

July 2007

SHWEC Compost Programming

Joe Van Rossum

The Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center provides many programs and services that are at the core of the SHWEC mission, "to enhance Wisconsin's environment and economy by providing quality education, information and technical assistance to promote the sustainable use of natural resources." In the next few issues of our e-newsletter, we will be highlighting a specific program or service in more detail. This month we are focusing on SHWEC's composting programs.

Master Composter Program

The Master Composter program has long been the centerpiece of SHWEC's compost-related education efforts. For over ten years the program has encouraged Wisconsin's residents to take responsibility for their grass clippings, leaves, garden debris and kitchen scraps by starting a backyard compost bin. The "Train the Trainer" concept is used in Master Composter program to provide individuals interested in composting with the tools and training needed to teach others about the benefits of backyard composting.



Each year SHWEC Recycling Specialist, Joe Van Rossum, works with three or four groups of composters hoping to become certified Master Composters. Gaining certification consists of attending a one day workshop, participating in a WisLine program, and performing three outreach activities. The outreach activities include teaching two workshops to get people started with home composting and doing a demonstration or display at a public event or location.

Reports of efforts from some of the 51 participants in the 2007 Master Composter class are being submitted. This group of hopeful Master Composters has already written articles about composting for local publications; given talks about composting at local nature centers, and one has even been interviewed on local television on the topic of composting. These efforts to reach out to the residents of Wisconsin extend the resources of SHWEC and Extension to the people of the state.



Large Scale Composting – Technical Assistance and Presentations

SHWEC staff also provide various forms of assistance to those who compost on a larger scale. Staff have and will continue to connect composting operations with businesses looking for recycling options for organic wastes. Additionally staff provide access to research and guidance that enables composters to overcome operational challenges.

Compost Publications

The latest addition to the catalog of compost related publications is now available on the SHWEC publication web page. *Leaf and Yard Material Collection Practices in Wisconsin* provides an overview of the leaf collection methods currently in use across Wisconsin. Also described are various methods of leaf collection as well as efforts that have been made to manage the cost of collecting these materials. For additional compost related publications visit the SHWEC publication page <http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/shwec/publications/publications.cfm> and enter the keyword "compost."

Contact Joe Van Rossum at vanrossum@epd.engr.wisc.edu or 608-262-0936 for assistance or more information about Compost programs and support from SHWEC.

DNR: Blastomycosis Risks from Composting Are Low

The Department of Natural Resources recently issued information for compost facility owners and operators in response to concerns about the respiratory disease blastomycosis following a report from the Department of Health and Family Services that linked a pile of stored pine needles to a 2006 outbreak of the disease in Lincoln County.

While the incident did not involve composting, the DHFS report found that moving large piles of stored pine needles may have released spores from the fungus *Blastomyces dermatitidis*, which causes the potentially serious respiratory infection blastomycosis.

In response to this report, DNR has issued guidance for compost facility owners and operations outlining practices that reduce the risk of conditions favorable to the fungus, which grows in moist, acidic soils with high organic materials. The guidance stresses that these steps are precautionary and that there are no known cases of composting operations spreading the fungus.

The guidance document, *Blastomycosis Awareness and Yard Materials Management* (PUB-WA 1173 2007) can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/publications/aneupub/WA1173.pdf>

Individuals, businesses or municipalities with concerns about their composting can also contact Ann Coakley (715-365-8960, annM.coakley@wisconsin.gov) or Gretchen Wheat (608-267-0557, Gretchen.wheat@wisconsin.gov).

Size DOES Matter

Steve Brachman

The key finding of the recently completed Waukesha County recycling system and capacity study is that much greater economies of scale can be achieved if the population base served is expanded. The study findings, which were presented by RRT Design and Construction of New York and its subcontractor GBB, a solid waste consulting firm, at a meeting on June 20, 2007, confirmed the importance of community collaboration to maximize recycling efficiency.

Faced with an antiquated material recovery facility (MRF), Waukesha County commissioned a study of its current system, which presently serves 25 of the 37 Waukesha county communities. Although the cities of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa did not formally join the study, the consultants were directed to assess their service needs and opportunities as well, since both communities have MRF facilities in critical need of upgrading or replacement. Key findings include:

- Implementing a single stream recycling system will increase recyclable recovery rates by 25%, while saving haulers \$15 to \$30 per ton in collection costs.

