

# Septic System Education Report

Resilient Communities  
Project, University of  
Minnesota, Spring, 2018

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# Background

- City of Ramsey
- How to make homeowner more aware of septic system care and maintenance
- Team members Greg Kelts, Susan Narayan signed up because. . .

# Goals

- To examine **research** on septic education programs
- To investigate **other communities'** responses to this problem
- To assess the level of septic **knowledge** among Ramsey citizens
- To develop an **education and evaluation program**

# What Was Done Previously

- Public Affairs group work, fall of 2017
  - Themes to engage people
  - Suggested strategies

# What is Being Done Elsewhere?

- Problem nationwide
- Septic care not top of mind
- Many communication techniques, varying results
  - Direct mailers, workshops, incentivized community presentations, websites, storytelling

# Survey to Assess Septic Awareness & Knowledge

- Information sources & preferences
- Willingness to participate in educational activities

# Survey

## CITY OF RAMSEY SEPTIC SURVEY



The city of Ramsey would like to better understand how residents understand septic system maintenance. We will use this information to improve our information and education efforts within the community. Ultimately, the goal of this effort is to help residents save money and better maintain their own septic systems. Please help us better your information needs by filling out this brief survey. Thank you for your time and effort on this project.

Septic System Health	Not at All	Very Little	Neutral	Somewh at	Very Well
How well do you understand the signs of septic system failure?					
How well do you understand the personal risks of a septic system failure?					
How well do you understand the risks posed by a failed septic system to the city of Ramsey?					
Family Health	Disagree	Somewh at Disagree	Neutral	Somewh at Agree	Agree
Poorly maintained septic systems can have an effect on a family's health.					
Proper septic system maintenance can prevent health impacts from septic system failure.					
There can be serious health consequences from a poorly maintained septic system.					

# Education Program

- Realistic expectations
- No one approach
- Creativity and perseverance needed
- Family health and cost consciousness



# Website

- Tips
- Links
- Guidelines
- Regulation info
- Facebook page
- You Tube

# EPA Website



Environmental Topics

Laws & Regulations

About EPA

Search EPA.gov



## Septic Systems (Onsite/Decentralized Systems)

CONTACT US

SHARE



### Do Your Part, Be Septic Smart!

Encouraging homeowners, wastewater professionals, and state, tribal, and local officials to design and maintain effective systems to protect public health, preserve valuable water resources, and sustain economic vitality in their communities.

[View recent SepticSmart webcasts:](#)

- [How State and Local Governments Promote and Proclaim SepticSmart Week](#)
- [Innovative Septic Improvement Program in Suffolk County, NY](#)
- [Home Financing from USDA Rural Development](#)



1

2

### Save the Date!

**SepticSmart Week 2018**  
**September 17-21, 2018**

- [View and download materials from 2017 and other past SepticSmart Week events](#)
- [View and download other Outreach Tools](#)

About Septic Systems

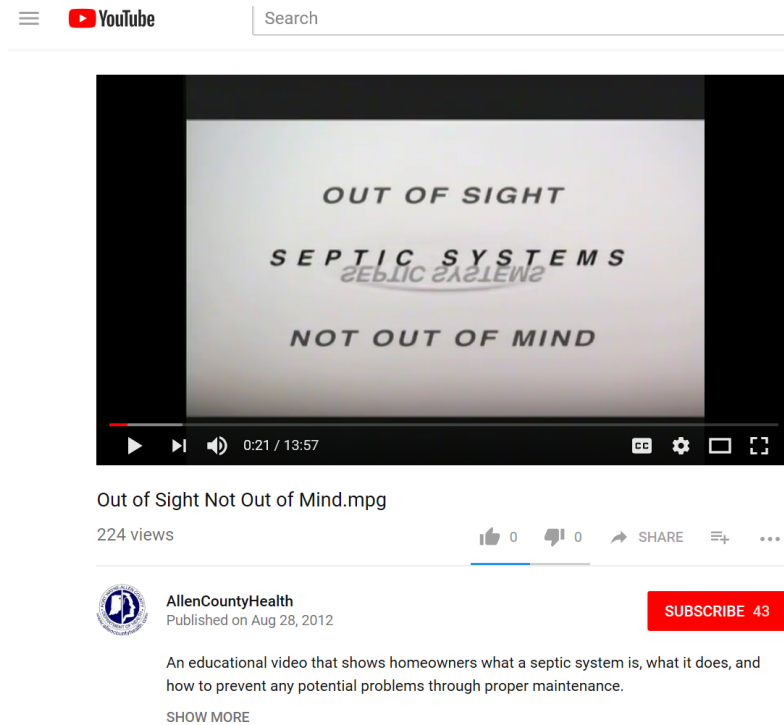
SepticSmart Homeowners

Technical Resources

What's New

- [EPA and 18 partner](#)

# YouTube Resources



YouTube

Search

*OUT OF SIGHT*  
*SEPTIC SYSTEMS*  
*NOT OUT OF MIND*

0:21 / 13:57

Out of Sight Not Out of Mind.mpg

224 views

0 0 SHARE

**AllenCountyHealth**  
Published on Aug 28, 2012

**SUBSCRIBE 43**

An educational video that shows homeowners what a septic system is, what it does, and how to prevent any potential problems through proper maintenance.

SHOW MORE

# Printed Materials

- Mailers
- Durable tip sheet
- Information provided with pumping invoices

# Magnet/Sticker

It's that time of year  
again...

