

Health Officer Annual Report for 2003

This year was busy with some very interesting complaints requiring follow-through. I have answered several calls on cleanliness issues in restaurants, West Nile Virus concerns, fruit fly invasions, school evacuations, an unsanitary residence that resulted in condemnation, day care inspections, carbon monoxide poisoning, and an environmental site analysis.

The flu season was a particular health concern this year. As of this writing the area seemed to have avoided an epidemic, though we did have some very sick people. Absenteeism at the school was low as compared to other years. The school nurse encouraged everyone to wash their hands frequently and open the windows to air out the germs frequently. The cold weather was a positive factor in containing the virus. The best advice to avoid the flu is to receive the vaccination if applicable and wash your hands often.

My main concern this year has been the problem dealing with the bears. The Town of Lincoln put in a bear ordinance effective on August 4, 2003 to help curtail some of the on-going problems that were a result of

people encouraging the bears. The first violation is subject to a fine of up to \$500. Copies of the ordinance are available in the Town Office.

In the spring, the bears will be looking for foods since there were very few berries available for them to eat last fall. I want to encourage everyone to take an active part in preventing the bears to feel at home in town. Everyone needs to secure their trash and remove bird feeders early in the spring. Local businesses need to obtain bear-proof dumpsters, and all trash needs to be picked up daily around receptacles that are outside. I am also asking that if the bears do come through and get into your trash that you take the responsibility to pick it up, so as not to create a further health hazard and unsightly messes as evidenced this past summer.

Please don't feed the bears and remember they are wild animals.

If you have any health or safety concerns in the Town of Lincoln, feel free to contact me at the Town Office at 745-2757.

Respectfully submitted,
Marti Talbot,
Health Officer