- Including Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and the 12 non-participating Waukesha County communities in the program will generate an estimated 80,000 tons per year by 2010.
- The current MRF's are inadequate and would require substantial upgrades in order to implement a single stream process.
- Upgrading Waukesha's current MRF would cost an estimated \$6 million, while a new MRF serving the much larger population base would cost an estimated \$8.25 million.
- Continuing the current dual stream program for the 25 communities will cost Waukesha County approximately \$325,000 by 2025, while developing a single stream program including the additional communities could generate a saving of \$769,000 by 2025.

As a result of these findings, four options were presented to Waukesha County. These include:

1. Continue to use the existing facility at a net cost per household of \$0.42
2. Expand and convert the existing facility to a single stream MRF at a net revenue per household of \$0.31
3. Develop a publicly owned regional recycling facility serving the larger population base at a net revenue per household of \$0.39
4. Use a private sector MRF with costs/savings unknown at this time.

The study clearly indicates that considerable savings can be achieved by expanding the population base served by recycling programs. Since a number of private vendors have indicated interest in providing service for this project, another significant recommendation is that a request for proposals be developed to determine private sector collection and processing costs. Key communities are continuing discussions to determine whether or not a collaborative program can be developed that meets the needs of all concerned parties.

Summer Brings Increase in Air Quality Concerns

Jack Annis

Warm and sunny, summer days are great enjoyment to all of us who spend many long Wisconsin months anticipating a few months of camping, fishing, boating and other outdoor activities. Unfortunately, long sunny days also have a downside when low level ozone is created by a reaction between sunlight and air pollutants. As we enter the hottest months of the year many people with respiratory ailments in particular, need to be aware of the daily changes in local air quality.

On June 21, US-EPA proposed strengthening the nation's air quality standards for ground-level ozone, revising the standards for the first time since 1997. The proposal is based on the most recent scientific evidence about the health effects of ground-level ozone -- the primary component of smog.

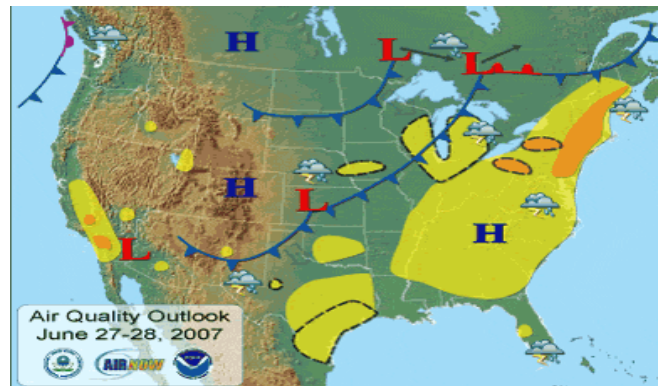
<http://epa.gov/groundlevelozone/>

In recent years both US-EPA and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have made it easy to be aware of the changes in air quality and educate the public about how ground level ozone is created.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/air/ozone/ozwatch.htm>.

For daily/weekly air quality information including the potential health impact visit

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/air/health/status.htm> or <http://www.airnow.gov/> or simply click on the map provided on the site.



Cool Your Home with the Help of Energy Star

Jack Annis

Now is the time to make sure your home is ready for the hot weather if you have not done so already. The US-EPA and the Department of Energy jointly sponsor the Energy Star web site which is a good place to get home improvement ideas that can save you money while making your home more comfortable in the summer months and year round.

You can download [Guide to Energy Efficient Heating & Cooling](#) or go to the Energy Star web site for product and technical information. Visit the [Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR @ home](#) to see the interactive house and click on a room for conservation tips that can help you improve your home.



