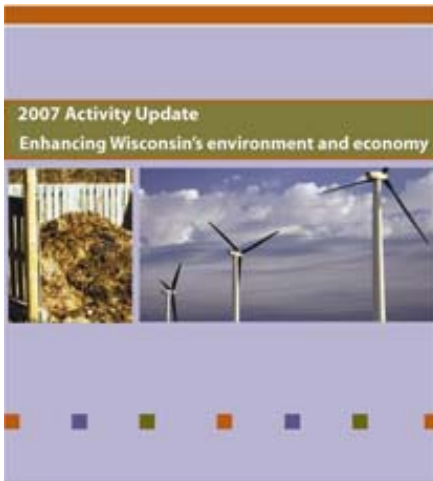


June 2008

SHWEC Annual Activity Report on Web

Cathleen Condon



The 2007 Activity Update is completed and can be seen on the SHWEC website **by clicking here**. It reviews the support and services that SHWEC provided over the last year.

Noteworthy is the response to growing interest in greening the environment; addressing the threat of climate change to the environment; promoting development of alternative fuels, and disposing of pharmaceutical wastes safely.

Last year, staff expanded the number of on-site technical assessments to help improve recycling, reduce waste, prevent pollution and achieve compliance with environmental regulations, as well as implementing renewable energy, green building projects and environmental management systems.

Recycling at Festivals, Fairs, and Special Events

Joe Van Rossum

The return of summer to Wisconsin brings with it many outdoor festivals, fairs and special events. Visitors to these events may leave with many memories, but often leave behind a mountain of trash. Plastic and aluminum beverage containers, along with cardboard boxes, make up a large portion of this waste. Many event planners have made efforts to recycle these materials rather than sending them to the landfill.

Recycling at special occasions can be a very challenging endeavor for some events. There are resources that are available to help plan for recycling. The following resources focus on recycling behind the scenes as well as recycling for event attendees.

The Wisconsin BeSMART Coalition has created an online tool-kit for event planners. The information provides event planners with many ideas and options to reduce waste and to increase recycling at their events. In addition to numerous case studies provides a "checklist for event recycling". The tool-kit is online at www.besmart.org/festival/index.html.



The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Solid Waste has launched a "Recycling on the Go" campaign to encourage recycling away from home. In addition to recycling at special events, the website includes guides for recycling at stadiums, shopping centers, and parks. The website is www.epa.gov/osw/conserves/onthe-go/index.htm

Madison Recycling Away from Home or Madison RAH was born out of a neighborhood initiative to ensure recycling was taking place at various neighborhood events. The organization has grown to include several neighborhood organizations and developed a guide for recycling/trash management at festivals. Learn more by visiting their website at: www.madisonrah.org

Get the Meds Out – New Program has Promising Start

Steve Brachman

Get the Meds Out, a consumer medication return pilot program, was launched in early May to more than 500,000 potential participants in a two-county area in Wisconsin. The pioneering initiative, a joint effort between the University of Wisconsin – Extension (UWEX), Waukesha and Winnebago counties, Capital Returns, Inc. (CRI), the Wisconsin DNR and over 100 area pharmacies, promises to provide a safe drug disposal alternative to the local community while bringing national attention to drug safety issues affecting the public and the environment.

EXPIRED MEDS? UNUSED MEDS?
GET THE MEDS OUT!
Keep our Kids Safe
and our Waters Clean
IT'S EASY!
Take part in a new, FREE program
in Waukesha and Winnebago counties.
RESIDENTS - DISPOSE OF OLD MEDICATIONS SAFELY
Call 1-800-958-5859
for a prepaid envelope, then ship your medications in to be safely destroyed.
Don't delay - Dispose today
(limited time opportunity)

The concept of a unified medication return program utilizing the existing reverse distribution infrastructure has been discussed for years. Based on recommendations of the Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Waste working group, Capital Returns, a Milwaukee-based reverse distributor, agreed to pilot a mail back model for unused and unwanted consumer medications. Working in partnership with the Waukesha and Winnebago County recycling managers and other local county solid waste officials as well as representatives from the EPA, Illinois Indiana Sea Grant program, Wisconsin DNR and area pharmacies, UWEX and the counties secured funding from the Wisconsin DNR and Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, as well as the US EPA and Illinois Indiana Sea Grant programs, and work began to assemble partners to help with awareness and execution.

Under the pilot program, media press releases, pharmacy posters and inserts, and community outreach help direct consumers residing in the two counties to call a special 800 number (1-800-958-5859) to receive instructions and a pre-paid shipping label. CRI, a company licensed as a reverse pharmaceutical distributor, will handle the calls and provide a return authorization and send out a pre-paid label for the old or unused medications, excluding controlled substances. This process allows CRI staff to personally explain the process. Once residents receive their pre-paid labels, they place their old medicine in a container for delivery back to CRI. Products received by CRI are processed, separated into appropriate waste categories and then disposed of through incineration. The entire process is *free* to consumers.

