

## Welcome to our 1<sup>st</sup> Well Aware Newsletter

We want to share with you some highlights from local delivery communities and what we are doing at Well Aware.

We would like to thank the partners and supporters of this effective and efficient outreach and educational rural program.

## Well Aware on the Oak Ridges Moraine

Two delivery communities have been delivering Well Aware on the Oak Ridges Moraine for two seasons.

In addition to the guided self-assessments, community forums and information provider workshops help to engage homeowners and those who work directly with homeowners on the Moraine.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation has funded this outreach from 2007-2009.

At the end of 2009, the Foundation is shutting down; Well Aware would like to thank the Foundation for their support.



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## WA attends OFNTSC Conference & tradeshow.

Well Aware had a staffed display at the 14<sup>th</sup> Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation Annual Conference & Tradeshow titled "Sustainability in our Changing Economy". The tradeshow was held on August 26 and was attended by 200 delegates from across Ontario.

Other groups attending the tradeshow included: Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation, Human Resource Skills & Development Canada, Ontario Clean Water Agency, Environment Canada and many other services such as construction and engineering.

Well Aware and Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation has partnered with the Well Wise Resource Centre and the Green Communities Foundation for a First Nations Well Stewardship Pilot Project funded by RBC: Blue Water project.

The main deliverable for this project is a well stewardship program model that can be duplicated in First Nations communities across Canada. The model will have a multifaceted approach to engage well owners and professionals. Working together in a consultative process for first time, the partners

will work directly with the two communities and examine cultural barriers and opportunities to approach individuals, chiefs and councils with important messaging while motivating action to protect drinking water.

A project coordinator will be executing the deliverables for this project and working directly with the two participating communities. Part of the coordinators tasks are to: review and revise current Well Aware materials; conduct market research by way of surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews; develop partnerships by hosting Information Provider Workshops in each community; build capacity and direction; and report all findings and recommendations.

## Up Coming Tradeshows

- ◆ Canada's Outdoor Farm Show Sept 15,16,17
- ◆ Canadian Institute for Public Health Inspectors (Ontario Branch) Oct 5,6,7
- ◆ Fall Cottage Life Show Nov 6,7,8
- ◆ Latorell Conservation Symposium Nov 18,19,20
- ◆ OFA Convention Nov 23
- ◆ Southwest AG Conference Jan 6,7 2010
- ◆ Guelph Organic Conference Jan 30,31 2010
- ◆ Farm\$mart Conference Feb 2010
- ◆ Pork Conference Feb 2010
- ◆ London Farm Show Mar 2010

Thank you for those who are helping out!

wellwise



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Well Aware.ca



## Member of Provincial Parliament Rick Johnson has a GSA

Newly elected politician who lives on the Oak Ridges Moraine has a Well Aware guided self-assessment and media event.

## Professional Development

Project managers and advisors have been participating in professional development sessions which, have focused on the topics of their choice.

Denis Orendt, executive director of the Ontario On-site Waste Water Association, covered discussions on septic systems and rainwater harvesting. Rob MacKinnon, a member of the board of directors of the Ontario Ground Water Association, presented information about geothermal drilling. Susan Collins of the Canadian Dowsing Society facilitated the first session on the history of dowsing and how it can be beneficial in the water well industry.



Susan Collins with her rods.

WA would like to thank our presenters for sharing your knowledge.

On August 21, Durham Sustainability and Peterborough Green Up, along with Kim Gavine, executive director of the Oak Ridges Moraine, met at MPP Rick Johnson's home on Ballyduff Road in Pontypool to examine his well and remind rural dwellers just how important it is to regularly check wells and test the water from them.

Mr. Johnson sheepishly admitted that he - like many private well owners - does not check his 23-year-well as often as he should.

The 'Well Aware' program offers a free and confidential inspection of private wells, as well as tips and resources to ensure that well water is safe and

groundwater is protected.

There is often a misconception from homeowners that once the inspection is done, they will be forced to perform upgrades immediately, said Ms Andrews. The 'Well Aware' program is for educational purposes only, and the onus is on the owner to follow up on recommendations, the water guides simply give private well owners the tools they need to make efficient and educated decisions, she said.

Considering the fact that there are around 135,000 private wells around the Oak Ridges Moraine, the starting

point for 65 rivers that flow into Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the Kawartha Lakes, the potential consequences of contaminated groundwater sources are substantial, said Ms Gavine.

Many well owners also don't know how many programs are out there to help them, including Stewardship Council Funding that provides \$500 for each homeowner on the Oak Ridges Moraine to upgrade their wells, said Ms Andrews.

**"Well Aware is an important resource for rural Ontario homeowners"**  
MPP Rick Johnson

"The Well Aware check-up is an excellent service that all well owners should take advantage of," said Alix Taylor, water program co-ordinator for

Peterborough Green-up. "They can learn so much about protecting their water and they have nothing to lose. There is no cost and the information obtained is completely confidential." Many well owners, like Mr. Johnson, don't keep on top of the functionality of their wells as much as they should, said Ms Taylor.

"They [water guides] said 89 per cent of wells that they've seen need to be upgraded."

An excerpt from the Kawartha Lakes This Week, Date: 2009-08-26  
By Barbara-Ann MacEachern.