



# ECONEWSWIRE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2009

1. Report spills of hazardous substances like mercury to DNR
2. Water quality and quantity to dominate September EPC meeting
3. DNR Director's public forum heads to Jackson, Taylor counties

## REPORT SPILLS OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES LIKE MERCURY TO DNR

**MEDIA CONTACT: Rodney Tucker, DNR Emergency Response & Homeland Security Unit, at (515) 725-0387 or [rodney.tucker@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:rodney.tucker@dnr.iowa.gov)**

DES MOINES – Five separate spills of mercury in about one month are a good reminder that Iowans should promptly report hazardous material spills to the DNR.

Two spills were reported in Sioux City, with additional spills in Mount Vernon, Belmond and Davenport. Three of the spills were considered significant, each involving more than one pound of mercury or about two tablespoons.

One spill was found on a city street. Another occurred in and around a boiler room where vandals had broken thermostats. Three occurred in homes.

“One reason that people probably don’t report spills of this dangerous material is that they don’t realize how harmful it can be,” said Rodney Tucker, a DNR environmental specialist. “In fact, many people remember playing with mercury when they were children.”

However, it takes only a small amount of spilled mercury to cause big problems. Mercury is easily tracked from the original point of a spill to other locations, and its harmful effects are increased by vacuuming or sweeping. Over time, vapors accumulate in the air, leading to the possibility of serious long-term health effects for anyone exposed to it.

In fact, the side effects of mercury have been immortalized in the Mad Hatter of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland." Carroll's fictional character was based on hat makers of the 1800s. They worked in small, enclosed rooms using a mercury solution to turn animal fur into felt. Consequently, many showed signs of mercury poisoning, including trembling, memory loss, slurred speech and depression. Named for Mercury's effects, Mad Hatters' syndrome still exists today.

To be safe, follow guidelines from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clean up small amounts of mercury, such as a broken thermometer or fluorescent light bulb. Check their Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/index.htm>.

Paper towels, eyedroppers and duct tape used in the clean up should be sealed in a glass jar or plastic bag. Once collected, the container should be taken to a regional collection center for hazardous household materials. A statewide list of centers is available on the DNR Web site at [www.iowadnr.gov/waste/hhm/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/waste/hhm/).

"Anyone who finds puddles or drops of spilled mercury should report it to the state's 24-hour emergency spill line at (515) 281-8694 immediately," said Tucker.

The DNR has staff on call 24-hours a day, seven days a week to take those calls and to provide advice on clean-up.

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## **WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY TO DOMINATE SEPTEMBER EPC MEETING**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Jerah Gallinger at (515) 313-8909 or [jerah.gallinger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:jerah.gallinger@dnr.iowa.gov)**

DES MOINES – The Environmental Protection Commission will be asked to rule on several water quality and quantity topics at its Sept. 15 meeting in Windsor Heights.

Commissioners will be asked to approve a contract for a pilot project that would produce highly accurate flood plain maps for Poweshiek County. City and county engineers could use such maps to prevent or reduce damages from future floods. Completion of the pilot will provide the time and budget estimates that will help DNR plan mapping for the remainder of the state.

Also up for commissioners' approval are two proposals concerning water quality standards. One of these would reclassify the level of water quality attainable on about 32 stream sections.

The meeting will be held at 10 a.m. at the DNR Air Quality Building at 7900 Hickman Road in Windsor Heights. The meeting is open to the public and public participation is scheduled for 10:30 a.m.

Jim Roewer, Executive Director of the Utilities Solid Waste Activities Group, will make a presentation at 1 p.m. on coal combustion products.

The complete agenda follows:

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Director's Remarks
- Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund – Second Quarter Updates to the FY 2010 Intended Use Plans
- Notice of Intended Action- Chapters 90 - 93 – Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- Budget Request for FY 2011
- State of Iowa Public Drinking Water Program
- 2008 Annual Compliance Report
- Contract with United States Geological Survey for Cooperative Monitoring FY2010
- Proposed Rule – amend IAC 567 chapters 123 Regional Collection Centers and Mobile Unit Collection and Consolidation Centers and 211 Financial Assistance for the Collection of Household Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste from Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators
- Proposed Rule – amend Iowa Administrative Code 567 chapter 122 “Cathode Ray Tube Device Recycling”
- Solid Waste Environmental Management Systems (House File 2570, 2008 Legislative) and Environmental Protection Commission Responsibilities
- Contract with University of Iowa - Hydraulics Laboratory for a Floodplain Mapping Pilot Project
- Final Rules: Chapters 23, 25 and 34: Air Quality Program Rules – Rescission of vacated CAMR regulations and addition of new mercury monitoring provisions
- Final Rules - Chapters 20, 22, 23, 25, 28 and 33: Air Quality Program Rules - Updates, Revisions, and Additions
- Final Rule – Chapter 61 – Water Quality Standards (Stream Reclassifications via Use Assessment and Use Attainability Analyses)
- Final Rule – Chapter 61 Water Quality Standards- Chloride, Sulfate and Total Dissolved Solids and Chapter 62, “Effluent and Pretreatment Standards: Other Effluent Limitations or Prohibitions”
- Referrals to the Attorney General
- Water Supply: Water Use & Allocation Annual Permit Fee
- Monthly Reports
- General Discussion

- Items for Next Month's Meeting
  - Oct. 20 – Fayette County
  - Nov. 17 – Windsor Heights

Look for more information on the DNR Web site under "Commissions and Boards" at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

The members of the commission are Charlotte Hubbell, chair, Des Moines; Marty Stimson, vice-chair, Cedar Rapids; Carrie La Seur, secretary, Mount Vernon; David Petty, Eldora; Susan Heathcote, Des Moines; Paul Johnson, Decorah, Eugene Ver Steeg, Inwood; Dale Cochran, Urbandale; and Lorna Puntillo, Sioux City,. The director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

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## **DNR DIRECTOR'S PUBLIC FORUM HEADS TO JACKSON, TAYLOR COUNTIES**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Tammie Krausman, DNR, at (515) 402-8763 or [Tammie.Krausman@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Tammie.Krausman@dnr.iowa.gov).**

BELLEVUE – DNR Director Richard Leopold will hold public forums at Bellevue State Park in Jackson County Thursday and at Lake of Three Fires State Park in Taylor County on Tuesday.

Richard Leopold, director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, is holding forums across the state again this year to discuss natural resource issues with Iowans.

"I really look forward to hearing from Iowa's citizens. Last year, we got great feedback and ideas from more than 300 attendees," said Leopold about the seven forums held last year. "Our relationship with Iowans is something we highly value within the DNR and we will work together on the things most affecting our natural resources."

Each public forum begins at 6 p.m. with Director Leopold outlining the DNR's top priorities, the environmental report card, providing an update on budget cuts and discussing local issues. Another hour-and-a-half will be devoted to answering questions from the public.

Director Leopold has hosted more than 130 people at forums at Honey Creek Resort, Dolliver and Macbride state parks so far this summer.

Upcoming public forums scheduled for Leopold are as follows, listed alphabetically by city:

### **Bedford**

Lake of Three Fires State Park Lodge  
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 6 p.m.

**Bellevue**

Bellevue State Park Lodge  
Thursday, Sept. 3, 6 p.m.

**Clear Lake**

Clear Lake State Park Lodge  
Thursday, Sept. 17, 6 p.m.

**Council Bluffs**

Hitchcock Nature Center  
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 6 p.m.

**Sioux City**

Stone State Park Lodge  
Thursday, Sept. 24, 6 p.m.