Response during the first two weeks has been excellent. Several dozen calls per day have been received by the call center and consumers are beginning to ship materials to Capital Returns. As the pilot proceeds, a comprehensive evaluation of the program will be conducted in cooperation with UW-River Falls to determine consumer satisfaction and to compare participation with one day collection programs. Stay tuned for ongoing updates on the **Get the Meds Out** program.

Brown County Pharmaceutical Collection Day

Alice Billings, Graduate Student UW-Green Bay

Used pharmaceutical collection days, like one held recently in Brown County sponsored by the Sustainable Greater Green Bay Task Force (www.baylakerpc.org), are becoming popular local recycling events. These collections can provide a huge benefit to communities which have not had a consistent policy for unwanted pharmaceutical disposal. Many items are commonly accepted at these events such as prescription medication in the form of inhalers, liquids, pills, creams and pet medicines. Also accepted are over the counter items, vitamins and nutritional supplements. Ideally, all medications are brought in their original containers, with names crossed out on the labels to avoid identity theft. Some items that are not accepted include needles, biological waste, syringes, and institutional and healthcare waste.

Policies for unwanted drug disposal vary considerably across the United States. The traditional disposal method has been to flush the drugs down the toilet or to throw them out with the trash. These options pose some environmental concerns because antibiotics, hormones and other drugs are being found in waterways, raising questions about potentially negative health and environmental effects from these practices. Studies have linked hormone exposure to fish abnormalities, while germs exposed to antibiotics in the environment may become more drug-resistant. Flushing drugs down the toilet also has a negative impact on drinking water and septic systems. The EPA, in April of 2007, funded two pilot studies to be carried out by non-profit organizations in Orono, Maine, and St. Louis, Missouri, to develop alternative stewardship approaches for unwanted medication disposal, including "mail back" or "take back" pilot demonstrations (yosemite1.epa.gov).

In addition to environmental concerns, keeping track of unwanted drugs has become an important social issue (www.medicinereturn.com). Prescription drug abuse is on the rise, and research suggests that more than half of the people who misuse those drugs get them for free from a friend or relative. Having unused drugs in the medicine cabinet is a risky idea. Anyone visiting your house could take them. Also, illness from accidental drug ingestion by small children or pets is avoided if the unused medication is disposed of properly.

This issue is not just a concern in the United States. Great Britain and France have a program through their National Health Services by which unused medicine is returned to any pharmacy for proper disposal. Australia's program, called RUM for "return unwanted medicines" (www.returnmed.com.au), has been operated through its National Health Service since 1999. Italy's program involves the pharmaceutical manufacturers as well. On a six-month cycle, wholesalers and pharmacies clear their shelves of out-of-date or damaged stock. These products are transported to an incinerator facility for proper disposal. Even the World Health Organization has drawn up policies for handling pharmaceuticals donated to relief efforts, or those damaged during natural disasters or war.

An unwanted medicine collection day gives communities an excellent alternative to disposing of drugs by flushing or disposal in the landfill. It is a good feeling to join with people from your local community, and around the world, in maintaining a healthy environment for wildlife, and a safe drinking water supply.

Environmental News Briefs of Interest

United Parcel Service Expands Green Fleet with 200 Hybrid Electric Vehicles

In a continuing effort to reduce fuel costs and reduce emissions from the UPS vehicle fleets the company announced May 13, 2008 that it was purchasing "200 hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) - the largest commercial order of such trucks by any company - in addition to another 300 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles for its U.S. delivery fleet. The purchase of the 500 additional vehicles means the UPS alternative fuel fleet - already the largest such private fleet in the United States - will grow 30 percent from 1,718 to 2,218 low-carbon vehicles."



"The chassis for the CNG and HEV trucks are being purchased from Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation, with Eaton Corporation supplying the hybrid power system for the HEVs. The truck bodies are identical externally to the signature-brown trucks that now comprise the UPS fleet with additional script markings that will identify them as CNG and HEV vehicles."

You can read the entire article at the UPS news web page at:

<http://www.pressroom.ups.com/pressreleases/current/0,1088,5008,00.html>

EPA Issues 2008 Report on the Environment

May 20th, 2008 EPA released its 2008 Report on the Environment (EPA 2008 ROE), an important resource that citizens can use to better understand trends in the condition of the air, water, and land and related changes in human health and the environment in the United States. The EPA 2008 ROE uses scientifically sound indicators to measure and report on overall progress toward protecting the environment and human health. An environmental indicator must be quantifiable and provide valuable information on the condition of air, land, water, human health, or ecological condition. For example, one water ROE environmental indicator is the percentage each year of public or community water systems that have reported no violations of EPA health-based standards. Later this year, EPA will also publish the 2008 Report on the Environment: Highlights of National Trends (2008 ROE Highlights), which summarizes highlights of the EPA 2008 ROE without all of the technical detail. EPA's 2008 Report on the Environment is available at <http://www.epa.gov/roe>

