

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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County officials seek to change federal regulations

Through a Steele County environmental program called XLC, businesses and industries met at the Owatonna Fire Hall Thursday with Environmental Protection Agency and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency representatives to find out how to encourage changes. "We as businesses and industries have been regulated for 30 years," said Dennis Sershen, who helped start the XLC project in Steele County. "This is good for the community. I'm extremely pleased." Business and industry now know what the regulations are. It's time for the government to become a resource instead of a regulator, he said. Through the local project, Sershen said he believes Steele County maybe make changes that will not only affect regulations for businesses in Steele County, but across the United States as well. The aim of the XLC project is to reduce pollution going into the environment from participating industry and business. The project was first started by President Clinton for communities with his March 16, 1995, Reinventing Environmental Regulation initiatives. He described the XLC projects as giving the regulated groups the flexibility to replace the requirements of the current system, with an alternative strategy developed by the company or a community. For Owatonna, Sershen said this project could mean better parks, cleaner water and more wildlife. The first project will focus on cleaner waste water from the Owatonna Waste Water Treatment plant. Later, the project may be extended to improve air quality. Denise Madigan from the EPA came to the meeting to help business and industry get the project under way. "My objective is to make sure everyone gets heard," she said.

During the next two weeks, she will contact interested businesses that signed up during the meeting to find out what Owatonna would like to work on. She then plans to work with representatives to find what goals need to be accomplished so negotiations can be set up with the appropriate agency. The process should be into the negotiating stage by June 6.