

Southwest Kansas Local Environmental Planning Group

Scott Selee

Southwest Kansas Local Environmental Planning Group currently serves 9 counties.

Clark, Finney, Gray, Grant, Hodgeman, Hamilton, Kearny, Meade, and Stanton.

This office is the primary point of contact for a wide range of services governed by county environmental codes, state regulations, and federal regulations.

- Onsite wastewater systems permitting along with preliminary and final inspections to verify minimum county sanitary codes and state standards are met.
- Provide technical expertise to the County Conservation Districts for implementation of their Cost Share program.
- Licensing of septic system installers and septage pumpers.
- Available for inspections of onsite wastewater systems and private water wells that serve foster care homes and day care facilities as required by current KDHE regulations.
- Responding to environmental complaints and conducting follow up investigations, which often includes collaboration with KDHE.
- Providing education and technical assistance to elected officials and county residents.
- Maintaining database of onsite wastewater systems permits and inspections for present and future reference.
- Conducting inspections of onsite wastewater systems and private water wells when required for a real estate transaction.

In the last 14 years in the 9 counties served over 1600 septic systems installed to the minimum state standard along with 1275 water samples analyzed of private domestic water wells.

Actions being taken to continue providing the services given the present circumstances?

1. Revising the interlocal agreements with counties to reflect a set participation fee of 4,000.00 for first year and built in increases each year thereafter.
2. Raised permit fee's to 250.00 per permit.
3. Closed office and working from my home to save money on office expenses.

There has been in the past a close working relationship with Southwest Kansas Local Environmental Planning Group and KDHE (who was administering the LEPP grant funds). One concern that I would like to have you consider is the synergy of more than one entity working toward a common goal is greater than any single group.

The cost share program for repair of failing septic systems.

The Division of Conservation requires the technical oversight of LEPP personnel to administer their program in a timely and efficient manner. Often times the cost share program is the only way that a family can get a failing septic system repaired. Let me assure you people inherently know that surfacing sewage in the ditch in front of their home or in the backyard is not the way it should be. Numerous times I have gone out to draw up the permit and see what people have been living with and they don't need a registered sanitarian to tell them it is not healthy for them or their family.

Licensing septic contractors is another point where working together makes it possible to achieve the State of Kansas' goals. Without oversight from LEPP who's only role is to see that the system

installed meets current county and state regulations. With 9 counties I often get calls for a septic permit that is anything but ordinary. This often requires considerable time spent researching and reading to respond with accurate answers for the landowner and contractor. A licensed contractor would be hard pressed to convince any landowner to put in a septic system that meets minimum state standards. Contractors are in no position to advocate for minimum state guidelines or water quality issues. LEPP levels the playing field so to speak and assures both landowner and contractor that only approved materials will be used and the system installed is designed according to soil type and number of bedrooms per existing regulations, not what is the cheapest fix at the moment. This is the best for all involved because it gives the landowner peace of mind that what was installed met a prescribed set of standards established with health and safety of all concerned not the cheapest deal at the moment. Not only treating the waste water correctly but protecting the water supply whether it a well or surface water.

My concern is that we will fragment without some sort of cohesion which I believe the structure of the LEPP up until July 1, 2012 afforded the entire state.

Last but certainly not least is the advantage of LEPP, County Commissioners, County officials, KDHE, Division of Conservation, Kansas Water Office and you the elected officials all pulling in the same direction to accomplish what was directed in legislation dating back to 1907. One example is K.S.A 65-164 dealing with Public Health and protection of water.

Scott Selee R.S.

Serving CLARK, FINNEY, GRANT, GRAY, HAMILTON, HODGEMAN,
KEARNY, MEADE and STANTON COUNTIES

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