

N.E. Colorado Health Dept. sends on new policy for state board approval

Written by Deanna Herbert

A public hearing regarding proposed changes to onsite wastewater regulations was held during the Northeast Colorado Board of Health's Wednesday, April 29 meeting. The proposed changes include an exception provision regarding the stipulation that for each dwelling, a property owner must have a minimum of two and one-half acres available to repair or replace an existing septic system if there is a well also located on the property.

The matter was first brought up by Morgan County Commissioner Jon Becker, after his county experienced several conflicts with the regulations. Becker cited examples of old homesteads that have been parceled off where two houses may now reside on two and one-half acres or less.

Becker asked the board back in February to consider rewording the current regulations to include a variance process that would bypass the two and one-half acreage requirement, but still adhere to state setback requirements for wells, ground water, soil types, property lines and buildings for the septic structures.

Despite verbal concerns from the state regarding the exception, board members unanimously approved the new wording and voted to send the new policy in its present form to the state health department for approval. The proposed changes cannot be approved without consent from the state health department.

The board also partially approved a proposal by Carmen Vandebark, NCHD's consumer protection coordinator, regarding a new fee structure for the food service program. The proposal included requests to charge temporary event coordinators \$30 per hour for inspections, menu reviews and pre-event meetings.

The proposal also included requests for a change in fees for retail food establishments plan reviews, opening inspections, change of ownership inspections, child care inspection charges, child care review plans and body art review plans and licensing.

After discussion the board voted to approve the proposed changes, with the exception of the hourly fee for a temporary event coordinator. The new fees, which go into effect June 1, 2009, are available on NCHD's website, www.nchd.org, or can be picked up at any of our offices.

In other business the board:

—recognized the recipients of NCHD's 2009 Public Health Shining Star awards. Recipients included Linda Langelo, Kerri Hansen, Darla Brennemann, Dr. Paula Frantz, Pam Blochowitz, and the late George Severin.

—accepted the financial statements for March.

—approved the purchase of Envision Connect software in the amount of \$8,600. This software will upgrade the present software and eventually allow health inspectors to input data while they are in the field.

—approved the purchase of Demolizer II to help reduce the costs of NCHD's medical waste. The unit, which had an initial investment of \$6,445, will save the department \$9,672 each year by replacing their commercial medical waste disposal service.

—approved the proposal to make the Northeast Colorado Health Department a tobacco free campus. This policy will apply to the property that NCHD currently owns, which include the Sterling and Fort Morgan offices.

—voted to move into executive session, citing personnel matters regarding employee conduct and NCHD's policies.

—emergence from executive session with no action taken.