

Early lead results released

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Preliminary lead testing results in Dallas schools have found levels in some fixtures that exceed the Environmental Protection Agency's "action" threshold of 20 parts per billion.

Results found that the sources of most of those samples are fixtures that are rarely — if ever — used for drinking, said Kevin Montague, facilities director.

He said while he's not pleased to see tests come in too high, so far the results are better than he expected given the age of the school buildings.

"I knew we were going to have some (high) levels," he said. "I had no doubt about that."

The results, readings from "first pull" tests taken between Sept. 20-30, are part of the 552 fixtures tested district-wide.

All fixtures that students or staff could possibly use for drinking and food preparation were tested, exceeding the recommendations of both Oregon Health Authority and the EPA, Montague said.

The lab used for analysis, TRC Environmental Corp,

began sending the district results from only those samples that exceeded 20 ppb late last week.

So far, 24 samples have tested too high, but those do not include the 184 fixtures tested at Dallas High School, which still are under analysis.

Montague said fixtures testing high have been turned off except those not easily accessed by students or staff, such as those in storage rooms or blocked by equipment.

He said even those will be turned off as soon as maintenance crews can get to them.

"The nice thing is, so far, none of our main common area drinking fountains outside of our classrooms, which is where most of our kids drink anyway, have come over the action level," Montague said.

Montague said the scariest looking result came from a kitchen soup pot faucet at Oakdale Heights Elementary School that tested at 1,540 ppb.

He said that faucet was installed for a specific purpose is no longer used, according to kitchen employees at the school.

"The soup pot faucet has

not been used in years," Montague said. "It's a piece of obsolete equipment."

The district is waiting for preliminary results from Dallas High School and results from second tests taken on each of the fixtures that were high on the first sample. The results will tell the district what it needs to do to fix the problem.

The district had samples gathered following EPA guidelines of taking two at the same time, Montague said.

Samples were taken on Tuesdays through Fridays and between 4 and 7 a.m. before anyone used the fixtures. The first, or A sample, is the water from the first use. The second, or B sample, is taken after the water has run for 30 seconds.

"All of the A samples went in from testing," Montague said. "Any of the ones that came back at or above the action level triggered the B sample to go in for testing."

B samples will help determine where the lead is coming from — the fixture or the pipes feeding the faucet.

"We do not have any of the B results yet," Montague said. "If the B results come back and they are lower, we can pretty well identify the

fixture as the contributor and just swap out the fixture."

If the source is in the pipes, that could be a more complicated and expensive fix that would have to take into consideration the presence of asbestos and lead paint if walls need to be opened.

A final analysis will reveal the results of all tests, even those not exceeding the 20 ppb threshold.

Montague said once the complete report is ready, the district may want to have a conversation about whether it wants to follow EPA guidelines or set a lower threshold for lead in water in its schools.

"Twenty is the action level, but EPA and Health Authority say that no amount of lead is safe," he said. "That's probably a board conversation."

In other business, the district:

- Submitted its preliminary draft "Healthy and Safe Schools Plan." The plan outlines how schools will mitigate risks of radon, lead in water, lead paint, among other health risks. Districts were to submit draft plans by Oct. 1 and final plans are due in January.

Falls City seeks grant for sewer

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — The city of Falls City was able to submit its grant application for funding to pay for a sewer system upgrade.

The application was due on Sept. 30, and Mayor Terry Ungricht wrote in his "Mayor's report" for Thursday's Falls City City Council meeting that the Community Development Block Grant application "met the deadline with a couple hours to spare."

He said the state's Infrastructure Finance Authority would review the application and submit questions for the city to answer. The city will have 14 days to respond, and the application would be reviewed again.

"I am not sure when the final decision will be made," Ungricht said.

The grant is for \$2.5 million, the bulk of the estimated \$3.3 million cost of upgrading the city's sewer system.

The city was invited to apply for the grant after an income survey revealed that 55.1 percent of residents served by the system are in the low-to-moderate income range.

Ungricht said he will seek more grant funding to help pay for the rest of the project, but suspects the city will have to finance some of it, which will result in an increase in sewer bills.

"I'm trying, but unfortunately it's going to be a significant rate increase," Ungricht said.

An update on the code enforcement situation in Falls City and efforts to find options for keeping the Wagner Community Library open are on the agenda for the Falls City's meeting Thursday.

Check it out

What: Falls City City Council meeting.
When: 7 p.m.
Where: Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St.
For more information: 503-787-3631.

Monmouth council considers first phase of business registration

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — The Monmouth City Council is considering a business registration in the city, but it would only affect new businesses at this point, City Manager Scott McClure said.

The issue was discussed at the Oct. 4 council meeting.

"The idea with that is to have somebody come in and do simple checks to make sure they're in compliance with city rules, zoning, planning and anything else you need to do there," McClure said.

"It's not ongoing or annual."

The point would be to help new business owners get everything in order ahead of time.

"There's all sorts of silly stuff people don't think about," he said.

For example, sometimes someone will arrange a lease with a building owner and start a business without ever consulting the city. Sometimes, this leads the city to have to tell someone they are not in compliance with codes, McClure said.

The council talked about doing a more ongoing, annual business registration at a later date, he said.

"There is a benefit to registration like (that)," McClure said. "You have basic data. Public safety likes contact information, but the flip side is you have to administer it, dedicate staff time to doing the letters and follow-up phone calls."

Also at the meeting, the council heard about plans on Gwinn Street.

The residential housing development would finish the street.

"You'd be able to get from Gwinn Street to Highway 99 when it's done," McClure said.

Housing is in demand in Mon-

mouth, McClure noted.

"What we're seeing right now is infill development, where you get a little creative — a lot here, a lot there," he said. "Where we're sitting, there aren't a lot of subdivisions available here."

The council also heard a request from the Monmouth Engaged bicycle and pedestrian committee to install bicycle-only camping at Gentle Woods Park, McClure said.

With the bike path on Highway 99W, it would be easy for cyclist to spend the night at the park, he said.

"We're going through, how does

this work?" McClure said. "How do you manage it, what's the best location in the park. In some cases, you could just drop your tent on the ground and call it good, but what would be the impact of current users, and also the neighborhood impact?"

The space at Gentle Woods Park is used often, McClure said.

"Sometimes these things are easier if you have a surplus piece of land, but most of the property is used," he said. "There's heavy rentals down there. You have to figure out how to make everything dovetail in there."



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