f Drinking water Pumps

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THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

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STATE BRIEFS

Madison

Wells may be at risk from pump oil

As many as 160,000 drinking water wells in Wisconsin are at risk of being contaminated by leaking oil from old submersible pumps, state environmental and health officials say. A five-year state Department of Natural Resources study found that up to 20% of Wisconsin's 800,000 water wells may be at risk.

In addition, 10,000 to 20,000 wells also may be contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, a suspected cancer-causing agent used in pump capacitors, that may leak into pump motor oil, the report says.

Submersible well pumps are designed to operate under water inside the well. They are typically used for residential wells and commercial businesses, such as restaurants, taverns and motels, DNR water supply specialist Bill Furbish said.

Submersible pumps now are required to use non-toxic oils that meet US Food and Drug Administration requirements, but many older pumps used lower grade motor oils for lubrication and to protect parts from water.

Madison

State Patrol to try using video cameras

The Wisconsin State Patrol will install video cameras in 21 cars as part of a federal study to determine the effectiveness of the equipment in catching drunken and drug-using drivers, officials said.

James O. Patenaude, an analyst with the state Department of Transportation, said Monday that the experiment would be the first scientific test nationally to show how well the cameras work in catching impaired drivers.

Patenaude said that about 2,000 patrol cars across the nation were equipped with the cameras but that no formal evaluation of their effectiveness had been done.

Although fewer than 10% of State Patrol cars will have the cameras, all of the cameras will be in use during the 3 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift, when most stops are made on suspicion of drunken driving.

The federal government provided funds for the $1,499 cameras, plus monitors, remote control devices and microphones.

Madison

Candidate proposes to use 900 number

An Assembly candidate is seeking State Elections Board approval of her plan to solicit donations with a 900 number telephone line.

The request from Tammy Baldwin of Madison marked the first time a candidate for state office in Wisconsin made the 900-number request, said Kevin Kennedy, executive director of the Elections Board.

Baldwin proposed that potential contributors call a specific 900 number. A company would follow up by mailing an invoice to the caller.