

Michigan Public Health Week 2008  
Climate Change—Our Health in the Balance  
Hometown Health Hero Nomination Form

Name of person completing form	Mike Kolbusz	Daytime Phone	231-995-6024
Organization (if applicable)	Grand Traverse Co. Health Dept.	Email address	mkolbusz@grandtraverse.org

**Nominee Information**

Please check or highlight one:  Individual  Group/Organization

Name\* Thomas Buss

Occupation Environmental Health Director

Home Phone (include area code) 231-943-8940

Work (Daytime) Phone (include area code) 231-995-6000

Home or Work Address 2650 Lafranier

City Traverse City, MI

Zip Code 49686

E-mail Address (if applicable) tbuss@grandtraverse.org

Name of Local Newspaper Traverse City Record Eagle

\* Those selected will have their names mentioned in a press release.

Check the box next to the most appropriate Climate Change theme of this person or organization's work:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preparedness & Extreme Weather Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Water Supply |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Pollution & Respiratory Health        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water- & Vector-Borne Diseases |  |

**Tell Us about Your Hometown Health Hero**

Please describe (in 300 words or less) why this person or organization is a Hometown Health Hero. If you are nominating a person who is employed full time in public or environmental health, tell us how this person has gone beyond normal job duties to address climate change needs.

Please note, due to a high volume of nominations, keep your submission to 300 words or less. Early submission is encouraged.

see additional page

### **Hometown Health Hero Nominee: Tom Buss**

Tom is currently the Environmental Health Director for Grand Traverse County Health Department. He began his career with the county in 1976 as a general field sanitarian working in food sanitation, well, and septic programs. Tom is married to Cindy and they have two children Andy and Lee.

During the summer of 2007 the Health Department issued advisories for some beaches located on West and East Grand Traverse Bay for exceeding E.coli standards. This has raised the awareness of our residents and local media to this problem. E.coli bacteria is found everywhere in our environment. High E.coli levels can possibly be attributed to climate change. Lower water levels due to drought, warmer temperatures, waterfowl migration patterns, and invasive species all have an affect on the Bay's ecology. Tom is spearheading initiatives to protect the residents and visitors to the County. Currently his work is focusing on two methods:

- **Reducing E.coli levels:** Collaborating with local governments to pass ordinances to protect the watershed (waterfowl feeding ban). Working with the City of Traverse City and the Watershed Center to do sanitary surveys of the watershed to identify any point source contamination. Tom is also exploring the possibility of developing a beach model that can predict times of higher E.coli levels.
- **Education of the public:** Tom is working to bring experts to Traverse City this spring for a community forum. This forum will allow residents to ask questions such as where does E.coli come from, and what can governments and residents do to protect our pristine waters?

Tom is undertaking these endeavors with no direct funding and is working on his own time to protect the residents and our environment. This is why I am nominating Tom Buss as Hometown Health Hero.