

Lifeguards' quiet summer season

PREVENTATIVE actions rather than rescues provided the main activity for Himatangi Beach lifeguards this summer as patchy weather conditions reduced swimming numbers at the popular Manawatu holiday spot. No rescues have been recorded since patrols started in December, as compared to five last season, while smaller surf conditions and fewer rips also contributed to the lifeguard's quiet 2009/10 watch. Other beaches in the Western Districts area have also had fewer rescues - two at Otaki (18 last year) and

in preventative actions this summer as the lifeguards became more pro-active among the beach users. Such actions, totalling 375, included shifting swimmers back into the flagged area after drifting clear, advising boogie board users to wear fins, picking up glass and warning swimmers about inappropriate clothing. Palmerston North Surf Life Saving Club's regional lifeguard, Jordan Dare, said swimming conditions at the beach had been safer than previous years and every-one had stayed clear of one

with people generally staying within the flags. Regional guards handled weekday duties at Himatangi Beach from December 21 to January 29, with the weekend volunteers on duty from the beginning of December until March 14. Community and Strategic Development Officer, Tracey Hunt, said the importance of the partnership between the club and Manawatu District Council, which provides some financial support, could not be under-estimated. "The surf patrol provides a vital safety service to the



REGIONAL lifeguards Joseph Gibson (left) and Jordan Dare prepare to put out the warning flags for swimmers on a rare calm and sunny day at Himatangi Beach.

none at Levin-Waitarere (seven in 2008/09). However, rescues at Foxton Beach had increased, with nine (five of them on Saturday) as compared to six rescues last summer. Central Region's Administration Support Officer for Surf Life Saving New Zealand, Joss Urbahn, said there had been an increase

big hole that was evident at low tide. Even the stinging jellyfish and bluebottles had stayed away. Mr Dare said the flagged area usually stretched for about 50 metres, but this sometimes varied depending on the number of swimmers in the surf. He said the behaviour of swimmers had been good

community," she said. "The sea is to be respected as it poses a safety risk irrespective of conditions". Himatangi Beach is a relatively safe swimming spot because of its flatness, but swimmers are urged to keep between the flags, ask the lifeguards where to swim and not to swim alone.

Patrol statistics for Himatangi Beach

Voluntary patrols (weekends)	
Hours worked:	357
Rescues:	0
First aids:	2
Preventative actions:	26
Regional guards (weekdays)	
Hours worked:	617
Rescues:	0
First aids:	2
Preventative actions:	349

Pool education campaign

A MANAWATU District Council education campaign is currently underway to ensure that the 400 plus privately owned swimming pools in the district are safe and comply with requirements under the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act. Regulatory Supervisor, Karel Boakes (pictured), said the programme aimed to make people more aware of their responsibilities under the act and to clear up any lack of understanding by owners and councils as to what was compliant in regard to pool fencing.

We do need to look at that." A five-yearly inspection roster is also in place, with up to seven pools to be checked every month, though top priority would be given to those pools that have not been consented. Ms Boakes said there had been a design change in recent years on how pools were

Private pools were a wonderful asset for the home and family, said Ms Boakes, but could be a potential danger for young children, with Water Safety New Zealand statistics revealing that four children drown each year in such pools. She said it was imperative that owners notified council of the existence of a pool, obtained a building consent before constructing a pool or fence and ensured continuing safety and maintenance of the immediate pool area. An MDC pamphlet on the fencing of



The MDC database lists 416 private pools (including spa pools) in the district and Ms Boakes believes that number is likely to go even higher. "Council feels that some of those pools have not been consented, so we don't know if they are safe or compliant as far as the fencing goes. located within the garden environment. "Originally, they used to be totally fenced-off separately, but nowadays owners want them to be close to the house so there is an access flow between the home and pool. This has caused a lot of problems over entrances to the pool area."

swimming pools is sent to all those people on the database, while other brochures and posters demonstrating pool responsibility are at the council's administration building in Manchester Street, Feilding. Further information available on (06) 323-0000 or from www.mdc.govt.nz

Important wastewater meeting

MANAWATU District Council is hoping for a good turnout at a public meeting in Himatangi Beach next week to discuss the proposed wastewater scheme for the community. The meeting, to be facilitated by Wastes Manager, Peterson Asante, begins at 11am on Saturday, February 13, in the Himatangi Beach Community Hall. Manawatu District Mayor, Ian McKelvie, as well as

some councillors, will attend. Mr Asante said council had received the long-awaited Government funding of \$3.3 million for the proposed scheme, which represented about 50 percent of the estimated project capital cost. "Council welcomes the funding and wants to hear the views of the community," he said. "It is an opportunity for ratepayers and residents to make their voices heard and feel they have played a part

in the outcome." Mr Asante said no voting was planned for the meeting but council officers would analyse comments made and prepare a report for elected members. "It is a big decision considering the makeup of the community and if the residents decide to move forward with the project it will mean a lot to them," he said.



WORK is on schedule as contractors replace the sewer main and laterals (property connections) in Poole Street, Feilding, from East Street to Drake Street. Settled weather conditions have enabled Infracon Taranua to make steady progress and a new water main and laterals are also expected to be laid over the next week or two. Similar work is to be carried out in Nelson Street and is expected to start shortly.