Pump your septic system  
to protect your health and  
wealth!

[cityoframsey.com](http://cityoframsey.com)



## Homeowner,

According to our records, it has been at least 3 years since you have had your septic system pumped. The city of Ramsey requires that each household with a septic system pump their tank every 3 years.

Visit [www.pca.state.mn.us/sst/licensing.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/sst/licensing.html) to find a list of certified septic pumpers.

For permitting and fee information, please visit our website at: <http://www.ci.ramsey.mn.us/septic>

## Pumping your septic system...



Protects your  
property value



Protects the  
health of your  
family, water,  
and environment



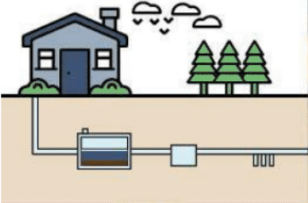


Saves money  
in the long-run

# Septic Activities

- Septic Booth at Happy Days in conjunction with Septic Week
  - Coupons
  - Drawings
- Piggyback on other events
  - Farmer's Market
  - Local meetings
  - County fairs

# Pamphlet



## Managing Your Septic System

**NOTE YOUR LAST SEPTIC PUMPING**  
Then be sure to schedule one every three years to keep your system in tip-top shape.

**MONITOR YOUR WATER USAGE**  
Run machines like washing machines and dishwashers when they are full for maximum efficiency.

**SCHEDULE REGULAR INSPECTIONS**  
Have a certified professional regularly inspect your system, and it will save you time and money in the future.

**MAKE A LIST OF DRAIN DOs & DON'Ts**  
Keep this list by the sink as a reminder. Grease and chemicals aren't meant for septic systems.

**DRAIN FRIENDLY CLEANING PRODUCTS**  
Use environmentally friendly cleaning and personal care products that won't damage your septic system.


**Information for Ramsey Residents:**

- Your system should be pumped every three (3) years by a certified septic pumper
- A list of certified septic pumpers can be found at: [www.pca.state.mn.us/ests-licensing.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/ests-licensing.html)
- Save time and money and have your septic tank inspected for malfunctions at the time of pumping.

Low interest loans for septic pumping and maintenance are available through the through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (AgBMP Loan), and Anoka County.

• For more information, see our website at: <http://www.ci.ramsey.mn.us/septic>

For further information see:  
<http://septic.umn.edu>  
[www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us)  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)



# Talking to the Community

Existing groups

Storytelling approach

“Septic owner had a huge expense because. . .”

“Septic owner was able to save money because. . .”

Utilize community experts

Visit new septic owners



# Evaluation Plan

- First survey baseline
- Follow-up survey
- Simple count and analysis of help calls

# Survey

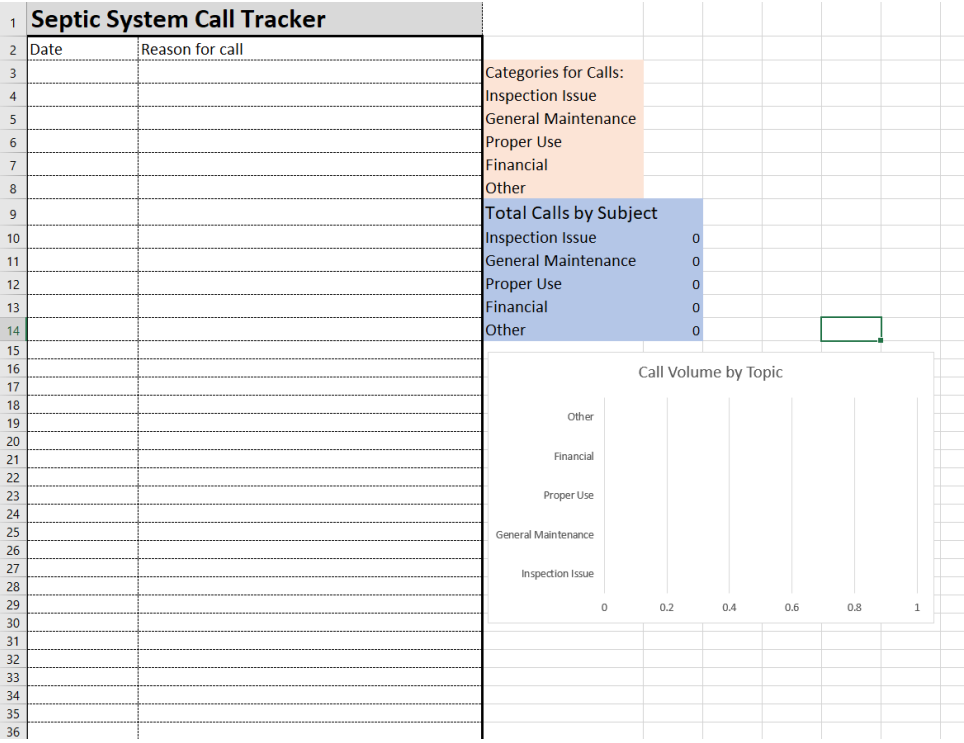
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# Call Tracking Spreadsheet



# Budget

- Will depend on the amount of implementations
- Full implementation cost estimated to range between \$14,355 and \$27,000
- Recommendations can be taken as an ala cart list

# Conclusion

- Comprehensive education plan
  - Assessment
  - Education program
  - Efficacy evaluation
- Should help promote septic education within the City of Ramsey