



## Health Points

# What do you need to know about your private septic system?

By LANA SANSTROM, LEHP Do. Co. Health Department

When it comes to waste generated in the bathroom or even the water from the kitchen sink, most people are just glad to have it leave their home.

It seems like people are always caught at the most unexpected and vulnerable time when the urgent problem of sewage back-up occurs in their home.

The last situation anyone wants is to have sewage flowing back into their house through the basement, the bathtub, a sink, or from a toilet which will not drain.

This back-up can occur because the septic tank is not able to empty fast enough because it is too full in the first place.

It is also possibly due to the seepage field possibly being flooded by a seasonal high water table or not being sized correctly from many years ago.

A temporary fix for an overflowing septic tank can sometimes be accomplished by having the septic tank pumped which should be done every 3 to 5 years anyway to remove the sludge.

This keeps the tank operating and gives the seepage field time to heal itself as the seasonal high water table lowers.

An old system may have to be replaced, but this will buy the homeowner some time until that decision can be made.

The following is a list of some other septic system “do’s and don’ts”:

—Do have your septic system pumped out every 3 to 5 years. There are licensed pumpers who do this; contact the

health department if assistance is needed in locating one.

—Do make certain your septic system is up to code.

The health department has a record of most septic systems installed back to 1976 if you cannot locate yours or have no knowledge of its size or layout.

When requesting information, it is helpful to have the original owner’s name and have an idea of the construction date.

With 911 addressing not being in use prior to the early 1990s, it is hard to determine the correct septic system paperwork with a Rural Route Number or directions to a house “two houses east of the old school house”! Keep a drawing of your septic system as a reference for when emergencies arise.

—Do conserve water to prevent overload to your system. A leaky faucet can cause too much water to flood your septic system.

—Do know the procedures for making repairs or remodeling your system. In Douglas County, to renovate your septic system, you MUST have a permit.

—Do NOT use a garbage disposal without checking with your local ordinances, your system manufacturer, AND your contractor to insure your septic system can handle the additional waste.

If the house did not have a garbage disposal at the time the system was installed, the tank may not be large enough.

The disposal is only meant for small particles of food that make it to the drain; throw garbage in the trash not down the sink.

—Do NOT allow excess water from drains, pumps, or drainage paths to filter into your septic system.

—Do NOT drive over or park on top of your septic system.

—Definitely do not build, pour concrete, or place a deck/patio over a septic system.

—Do NOT dump non-biodegradables into your toilet or drain.

Chemicals, grease, gasoline, oil, paint, pesticides, antifreeze, and other chemical liquids will cause dangerous run-off from your system as well as kill the microbes that make your septic system function

When there haven’t been large amounts of rainfall and any of the following are noticed, your system should be evaluated for possible failure.

Sometimes it can be as simple as having your septic tank pumped to remove a buildup of sludge, but older systems may need replaced.

—Sluggish drains;  
—Sewage backing up into your home through the plumbing;

—Outdoor odors;  
—Sewage surfacing onto the ground surface;  
—Presence of algae growth or black slime on the ground surface in the seepage field.

For further information, contact the Douglas County Health Department at (217) 253-4137. Septic permit applications and lists of soil evaluators working in Douglas County can also be obtained by viewing [www.dchealthdept.org](http://www.dchealthdept.org).

## Town Talk

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Talk congratulation to Gary Alexander who was recently selected to be superintendent of Tuscola schools. Gary was a teacher, coach, AGS principal, and junior high and high school principal during his 14 years here in Arthur.

He is married to Kristi (Montgomery) Alexander who is from our town and the daughter of Judy (Willoughby) Kon-drup which makes her the granddaughter of Renie and the late Wally Willoughby. Gary and Kristi have four kids: Austin, Brayden, Colton, and Jillian.

The Alexanders have been in Pawnee the past seven years, so this will be a move closer to home. Gary is a 1989 graduate of Tuscola Community High School, and Kristi a graduate of AHS, so they will be back among many familiar faces.

Congratulations and welcome home!

### Passing the Torch

Okay, it is not a torch being passed, but a gavel is exchanging hands. Dave Conlin is stepping down from his position as president of the Arthur Area Economic Development Corporation after seven and one-half years of service.

Of course, before his role with the AAEDC, Dave was on the village board and also served as mayor. He and his wife Bonnie have been involved in the community more than almost anyone else I can think of, and we have all benefited immensely from it! Thank you, Conlins!

## Beekeeping classes offered

Long Lane Honey Bee Farms is offering Beginning Beekeeping Classes in 2019 at their Training Center in Fairmount.

Classes are taught by Certified Master Beekeeper David Burns, who has 25 years beekeeping experience. David has taught beekeeping classes since 2008 and other choices include “Queen Rearing”; “Spring: Survival, Supering, Swarms and Splits”; “A Day in the Apiary,” and “Overwintering Your Bees.”

His beekeeping Youtube channel has over 3.5 million views and has thousands subscribed to his beekeeping blogs. David has also taught all over the U.S. at beekeeping clubs and conferences.

Beginning Beekeeping workshops are one-day events, starting January 26, 2019, and most students will also pick up their hive packages at the same time.

For more information and to register for classes, please go to [honeybeesonline.com](http://honeybeesonline.com) or call the office during their hours at (217) 427-2678.

Taking over for Dave will be Mac Condill who did finally take off the Christmas suit he was sporting while coaching our ALAH Knights high school girls’ basketball team. They were winning, and it was working so glad he did it! Mac will be outstanding in the job. He brings lots of experience as a successful business owner with many connections. He, along with wife Ginny and family, is dedicated to seeing our community and, most important, the people of our community and area succeed.

Good job and good luck, respectively.

### Resolution Time!

It’s New Year’s Resolution time, and we would all like to find the road to good financial investments. Edward Jones Financial Advisor Ryan Kleiss will be

at Arthur Public Library on Saturday, January 12, at 1:00 p.m. for a “Rules of the Road” presentation that will cover 10 principles of investing that can help you achieve your goals and help you avoid common investing mistakes. The program is free, and everyone is welcome. Please call the Arthur Public Library at (217) 543-2037 to reserve your seat.

Another resolution we should all make is to support our local library. They have been offering some great programs and will be doing so throughout 2019. Arthur Public Library is a huge asset to our community, so invest in it!

And that’s “80” today for Doris “Hammond” Carver, one awesome lady!

Happy Birthday on January 3!

## A Look Back at 2018

(Continued From Page 2)

Duane Gingerich as a director.

Frenchie’s Boutique is downtown Arthur’s newest business located at the former site of The Fitness Center. Jamie Monts is the owner and operator.

Makenna Green and Taylor Powell are the recipients of this year’s DAR and SAR awards.

Dave Conlin retired after eight years as president of the Arthur Area Economic Development Corporation. Mac Condill will take over the position.

Arthur Police Department lost two full-time officers to other area agencies in less than one month. The K-9 unit will remain here and be transitioned to another officer at a future date.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2019!



ROTARY HEARS ABOUT MISSION TRIP. Adriene Lane, center, was Julie Paddock’s guest speaker at the December 20 Rotary Club meeting. Lane spent a year in Ecuador on a mission trip. She taught English in a school during the year. Tanya Walker, club president (right) and Paddock thanked her following the meeting. Photo by Roger W. Bonham



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