

SOLID WASTE/AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE
2011 Wisconsin Integrated Resource Management Conference
AROW/SWAN/WCSWMA
Conference Summary – February 23-25, 2011

Attendance: Don Reese-Chair, Sharon Ehrhardt-Program Assistant

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

Wisconsin Council on Recycling

Sharon attended the Wisconsin Council on Recycling quarterly meeting. Only five members of the Council were in attendance. They did elect new officers, but were concerned that the Governor might want to disband the Council. The Council is written into law (s. 287.22 Wis. Stats.) so the Governor would have to change the law to disband the Council. DNR Division Administrator Pat Stevens and Deputy Suzanne Bangert addressed DNR program changes and budgeting/staffing. The DNR has over 175 vacant jobs, but if a job has not been filled within a year the job would be eliminated and responsibilities absorbed by other members of the department. There are 19 positions in the Administration Department where employee could retire; if that happens they don't know if the jobs would be filled. Pat and Suzanne were very optimistic about how well the DNR will do, but others in attendance questioned what type of service the DNR will be able to continue when it is so understaffed. The answer was prioritizing.

The Council report for 2010 is on the DNR website for everyone to read.
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wn/recycle/council>

Cynthia Moore, DNR, discussed the new laws that were implemented this past year regarding electronics (e-waste), mercury products, and oil filter/absorbents. Cynthia is also working with a glass recycling group trying to improve glass recycling in Wisconsin. Cynthia wasn't sure how the new group of legislators would be about more product stewardship laws that put the responsibility on the manufactures. Cynthia is an officer for the Mid-West Product Stewardship Council and they are working on pharmaceuticals, paint, and fluorescent lights. They are working on other products, but these are the top three.

The next meeting will be in Madison.

Thursday, February 24, 2011

AROW Annual Membership Meeting

Sharon and Don both attended the AROW meeting. They elected new officers and presented the annual report and budget. The annual report is posted on the AROW website www.arow-online.org. They talked about the new product stewardship laws (e-waste) and AROW's support of them. They also said they would try to be more pro-active on recycling issues. AROW will respond as a group to the Governor's Budget Repair Bill on RU grants. AROW has taken ownership of the RecycleMoreWisconsin.org website and if members need to update or change information contact Angie Lemar, AROW Program Director. It is always helpful to attend this morning meeting because you get to interact with other members.

Chad Pregracke, "Helping to Clean America's Rivers"

Chad was the keynote speaker for the conference. He is the founder and president of "Living Lands & Waters". Chad told the group how it became his mission and business in life to clean America's rivers and streams. He started diving for clams in the Mississippi River when he was in

high school to earn money for spending and college then realized how much junk was in the Mississippi River. He started asking for business sponsorships and began cleaning the Mississippi River and shores until money would run out. He graduated from college and continued with his life mission. He continues to get grants and sponsorships for the clean up. He now gets invited to communities all over the United States to organize clean up events along America's Rivers. He mainly focuses on the Mississippi, Ohio, and Illinois Rivers. He has written a book and does public speaking on how one person can make a difference. He also showed a video on some of the river projects he has done. This was a very good presentation.

DATCP Clean Sweep Program & Rule Revisions – Pat Kandziora

This session was cancelled because of a family emergency. We were disappointed because we had questions about the grants we received and what changes have been made to the program. Pat only works for DATCP Sweep Program 75% of the time the other 25% she has other DATCP responsibilities. The people who handled DATCP Clean Sweep Program in the past have retired.

Pharmaceutical & the Great Lakes Initiative Grant – Barb Bickford (WDNR), Steve Brachman (SHWEC), Sierra Fletcher (Product Stewardship Institute)

