

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

A publication of the United States Environmental Protection Agency
EPA'S COLLABORATION NETWORK NEWS



"Public Involvement brings the pieces together"

Fall 2007

Another season, another issue of *Network News*. I hope you will find it useful and interesting. Please share this issue – as many of you have over the past two years -- with your networks. In this, the eighth issue, you will find a range of new resources and meetings and three thought provoking feature articles.

If you discover an excellent new publication, take particularly useful training, are involved in a regional or national event of interest to practitioners that you would like to report or publicize, have a success story or a not-quite-successful project that taught you lessons that others can learn from -- send me an e-mail about it @ bonner.patricia@epa.gov. [To be added to or deleted from the distribution list, please use the same e-mail.].

Please let me know what kinds of articles and information would make the newsletter work for you. Or, better yet, take a chance – send a draft article for the next issue. I look forward to reading it and sharing it with practitioners around the nation and the world.

In This Issue:

- ◆ **The benefits of collaborative supplemental environmental projects (SEPs) --** Read about how greater use of collaborative approaches in developing and implementing SEPs -- with meaningful community involvement -- can provide significant benefits for the community, the violator, and the enforcement agency.
- ◆ **Putting "public" back in public health work --** Learn how the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) engaged communities in discussing whether and how to implement Community Control Measures at the time of a pandemic outbreak in the United States. Discussions helped form CDC's national guidance for communities.
- ◆ **Americans' knowledge of nanotechnology --** A recent poll found that even with an estimated \$50 billion worth of nanotechnology manufactured goods on the global market last year, only 6 percent of Americans – or fewer than one in 16 – say they have "heard a lot" about nanotechnology, and about 70 percent of adults say they have heard "just a little" or "nothing at all."

What's



New?

[Integrating Collaborative Activities: Public Deliberation with Stakeholder Processes](#)

[738KB PDF] This 38-page report by the National Policy Consensus Center explores how leaders can create even better solutions by combining collaborative governance activities - engaging the public in discussion and implementing their ideas through a representative group of stakeholders. The report examines cases in the United States where public deliberation has been integrated with such stakeholder processes. The examples illustrate what can be gained by integrating public deliberation and stakeholder processes, and when and how those collaborative governance activities should be combined. The report concludes with: "To achieve the most effective, most lasting solutions, with the most community acceptance and ownership, a combined effort should be considered when:

- A broader public interest is involved;
- Representatives of all interests cannot be gathered in a small group;
- Creative solutions have not emerged from stakeholders; or
- Implementation will depend on the wider public.

In these cases, the public needs to have its values heard, its conflicts resolved, and its priority issues addressed. Including a public forum can educate the wider public about the stakeholder process, build trust between the public and stakeholders, and yield more successful implementation of the final decision.

By combining public deliberation with stakeholder processes:

The public's values can help frame issues at the beginning of a stakeholder process;

More creative solutions to public problems can emerge;

Stakeholders can implement public solutions more directly, and with greater acceptance;

Communities will suffer less from current challenges like interest-group politics and community members' limited involvement in problem-solving efforts;

Democratic principles will be immediately fortified in stakeholder processes; and

Democratic practices will be more successful over time."

Ask EPA [www.epa.gov/askepa] On Thursday, November 1, at 3 p.m., Administrator Stephen L. Johnson launched EPA's new online interactive forum, *Ask EPA*. The Administrator discussed the Agency's efforts to promote clean and dependable energy solutions, including the ENERGY STAR Change a Light Campaign.

In this new forum, patterned after *Ask the White House* [www.whitehouse.gov/ask], the public will have the opportunity to ask the agency's senior environmental officials questions on a wide range of environmental and human health issues. The live chat sessions will last approximately one hour and consist of 8-12 questions and answers. Individuals can submit questions up to two days in advance, as well as during the live discussion.

For more information or to receive e-mail alerts on upcoming hosts and topics, visit the *Ask EPA* site [www.epa.gov/askepa]. If you have any questions, please contact Andrew Wilkins at 202-564-7848.

Publications about public engagement on nanotechnologies -- On 26 June two new publications about public engagement on nanotechnologies were launched at a conference in London.

Democratic Technologies? The final report of the Nanotechnology Engagement Group

Download a PDF copy [here](#) In laboratories across the world, new scientific territory is being uncovered everyday; territory that offers groundbreaking opportunities for society, as well as new risks and unexpected challenges. Just as yesterday's science and technology has contributed to shaping today's world, these new technologies will help shape the world of tomorrow. The power of technology is clear, but its governance is not. Who or what makes these world-shaping

decisions? And in whose interests are they made? These are the questions posed by a growing number of researchers, NGOs, citizens, politicians and scientists who seek to challenge the way that science and technology is governed and invent new ways to democratize the development of new technologies. This report documents the progress of six projects that have sought to do just that – by engaging the public in discussions about the governance and development of nanotechnologies.

