



1930 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59601
406-457-8900
www.LewisAndClarkHealth.org
publichealth@lccountymt.gov

For immediate release

July 23, 2015

Contact: Laurel Riek, Licensed Establishment Program Manager, 447-8361

Gayle Shirley, Communications Manager, 457-8908

5 Public Pools and Spas Recognized for Health, Safety

Local health officials honored five Helena-area pool and spa operators Thursday for their efforts to protect public health and safety.

Staff of the Licensed Establishment Program of Lewis and Clark Public Health presented “Gold and Silver Buoy Awards” to the five operators during the regular City-County Board of Health meeting. This is the second year the public health department has issued the awards and the first time that an operator earned the top award. Last year, seven operators earned silver awards.

The Gold Buoy Award was presented to the Last Chance Splash Waterpark, 1203 N. Last Chance Gulch, for its splash deck, leisure pool, and 50-meter pool. The waterpark is operated by the City of Helena.

Silver Buoy Awards were presented to:

- City of East Helena, for the Kennedy Park swimming pool
- Green Meadow Country Club, for its pool
- Capital City Health Club, 1280 N. Montana, for its recreation and lap pools
- Helena Holiday Inn Express, 3170 N. Sanders St., for its pool and spa

The pool awards recognize operators of public, recreational water features (pools, hot tubs, and water parks) who provide a clean, healthy, and safe environment. They’re based on annual inspections by public health sanitarians of more than 50 water facilities in Lewis and Clark County.

“Our purpose in doing inspections is to prevent disease and injury by evaluating water quality, clarity, and facility safety,” said Laurel Riek, manager of the Licensed Establishment Program. “Operating a pool or spa is complicated and requires specialized training, as well as time and attention. These awards honor those facilities that maintain safe and comfortable water chemistry even with the challenges of sporadic heavy use, ventilation in indoor areas, and weather in outdoor areas.”

To qualify for a Buoy Award, operators had to meet these criteria:

- Few to no violations identified during an inspection
- Water chemistry that's comfortable and safe for swimmers
- Good water clarity
- Safe water temperatures (spas)
- Required rescue equipment, lifeguards (if needed), and CPR certification
- Regular monitoring, corrective action, and well-maintained records that track water chemistry and actions taken to maintain the pool (including closing the pool until it's safe for swimmers)
- Staff trained in pool operation
- Adequate ventilation and indoor air quality

“Gold Buoy winners have to have perfect records and monitoring and no more than two noncritical violations during an inspection, a standard that's difficult to meet,” Riek said. “Silver Buoy winners can't have more than four violations and must have almost all of the pieces in place for records and monitoring. The expectation is that pools are maintained every day to prevent waterborne illness.”

More information about pool inspections and the buoy awards is available on the Lewis and Clark Public Health website: www.lccountymt.gov/health/licensing-inspections/pools-spas.html