Energy Star was started by EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. In 2006 alone, Americans with the help of Energy Star saved \$14 billion on their energy bills and reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 25 million vehicles. To date, more than 30,000 commercial and industrial buildings have targeted energy efficiency improvements and more than 3,200 of these buildings have earned the Energy Star. Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy designed to save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. The Energy Star Home page is located at: <http://www.energystar.gov>

National Compliance Assistance Centers Looking For Feedback

Jack Annis

The National Compliance Assistance Centers (Centers) would like your input on their services and the information they provide as part of their annual evaluation process. US-EPA has sponsored partnerships with industry, academic institutions, environmental groups, and other agencies through funding for each of the 14 sector-specific Centers some of which are listed below.



The Centers provide assistance to businesses, local governments, and federal facilities to help them to understand environmental requirements and to save money through pollution prevention techniques. If you have never visited a Center you can access all of them through the following <http://www.assistancecenters.net/>. In addition to the federal environmental regulations the site also has a gateway to state environmental regulations

Some of the Centers are offering incentives to complete their 2007 evaluation surveys and all can be accessed through the following web site at <http://www.assistancecenters.net/2007survey/> Input from the surveys is used each year to make improvements to the Centers and each survey should take no more than 3-5 minutes to complete.

EPA's New Go Green! Newsletter Helps Consumers Make a Difference

America is shifting to a "green culture" in which all 300 million citizens are embracing the fact that environmental responsibility is everyone's responsibility. As a step in that direction, citizen environmental partners can sign up to receive EPA's new consumer newsletter, Go Green! EPA is launching this monthly, email newsletter to provide "what you can do" information on activities and events that everyone can use to make a difference just about anywhere - in homes, workplaces, schools and communities.

The newsletter will include information on such issues as how to calculate individual energy use, upcoming environmental activities and observances and recent news reports from EPA. To subscribe to the Go Green! newsletter by email, please follow the prompt at <http://www.epa.gov/newsroom/gogreen>

Leading Innovators in Pollution Prevention Receive Awards

For the 12th straight year, EPA is recognizing leading researchers and industrial innovators for their efforts to reduce or eliminate waste through their manufacturing processes. The awards will be given out this evening, June 26, at the 2007 Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The 2007 Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge awards winners are: Professor Michael Krische of the University of Texas at Austin; NovaSterilis Inc. of Lansing, N.Y.; a partnership between Professor Kaichang Li of Oregon State University, Columbia Forest Products of Portland, Ore., and Hercules Inc. of Wilmington, Del.; Headwaters Technology Innovation of Lawrenceville, N.J.; and Cargill Inc. of Wayzata, Minn.

EPA's Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge promotes research to develop less-toxic alternatives to existing technologies, and to reduce or eliminate waste generation in industrial production. An independent panel of technical experts convened by the American Chemical Society selected the winners from the nearly 100 nominations for this recognition. The awards were given in five categories: Academic, Small Business, Greener Synthetic Pathways, Greener Reaction Conditions and Designing Greener Chemicals. Over the past 12 years, the winners' work has led to the elimination of over 940 million pounds of hazardous chemicals and solvents, over 600 million gallons of water, and over 340 million pounds of carbon dioxide.

The Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge 2007 Awards:

<http://www.epa.gov/greenchemistry/pubs/pgcc/past.html>

Events, Training, Workshop and Tour Opportunities.....

July 21-22, 2007 **Hybridfest**, Dane County Fair at Alliant Energy Center, Madison. Midwest's largest event dedicated to clean transportation solutions. Visit <http://www.hybridfest.com/>

August 8, 2007 **Resource Management Contracting Webcast**, 1 p.m Central Time. Learn how to get the most from waste and recycling contracts by creating performance based contracts that tie financial incentives to measurable goals. Presented by WasteCap Nebraska with funding from Nebraska Dept of Environmental Quality in partnership with US EPA Region VII. Online registration is available at <http://www.wastecapne.org/pub/2007/summer-lecture-series/3-resource-management.shtml>

September 12-14, 2007 **Greening the Heartland/SE2 Conference and Trade Show**, Monona Terrace, Madison. For more information contact the Wisconsin Green Building Alliance at <http://www.wgba.org>

Nov. 7-9, 2007 **Greenbuild Chicago**. Annual U.S. Green Building Council's Conference and Expo. This year's theme is Accelerating Green Communities. For information and to register go to <http://www.greenbuildexpo.org>.