

When Pigs Fly

By Douglas C. Osburn, OAWU Circuit Rider

I think I have heard all the excuses for not wanting to do a Security Vulnerability Assessment. Many of you have thought them yourself, like, it won't happen here or we're too small to mess with. Then there are those who just get their hair up and profess not to do one until you know where freezes over or when pigs fly. When I was told the one about flying pigs something clicked in me and I thought maybe I have been going about this the wrong way. Our goal is to help you understand and meet the new regulations as they come out of Washington D.C. and down through the State. So the pig thing got me to thinking about the three little pigs, yeah, you know the story. If you are going to build a house, you need to build it stout enough to be safe from your primary threat. To do that it would require you to perform a threat analysis to determine what the main threat might be to justify building something more than a straw or twig house.

I like this analogy because it makes sense. Managing or operating a water system makes this more critical. You not only need to protect the physical property and equipment, you have the health and safety of your customers to ensure.

When we first started seriously thinking about security, many of the water systems didn't even lock the well house door. Why, because we all thought who in their right mind would mess with the drinking water supply. The key words there are "right mind". The people that wish to harm you and your customers are not of the state of mind that we would call normal. They are fanatics and their only goal is to cause you harm. That's their sole purpose and that's all they live for.

The silver lining to this otherwise dark cloud is that when you identify your critical assets and work to protect them, you also protect them from all the lesser threats that might want to disrupt you from providing water, i.e.: disgruntled ex-employees, vandalism, and juvenile pranksters.

When you sit down to conduct your assessment, the best approach is to establish a team with at least one member of the decision making body on board. There will be budget items that will need to be

established and having someone there to understand the need to expend funds and where they will be allocated will be a big help.

If you need assistance or have questions, please call the O.A.W.U. office and we will have one of our staff call or set up an appointment to meet with you. Our phone number is 503-873-8353.

That's all from me for now and I'll see down the road.