

Cold and Windy Day for Minister Gerretsen Media Event

Shown Right (L to R)

Heather Kirby, Program

Manager, Well Aware, Green Communities Canada;

Brianna Rustige, Project Manager and trained advisor, Hearthmakers Energy Cooperative;

Steve Walker, Executive Director, Hearthmakers Energy Cooperative;

Minister of the Environment

John Gerretsen;

Marie Devillers, Homeowner;

Clifford Maynes, Executive Director, Green Communities Canada

Minister very supportive of Well Aware:

"I'll certainly do whatever I can to ensure that the funding is there and maybe even enhanced." Minister Gerretsen Gerretsen said protection of individual water supplies is just as important as efforts to secure municipal water systems.



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Minister Gerretsen becomes Well Aware

On October 15, 2009, Minister of the Environment, John Gerretsen, attended a media event hosted by Green Communities Canada to thank Minister Gerretsen for the Ministry's support for Well Aware over the past eight years.

Brianna Rustige, Project Manager and Steve Walker, Executive Director of Hearthmakers Energy Cooperative worked with local homeowner and fellow staff member Marie Devillers to help organize the event. Media from print and television were in attendance to report on the event.

Clifford Maynes, Executive Director of Green Communities Canada, introduced the organization and the provincial implementation of the Well Aware program. Steve Walker briefly described what Hearthmakers has been working on locally, including a recent ecoENERGY audit at the Minister's home.

Past endeavours of the Minister include the Greenbelt Plan and the Cosmetic Pesticide Ban which came into effect April 22, 2009. Both pieces of legislation have significant and positive impacts on our common groundwater resources.

To provide a vivid example, Heather Kirby described a situation discussed at annual well advisor training

about a well with an ill-fitting cap. When the cap was removed, a spider web was encompassing the full radius of the well pipe. On the spider web were small granules. When asked what it may be, the homeowner commented that he had recently broadcast some pesticides a few days ago. The pesticides in the well were a direct source of contamination for our common groundwater.

The Minister connected the combined positive impacts of the recent Pesticide Ban and the education and awareness of Ontario rural homeowners regarding the protection of our water through Well Aware.

The Devillers' beautiful home was also used in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities aware video which is available to view at www.wellaware.ca.

Thank you Marie and Tom for this opportunity.



Harvey Rosen (far right), Mayor of the City of Kingston was also in attendance speaking with the Minister, B. Rustige and M. Devillers.

Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors – Ontario Branch Educational Conference

Lynda Bausinger from Elora Environmental Centre staffed the booth for Well Aware’s first appearance at this conference.



The annual Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors – Ontario Branch conference was held from October 5-7, 2009 in London, Ontario. Over 200 health inspectors were in attendance.

This was an opportunity to reinforce the value of the Well Aware program to rural homeowners who receive a negative water test result.

Feedback from the conference participants who visited the booth was very positive and the Well Aware recognition was immediate. Comments included “Great, there’s Well Aware”, “We have all the books and DVDs to give out to the public at our health unit”. Seven boxes of booklets and over 100 DVDs were distributed.

Many Health Inspectors asked the question “Will Well Aware continue to run in the future”? The feedback and comments reflected their support. It is clear that they feel that the partnership between our two groups is mutually beneficial as they have directed many rural well owners with adverse water samples to the program for one on one education and assistance.

Thank you for your time away from Elora Environment Centre Lynda!

Lynda Bausinger is shown above with Joe Delassandro, Health Unit Chief from Grey Bruce County Health Unit. Thank you Mr. Delassandro for your support!

Main Sources of Information about wells:

1. Well Aware
2. Public Health Office
3. Licensed Well Technician
4. local Municipal office
5. mail or newspaper

Well Aware Program Evaluation
September 30 2009, Lura Consulting

Below, Lynda is talking with Krystian Imgrund. Krystian presented on the Ontario Household Water Well Stewardship Survey and his own research conducted in 2008. He has also presented this research at the Well Aware advisor training and the Well Wise Seminar Day in spring 2009.



Grant Jones of Elora Environment Centre has reached 350!



Grant’s experience is always an asset at the yearly training. With his charm and humour Grant is a great mentor for new advisors.

