



News Release

Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District
1503 First Street South, Nampa, Idaho 83651
Tel: (208) 466-7861 -- Fax: (208) 463-0092
Serving The Treasure Valley Since 1904

NAMPA & MERIDIAN IRRIGATION DISTRICT **WARNS PARENTS ABOUT RISKS OF CANAL DEATHS**

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Nampa, Idaho – April 16, 2008
0663

For Media Information

John Anderson, (208) 466-

Grim statistics show that in a typical year, three children will drown in Idaho irrigation canals. Now, the Treasure Valley's largest irrigation district wants parents who live near its 500 miles of canals to make certain their child is not one of them.

Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District launched this week a television canal safety campaign designed to warn people about the dangers to children by irrigation canals. The District's canal safety commercials will run on local television programming through the middle of June.

Local KFXD Radio personality Chris Kelly is featured in the two commercials. She is pictured in a section of the dry Ridenbaugh Canal pointing out how steep banks make it virtually impossible for children to get out of a canal once they fall in.

The thrust of the 30-second commercials is that children basically have no chance of survival if they fall into a canal filled with swift, freezing cold river water.

"Children will die in irrigation canals. Don't let yours be one of them," Kelly warns the viewer. It's a hard hitting, to the point warning to parents to keep their children away from canals.

"Our canal safety ads intentionally carry strong warnings to parents about the deadly danger posed to children and adults by irrigation canals. We want all people to understand that irrigation canals can be lethal for children and for adults as well," said John Anderson, NMID Water Superintendent. Treasurer.

Anderson also said parents who walk with their children on canal banks are sending exactly the wrong message. That because children might mistakenly believe it is safe to be near a canal because their parents let them walk there, and then venture on a canal bank alone.

"Absolutely nothing could be further from the truth then for kids to think a canal is not dangerous. Letting a child go anywhere near a canal is putting their life at risk," Anderson said.

NMID generally encounters its most problems with people and canals during the hot weather of summer time. Despite that fact that canals are private property and being in a canal or its banks is a violation of Idaho trespassing laws, every summer the District has to deal with reports of individuals, especially young people, playing around or in canals or ditches and floating on or swimming in the District's main and lateral canals. These reports frequently include individuals floating on inner tubes or swimming in the Ridenbaugh Canal.

In recent years several children and adults have drowned in Treasure Valley irrigation canals, including those belonging to NMID.

To children and young people, canals may appear to be inviting places to tube, swim or play around. But Anderson stressed that the inviting appearance hides the fact that canal water is very cold, flows at a fast rate of speed, plus there are a variety of falls, headgates, screens and other devices which can pose danger to people in the water. Canal banks are also near vertical making them easy to fall into but almost impossible to get out of, especially where canals have been lined with concrete.

Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District has served the irrigation needs for the Treasure Valley since 1904. The District supplies water to some 69,000 acres of farmland plus more than 14,200 individual pressurized irrigation parcels in Ada and Canyon Counties. More information about the District is available at its Internet website: **www.nmid.org**.

-end-