranium mill tails from the banks of the Colorado River to a permanent disposal site near the town of Crescent Junction.
Sinclair, who plans to retire on December 11, was honored. "It is great to be recognized for environmental service that I have thoroughly enjoyed throughout my career," he said.

Updated Report Notes Progress Made to Air, Land and Water

December 23, 2009

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utah's environment continues to improve due to progress made in 2009, according to the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) annual report released today.

"As we look over the past year, we see some successes – and some challenges," said Amanda Smith, executive director of DEQ. "Clean air, clean land, and clean water continue to be the basis of Utah's quality of life and economy. We are making strides to reduce energy use, optimize efficiencies and ensure a sustainable future."

The Web-based report highlights progress made in each of the four main sections: air, climate change & energy, land and water.

Air quality continues to improve as the Division of Air Quality drafts a plan to achieve the tougher federal standards for wintertime particulate pollution and summertime ozone. The federal stimulus money provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has helped communities make improvements to drinking water and fund wastewater projects. Additional funding also has helped advance the work to retrofit school buses with cleaner technology and clean up nine abandoned leaking underground storage tank sites around the state.

Challenges loom ahead as the Division of Radiation Control scrutinizes the safety parameters over depleted uranium disposal at EnergySolutions' low-level radioactive waste site in Clive, Utah. Legislation also is expected in the upcoming 2010 session to reform the Environmental Quality Restricted Account, a fund that waste operators pay into in order to cover the cost of oversight. DEQ has been meeting with stakeholders to shore up a projected $2.3 million shortfall by 2011 due to a decline in waste revenues and some money being diverted to cover other services.

The report is available to the public at: http://www.deq.utah.gov/envrpt/landing.htm.