

News Release

Pioneer Irrigation District

3804 Lake Avenue, Caldwell, ID 83605
TEL: (208) 459-3617 -- www.pioneerirrigation.com

Toddler's Irrigation Canal Drowning **Prompts Safety Warning Reminder**

For Immediate Use
Caldwell, Idaho – Aug. 3, 2010

For Media Information Contact:
Jeff Scott – 459-3617

The drowning death of an 18-month-old child in an Eastern Idaho irrigation canal has prompted officials with the Pioneer Irrigation District to issue a safety message to area residents: irrigation canals and children are a deadly combination.

The little girl was playing with friends near a golf course in Rigby when she fell into an irrigation canal on July 9. She drifted for a mile and a half before a farmer spotted her. She was hospitalized after the incident, but sadly, died July 16.

“Terrible events such as this are a tragic reminder of why parents need to keep children completely away from canals. It just takes a moment of inattentiveness and a child can end up in a canal. Once they are in the canal, their chances of being saved are remote at best,” said Jeff Scott, Pioneer Water Superintendent.

In a typical year, three children will drown in Idaho irrigation canals. Canals also regularly claim the lives of young people and adults who often swim in the deep, swift flowing canals despite the fact that canals are private property and individuals on or near canals are trespassing.

“Children who fall into canals are almost certain to drown. The steep banks make it almost impossible for a child to get out of. The cold water also means children will begin to suffer from hypothermia very quickly. That is an extremely deadly combination,” Scott said.

Hot summer weather such as the valley is currently experiencing also prompts PID officials, especially ditch riders, to be especially vigilant along the District's 350 miles of canals.

“Despite all the public safety messages, this time of year we continue to find people who think it is fun to swim or play in or near our canals. They just don't seem to realize they are putting their life at risk,” Scott added.

More information about Pioneer Irrigation District is available at its website:
www.pioneerirrigation.com.

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