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BOARD OF HEALTH TO CONSIDER PROPOSED CHANGES TO ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT (SEPTIC) SYSTEM REGULATION – PUBLIC MEETING

Jefferson County, Colorado— The Jefferson County Board of Health plans to hold a public meeting on January 25, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. at Conifer High School, 10441 Hwy 73, to present the proposed changes in the Jefferson County Public Health onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) regulation and to accept public comment and testimony.

Recent statutory and regulation changes at the State level have caused all local health departments to revise their local regulations to conform to the new statewide requirements. “Even the names have changed,” Bonnie McNulty, president of the Board of Health. “What we once called ‘individual sewage *disposal* systems’ are now ‘onsite wastewater *treatment* systems’ to emphasize that the focus is now on treating the wastewater from these systems rather than just disposing of it.”

Due to the scope of the changes the Department plans to revoke the current regulation and adopt an entirely new set that closely mirrors the new state regulation. Among the proposals are additional soil test requirements to ensure that engineering designs address site-specific conditions such as high groundwater and shallow bedrock. Higher level treatment systems, which reduce wastewater contaminants, will receive additional oversight to ensure that they are properly maintained and operating as designed. Other provisions would require septic tank pumpers to report or repair leaking tanks. Also under consideration is a proposal that requires the buyer of a house to have the OWTS inspected and approved if the seller fails to do so before the sale, as is currently required.

“Most of our mountain residents are impacted in one way or another by these regulations,” continued McNulty, “and to keep them workable and enforceable we need citizen input.” McNulty also noted that Department staff has already met with engineers, pumpers and installers to discuss technical issues.

A summary of the proposed changes may be found on the JCPH web site at <http://jeffco.us/public-health>. Hard copies are also available for review; contact Craig Sanders at 303 271-5759 or csanders@co.jeffco.us for more information. The Board earnestly encourages public participation in this important decision-making process and welcomes both written and verbal testimony. Formal adoption of the new regulation is scheduled for February with an effective date in early April 2014.

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