Grant Jones has been delivering Well Aware guided self-assessments since 2002 when the program first started. He has a natural way of talking to homeowners about their well that connects them to the importance of caring for it and our common drinking water.

Reaching 350, Grant holds the record for most Guided Self-Assessments across the province!

In addition to his well visits, he also conducts the ecoENERGY home audits in the Fergus area. Great job Grant! Keep up the good work!

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, Woodstock, Sept 15-16-17 2009

The University of Guelph invited Well Aware to partner with them on an education & outreach project.



The University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus invited Well Aware to partner with them on a project that focuses on educating agricultural and rural communities in their watershed on drinking water source protection and best management practices.

The watersheds that are covered in their area fall within the St. Clair Conservation Authority as well as both the Upper and Lower Thames Conservation Authorities.

The University has strong connections in the agricultural community while Well Aware has trained advisors with excellent communication skills and has established a successful booklet and prompts (water test decal). These two strengths come together to create an effective partnership.

A total of five agricultural events will be attended with this partnership in southwestern Ontario: Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, OFA Convention, Southwest Ag Conference, Guelph Organic Conference, and London Farm Show.

When the opportunity is there, Well Aware staff will have a one-hour presentation for delegates to learn more about their wells and best management practices.

Well Aware would like to thank the University of Guelph for this opportunity and partnership. We look forward to the remaining tradeshows.

Information Providers Workshop held for Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation partners.

On October 19 at Black Creek Pioneer Village, Mary Jane Conboy facilitated an Information Provider Workshop (IPW) for members of the ORM Foundation and their partners.

**“It was a great opportunity to see in action what the Foundation has supported. The workshop was very interesting and helpful”
Lisa Turnbull**

This workshop was one of nine held on the Oak Ridges Moraine over the two year funding partnership with Well Aware, IPWs are for groups that work firsthand with rural homeowners (real estate agents, home inspectors, health unit, municipal, and conservation authority staff).

A key component of the workshop is the groundwater model interactive display. It demonstrates groundwater movement in different scenarios. Windfall Ecology Centre and Durham Sustainability have received models compliments of the Foundation. (see right)

Fall Cottage Life SHOW

November 6-8, 2009 HALL 5, INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, 6900 AIRPORT ROAD

As the cottage season wraps up, it is also important to consider your well and septic as you close up your home away from home.

Alix Taylor of Peterborough Green Up, along with Kari Scott and Violet Chew of Windfall Ecology Centre will be staffing the Well Aware booth at the Cottage Life Show to remind cottage owners that their wells and septic systems are valuable assets to the property and should be added to the opening and closing checklist.



The red is a containment moving through the native soils – an excellent visual tool to see what goes on under our feet.



Shown Left (L to R)
 Heather Kirby, Program Manager, Well Aware, Green Communities Canada
 Desiree Ducharme, Project Director, Greening Nipissing
 Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller
 Judith Koziol, City of North Bay Councillor
 John Sawyer & Shirley Taylor, Homeowners
 November 3, 2009

Environmental Commissioner is more 'Aware'

Green Communities Canada and Greening Nipissing worked together to host a media event to create stronger community partnerships for Greening Nipissing and to connect the Environmental Commissioner with Well Aware.

Greening Nipissing is a member Green Communities Canada and has been delivering the outreach portion of the program in 2009 and will be delivering the full program in 2010. Cogeco television and CTV North Bay were in attendance to cover the event for the evening news. The Commissioner answered questions from the media, the homeowners and others in attendance. His answers reflected the 5 key messages of Well Aware and he was very supportive of the work that is done across the province.

Desiree Ducharme, Project Director, was extremely happy at the turn out for the event and felt that this will move her organization to stronger partnerships in the community for when they start to deliver the full program next year. Thanks for all the hard work and efforts

Free Draw for a Duel Flush toilet!



(Derek Tessier (R), EcoSuperior water advisor, and the lucky winner.)

Each year, EcoSuperior has a draw for guided self-assessment participants. The toilet and installation are provided by two local companies as in-kind support for their program. What a great partnership!

Well Aware has an electronic letter writing campaign to help continue the program. If you would like to take part, please see the website. Thank you for your support.