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NEWS RELEASE

June 19, 2009 – For Immediate Release

Backyard pool ordinance prevents tragedies

DUBUQUE, Iowa – An all-too-frequent summer tragedy is the story of a young child who has wandered from home and drowns in a neighbor’s unprotected backyard pool.

Death by drowning in private pools has caused many cities and counties to enact ordinances requiring barriers or fencing around swimming pools. Dubuque is no exception and the City of Dubuque is reminding residents of their responsibility in helping to prevent pool-related injuries.

Dubuque’s ordinance defines a “swimming pool” as any constructed or prefabricated pool over 18 inches in depth used for swimming, bathing, or wading. Unless the pool is a prefabricated pool less than 24 inches deep, residents must obtain a pool permit from the City of Dubuque Building Services Department. All pools over 18 inches deep must meet the following fencing requirements, even if they are exempt from a permit:

- Fencing must be not less than five feet in height, completely surrounding such pool, lot or premises, with no openings therein, other than doors or gates, larger than six inches in any dimension; provided however, that if a picket or similar fence is erected, the horizontal dimension of the openings, other than gates or doors, shall not exceed four (4) inches.
- All gates or doors into the pool area shall be equipped with self-closing and self-latching devices designed to keep the gate or door securely closed and latched at all times when not in actual use.
- All fencing must be in place with gates when the pool is filled with water.

The location of swimming pools is governed by the zoning ordinance of the city. For a complete copy of Dubuque’s swimming pool ordinance, or more information, please contact the City of Dubuque Building Services Department at 589-4150 or e-mail building@cityofdubuque.org. The ordinance is also available on the City website, www.cityofdubuque.org.

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