

August 2015 – Article 2 of 5 in a series of interesting and informative articles introducing you to the people working to provide private well owners with the knowledge and tools they need to care for their water wells.

The People Behind the Program – Licensed Well Water Drillers

The provincial Working Well program provides information, resources and hands-on workshops to Alberta's private well owners. Meet the real people who are helping to deliver it.

Mark Holland has had his journeyman's certificate as a Water Well Driller for nine years, but he helped drill his first well long before he began any apprenticeship program. Holland Water Wells Inc. was founded in 1975 by Mark's father, Ed Holland and Mark grew up in the business. "There were times growing up when the front seat of my father's rig was my daycare," says Holland. "I can't even remember how old I was when I first watched my dad drill a water well."

Over the years, Holland has seen a lot of water wells and knows the ins and outs of well construction, installation and repair like few others. He is the Vice President of the Alberta Water Well Drilling Association and lends his expertise to the Working Well program, a program designed to provide well owners with the information and tools they need to properly care for their wells. He sat on the steering committee that developed the program and currently serves as a local presenter at free workshops offered to the province's private well owners.

"Water wells are not at the forefront of most people's minds," admits Holland. "Some people don't even know where their water well is and they've never tested the water to make sure it's safe to drink." One of the biggest challenges is educating homeowners that it's their responsibility to maintain their well and regularly test the water quality. Old wells that are not maintained and which are not tested can not only put a family at risk, they can contaminate an entire aquifer and ruin the water for other ground water users.

Most Working Well workshops include the participation of a licensed water well driller that is local to the area. "Alberta is such a diverse province geologically and no two wells are exactly the same," explains Holland. "It helps to have a local driller at these presentations who is familiar with the unique challenges of drilling in a particular area. Drillers deal with all of the things discussed in the workshops on a day-to-day basis and they can answer technical questions that might be a challenge for others."

Holland has been in the drilling business for a long time and he's seen a lot of changes over the years, but he believes the Working Well program is one of the best developments that have happened in the industry. "I like my job," he says. "The biggest challenge for me and other drillers is trying to educate well owners about the importance of maintaining and testing their wells, and properly capping off old wells. As a well owner, you don't own the water; you own the right to use the resource." There's a lot of information out there and the Working Well program is designed to get it into the hands of the people who need it.



Learn how to properly care for your water well

Online resources and free community-based workshops offered by the Working Well program provide well owners with the information and tools they need to properly care for their wells. For more information, visit the Working Well website at:

www.workingwell.alberta.ca

Learn more about the Alberta Water Well Drilling Association at: www.awwda.com