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## **PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS CONFIRM FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN CHICO**

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer for Butte County Public Health Department (BCPHD), today announced that a Chico woman has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV); the first confirmed human case in the Chico area this year. The woman observed only minor symptoms and is recovering.

Additionally, an Oroville man also tested positive for WNV, which brings the number of confirmed human cases in Butte County to four this year. In 2007 there were 16 human cases of WNV reported in Butte County, two resulted in death.

“This is an important reminder that West Nile Virus is here to stay in our County,” said Lundberg. “However, a human infection in one town doesn’t mean that town is at any greater risk than any other town in the County, it just means that West Nile Virus is active in many parts of Butte County, so all residents need to be preventative. Prevention is the key to stopping the spread of the virus.”

As of Sept. 10, 2008 WNV activity has been detected in 41 of California’s 58 counties, with 20 of those counties reporting human cases of WNV infection. In Butte County, 28 dead birds have tested positive for the virus.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.

All ages are vulnerable to infection and should be educated about WNV prevention. However, most individuals who become infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Individuals 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms if infected. Recent data also indicates that those with diabetes or hypertension may be at greatest risk for developing serious symptoms.

Residents can reduce the risk of infection by taking precautions to prevent mosquito bites and to protect their health:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- While outdoors, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when it’s possible.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, Picaridin or IR3535 according to instructions.

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- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding.
- Contact the local mosquito or vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

Additional precautions can be taken to stop the spread of WNV, which include reporting “green” standing water, such as ponds, or neglected swimming pools to the local Mosquito and Vector Control District at (530) 342-7350 or (530) 533-6038, and reporting suspicious dead birds and squirrels thought to be infected by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or visiting [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). Residents can also track West Nile activity in Butte County and neighboring counties on the Web site.

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### **Butte County Public Health Department**

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community and environmental health.