Barb talked about some of the drug collections initiated in Wisconsin. The DNR is working with local groups and organizations trying to get state wide options for collecting drugs. Barb said that the DNR realizes the only way to destroy collected drugs is witnessed burn which is costly to local communities. Mark Heal informed her that because of the Jefferson County Sheriff communities and counties can group together and share the cost of a witnessed burn. Mark explained how the witnessed burn works and invited anyone interested in the Jefferson County witnessed burn to contact him. Steve Brachman talked about the mail back pilot program run in three counties and the Great Lakes Initiative Grant. The grant only covers the Great Lakes counties so Jefferson County cannot be part of this grant. This grant will be another mail back program. It is not a free program; people will have to purchase the mail back envelopes and can only return non-controlled medicines. They are trying to get the EPA and DOJ to allow controlled, but that doesn't look like it will happen. Steve is having pharmaceutical meetings in May for all local governments and interested groups. Sierra talked about how important product stewardship is in getting manufactures to take responsibility for the products they produce and not expect local governments to pay for the disposal. When Sierra was asked if she thought the pharmaceutical companies would follow the example of the e-waste companies, she said no. Until over half the states can get product stewardship pharmaceutical laws passed, the pharmaceutical companies won't do anything; for now they are taking a wait and see approach. The Mid-West Product Stewardship Council meeting will be before Steve's May meeting. (Sierra was a conference call and difficult at times to understand and to read her power point presentation) In 45 minutes they were not able to cover a lot of information so that is why Steve is setting up the pharmaceutical meetings in May.

General Session: Recycling Markets – Wisconsin Overview & Beyond – Tom Knippel (Sadoff & Rudoy Industries), Joe Van Rossum (SHWEC)

This session did an overview on how the recycling markets bottomed out in 2009 and are slowly growing and stabilizing. This was interesting, but because we are not a RU (responsible unit) we have very little to do with recycling marketing. China is buying up a lot of recyclables commodities for their manufacturing, because of this some companies in the United States are in short supply of recyclables commodities for their own manufacturing. Until you sit in on a session like this you don't realize how important recycling and the use of recyclables are to the economy of this county and around the world.

WDNR Updates

Cynthia Moore and Sarah Murray from the DNR discussed the e-waste recycling program and said there would be a completed report from the 2010 program year sometime in the next month and it would be posted on the DNR website, www.dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/ecycle/ Cynthia also discussed the ban on oil filters and oily absorbents banned from the landfills. Cynthia said they will keep an updated list on the website where residents of Wisconsin can take used filters. Most of the updates I already know about. The best information was from Elisabeth Olsen on recycling education and outreach. She thanked Jefferson County for sending letters to all Jefferson County Schools supporting the Green and Healthy Schools Program. She told the group that it was a good example of how to support a program without funds. She is going to use the Jefferson County letter as an example to show other counties now they too can support this program without funds. She told the group that backing and support is just as important as receiving funds. Elisabeth put up a booth in the exhibitor's hall to show examples of different educational tools available from the DNR to teachers other interested groups. Most of their teaching tools are online like coloring pages, games and craft projects to be used in the classroom as well as in the home. When Don and I stopped by the booth we both agreed that this was a very good display of educational recycling information.

Product Stewardship for Leaner Governments – Sierra Fletcher (Products Stewardship Institute), Cynthia Moore (WDNR), Sarah Murray (WDNR)

Both Cynthia and Sarah reviewed some of the information heard at other sessions about e-waste, oil filters, and mercury. The big message is that Product Stewardship can save money, and when businesses and local governments understand the concept, we will have less waste and a better environment. Again Sierra did a video conference presentation. I think Sierra was trying to update everyone as to what other states are doing with Product Stewardship. The power point was small and I couldn't read it. I was sitting in the middle of the room. The microphone wasn't working right so it was very difficult to hear Sierra. I'm afraid I don't have much to report because the session was difficult to hear and read. I commented to the conference committee that if you are going to do video conferencing you should find a better way of doing it. Don't put a microphone in front of a telephone and hope a room full of people will be able to hear, and power points should be large enough that so everyone in the room can read. This session could have been a lot better if more thought would have gone into it. The Product Stewardship group will be meeting in Milwaukee before the pharmaceutical meetings.

Closing Session: Landfill Diversion in Wisconsin: Where are we at? – Gerald DeMers (Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure), Brad Wolbert (DNR)

Gerald explained that a lot of landfill are diverting the methane gas into electricity, and sometimes directly to manufacturing plants for power and heat. He had a presentation showing examples. He also talked about keeping recyclables out of the landfills; diverting them into the recycling market is better for everyone. Brad from the DNR talked about different studies on landfilling. He said no one wants a landfill in their back yard so the more we divert and for which we find better resources for the wastes the more it helps the economy and environment.