New EPA Report Shows Environmental Achievements of Performance Track

On May 14th EPA released its 6th Annual Progress Report for the National Environmental Performance Track (Performance Track) program showing that since its inception in 2000. To date, the combined environmental efforts of all Performance Track member facilities have resulted in significant cumulative savings, including:

- Reductions of greenhouse gas emissions by 309,780 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
- Increases in use of recycled materials for production processes by 559,991 tons
- Reductions in water consumption of 5.2 billion gallons



Performance Track has 533 members — ranging from major corporations to small businesses and representing a variety of industries across 49 states and Puerto Rico — who have voluntarily collaborated with EPA to establish goals for environmental improvement. Performance Track is

unique among environmental programs in that it works with members to improve performance among a variety of environmental activities -- such as water and energy use, land and habitat protection, air emissions, waste reduction -- throughout the product lifecycle, rather than focusing on just one specific pollutant or environmental issue. For more about Performance Track results go to: <http://www.epa.gov/performance-track/results/> and Performance Track at: <http://www.epa.gov/performance-track/>

Small Businesses Tackle Big Environmental Issues

May 5th EPA announced \$1.6 million in SBIR funding for seven small companies to commercialize green technologies that promise to deliver significant results. For example, Media and Process Technology will develop a ceramic membrane system that recovers both water and energy from boiler flue gas. Industrial boilers account for 35 percent of U.S. industrial energy consumption, and if this recovery system is implemented nationally, it's estimated it would recover 70 billion gallons of water annually and save 500 trillion BTUs of energy. The companies that received Phase II SBIR funding are:

- Compact Membrane Systems, Inc., of Wilmington, Del.
- Giner, Inc., Newton, Mass.
- KSE, Inc., Sunderland, Mass.
- Lesktech Limited, Marquette, Mich.
- Media and Process Technology, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Nanomaterials and Nanofabrication Laboratories, LLC., Fayetteville, Ark.
- NanoScale Materials, Inc., Manhattan, Kan.

Since its inception in 1982, EPA's SBIR program has helped fund more than 600 small businesses through its two-phased approach. Under Phase I, the scientific merit and technical feasibility of the proposed concept are investigated. EPA awards Phase I contracts of up to \$70,000 with a 6 month period of performance. Phase II contracts are given to Phase I businesses whose technologies show the greatest commercialization potential. In Phase II, EPA awards contracts of up to \$225,000 and the period of performance is typically 24 months. For more information on the Phase II projects go to:

http://es.epa.gov/ncer/sbir/O8awards/index_state.html and for the SBIR program: <http://www.epa.gov/ncer/sbir>

EPA Provides Further Direction on Implementing Fine Particle Pollution Air Quality Standard

EPA issued a final rule further outlining steps that state, local and tribal governments must take to reduce fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}). The rule describes how to apply the New Source Review (NSR) program at facilities that emit fine particles. EPA's NSR program requires industrial facilities to obtain permits outlining emissions controls for target air pollutants before they begin construction.

The rule affects areas that do not meet the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards. Those areas must meet the standards by 2010.

Today's rule complements the agency's PM2.5 final implementation rule issued on April 25, 2007, which addresses the non-New Source Review provisions of PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards. A related rule, proposed on Sept. 21, 2007, would complete the PM2.5 preconstruction review program framework by establishing increments, significant impact levels, and significant monitoring concentrations for EPA's Prevention of Significant Deterioration program. Together, these three rules will establish the framework for implementing preconstruction permit components of the 1997 PM2.5 air quality standards. For more information on this rule go to: <http://www.epa.gov/nsr/>

EPA Proposes Stronger Air Quality Standards for Lead

EPA is taking steps toward revising the nation's air quality standards for lead to reflect the latest science on lead and health. The proposal recommends tightening the primary standard to protect public health by 80 to 93 percent. It would revise the existing standard of 1.5 micrograms per cubic meter of air to a level within the range of 0.10 to 0.30 micrograms per cubic meter. The agency is taking comment on alternative levels within a range from less than 0.10 to 0.50 micrograms per cubic meter.

Since 1980, emissions of lead to the air have dropped nearly 98 percent nationwide, largely the result of the agency's phaseout of lead in gasoline. And average levels of lead in the air are far below the level of the 1978 standard. Lead in the air today comes from a variety of sources, including smelters, iron and steel foundries, and general aviation gasoline. About 1,300 tons of lead are emitted to the air each year, according to EPA's most recent estimates.

EPA will accept public comment for 60 days after the proposal is published in the Federal Register. The agency will hold two public hearings on June 12, 2008: one in St. Louis and one in Baltimore. EPA must issue a final decision on the lead standard by Sept. 15, 2008. For details about the proposal and public hearing information go to: <http://www.epa.gov/air/lead/>

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

June 20-22, 2008 **Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair**, Custer, WI. For more information go to the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's web site www.the-mrea.org

July 19-20, 2008 Hybridfest at Dane County Fair, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI. For complete information visit <http://www.hybridfest.com/>