## COUNTY GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT in Ensuring Safe and Reliable Supplies of Drinking Water

Typically county governments are not involved in the operations and maintenance of public drinking water systems. However, the tasks of: subdivision plat recording, building permitting and planning and zoning are functions that counties are involved with. The policies and associated ordinances that counties adopt can either promote or discourage safe and reliable drinking water systems.

### BACKGROUND

The State Division of Drinking Water (the Division) has authority from the legislature to adopt and enforce rules that apply to public drinking water systems in the State. "Public drinking water systems" are defined as systems that serve 15 connections and/or serve 25 or more people for at least 60 days per year. The Division's rules are designed to ensure a safe (meeting scientifically researched and validated water quality standards) and reliable (have sufficient capacity to meet all water user demands for water) drinking water systems.

The Division acts as staff to the Drinking Water Board. This is a Board appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate. One of the primary duties of this Board is to oversee the disbursement of federal and State appropriated funds for the construction of drinking water facilities. In this role, the Board has noticed many occurrences where the applicant is a group of homeowners who live in a land developer's subdivision that was inadequately designed and/or constructed. Frequently, the homeowner group requests grants rather than loans for needed improvements. For this reason, the Board has charged the Division to implement programs that promote adequate construction of facilities even when the system is not large enough to qualify as a public system.

## County Government and Division Cooperative Efforts

The Division desires to work with county governments to ensure all water systems within counties provide a safe and reliable commodity. The Division believes this goal is and should be shared by county officials. For this reason, the Division proposes the following cooperative efforts, within the counties' authority, to reach this stated goal:

- Counties should encourage proposed land development projects to, where possible, connect to existing public drinking water systems.
- Where a connection to a public drinking water systems is not possible, the Division recommends that
  - ⇒ The county adopt and enforce construction standards to ensure consistently designed and constructed water system that will provide a reliable supply of drinking water (the Division has model ordinances for consideration),
  - ⇒ The county solicit the Division's services to review engineering plans for such development,
  - ⇒ The county requires, as part of its subdivision ordinances, that the land developers show proof of the Division's review, comments, and approval of the water system design.
- Counties should exercise their zoning authority to protect public water system's existing drinking water sources. County planners should review the Division's guidelines and interactive map of source water protection zones, on all building permit application decisions.

Ken Bousfield, P.E.
Director, Utah Division of Drinking Water

# DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

## of Public Water Systems

### WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

- County Building Authority
- County Commissioners
- County Health Department
- County Planners & Engineers
- County Planning Commissions
- Staff

### WHAT ISSUES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?

- Ordinances involving land development in place for planning and approval process.
- Approved process procedures in place
- A working relationship between county staff and the Division of Drinking Water
- Land use authority & source protection planning

**ADEQUATE WATER**

DDW will not give plan approval for other infrastructure until "wet water" is proven. County/City should not approve plats until "wet water" is proven

# INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## DRINKING WATER

**PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEW DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE:**

- Submit Project Notification Form and Engineering Plans and Specifications with PE Stamp to DDW
- Submittal will be reviewed by DDW Engineer
- Plan Approval Letter will be issued by the Division Director
- Construction of Infrastructure
- Submit Request for Operating Permit to DDW
- Operating Permit will be issued by the Division Director

## WASTEWATER

**DETERMINATION HOW WASTEWATER WILL BE HANDLED:**

Need Permits and Construction Approvals from Utah Division of Water Quality or Local Health Department

- Individual home septic systems or
- Central Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

**SYSTEMS TOO SMALL TO QUALIFY AS A PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM STILL MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING:**

- Certificate of Convenience and Necessity to Operate as a Public Utility

OR

- Exemption from Public Service Commission Regulation (Mutual Water Company) (Cities and Towns are exempt from PSC)

## CONTACT RWAU


Curtis Ludvigson
Development Specialist
Rural Water Association of Utah

**Office:** 801-756-5123
**Cell:** 435-851-0101
**Email:** clud@rwau.net
**Website:** www.rwau.net

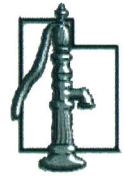
# DEVELOPING ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Drinking Water Supply
- Wastewater Disposal
- Fire Protection
- Outside Irrigation

### The County's Role In Developing Water & Wastewater Systems

Cooperative Effort RWAU & DDW

**RWAU**

Rural Water Association of Utah assists and encourages counties in developing or expanding water and wastewater systems; in understanding the importance of working cooperatively with the Utah Division of Drinking Water and the Utah Division of Water Quality; and with the administrative rules.

The Rural Water Association of Utah provides assistance to counties to understand the Capacity Development Program and the role of public or non-public water and wastewater systems to enhance and ensure technical, managerial, and financial capacity.