Nanodialogues: Experiments in public engagement with science Download a PDF copy [here](#) Depending who you ask, nanotechnology might be the Next Big Thing, the Next Asbestos or the Next GM. But before its impacts have been felt, nanotechnology has become a test case for a new sort of governance. It is an opportunity to re-imagine the relationship between science and democracy. This pamphlet presents the findings of the Nanodialogues – a series of experiments in upstream public engagement with different partners in different contexts. For public engagement to matter, it must go beyond risk management. New conversations with the public do not provide easy answers. They ask difficult but important questions, opening up new possibilities for science. The value of public engagement is that it takes us into a vital discussion of the politics of science.

DemocracySpace <http://www.democracyspace.org>. can help you tell others of your successes and challenges promoting inclusive dialogue that leads to action. Study Circles' new blog is ready for community organizers to post news, exchange ideas, and enjoy camaraderie and conversation with others who are doing similar work across the country. Think of DemocracySpace.org as a scrapbook for the deliberative democracy and citizen engagement community.

If you have news to share, contact Julie Fanselow at jfanselow@studycircles.org. She can post it for you or help you learn to blog. Perhaps you want to start your own local community blog, or a page on FaceBook or MySpace, or even a channel on YouTube. Julie can help you with all these fun and easy ways to increase your online outreach.

DemocracySpace will soon feature regular “water cooler” sessions – a designated hour where organizers can drop by the blog, ask questions, and trade ideas on a previously announced topic related to study circles. If you have a topic you'd like to see covered at the “water cooler,” send your idea to Julie at jfanselow@studycircles.org.

American Rivers released a report, **What's In Your Water: The State of Public Notification in 11 U.S. States** [www.americanrivers.org/RightToKnowReport], reviewing public notification policies across the country and found that Americans are not treated equally when it comes to their right to know, with many citizens kept in the dark.

According to the report, there is wide variation among and even within the 11 states investigated. Here is a snapshot of how these selected states compare:

- **Red Alert** - No public notification regulations on a statewide basis and/or a complete lack of implementation.
 - Alabama, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee
- **Orange Alert** - Information is available sporadically, only for certain kinds of spills, or only in certain parts of the state.
 - Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Iowa, Oregon, Washington
- **Green Alert** - Strong public notification measures and successful implementation
 - Maryland

Of these 11 states, American Rivers reports that only [Maryland](#) stands out as an example of states with strong public notification, showing how vulnerable many Americans are to sewage pollution and [confusion](#) over whether it's safe to swim. H.R. 2452, the [Raw Sewage Overflow](#)

[Community Right to Know Act](#) would require all states to ensure that their residents are informed of sewage spills. The full report is available at www.americanrivers.org/RightToKnowReport.

Help with Web 2.0 <http://www.commoncraft.com/shows/paperworks> This site features several short videos which explain web 2.0 technologies such as social bookmarking, rss, and more – the videos are entertaining and easy-to-understand.

The **2007 Growth and Transportation Survey**, <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/narsgareport2007.html> sponsored by the National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America, reports that three-fourths of Americans believe that being smarter about development and improving public transportation are better long-term solutions for reducing traffic congestion than building new roads.

The survey, released on October 25, 2007, details what Americans think about how development affects their immediate community. Nearly 75 percent of the respondents were concerned about the role growth and development play in climate change, as well as remaining concerned about traffic congestion. Half of those surveyed think improving public transit would be the best way to reduce congestion, and 26 percent believe developing communities that reduce the need to drive would be the better alternative. Eight in 10 respondents prefer redeveloping older urban and suburban areas rather than build new housing and commercial development on the edge of existing suburbs. More than half of those surveyed believe that businesses and homes should be built closer together to shorten commutes, limit traffic congestion and allow residents to walk to stores and shops instead of using their cars. Six in 10 also agree that new-home construction should be limited in outlying areas and encouraged in inner urban areas to shorten commutes and prevent more traffic congestion. Only 21 percent said building new roads was the answer.

The 2007 Growth and Transportation Survey was conducted by telephone among 1,000 adults living in the United States in October 2007. The study has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Developing and Sustaining Community Based Participatory Research

Partnerships (CBPR): A Skill-Building Curriculum <http://www.cbprcurriculum.info> This evidence-based curriculum is intended as a tool for community-institutional partnerships that are using or planning to use a CBPR approach to improving health. Each of the 7 units in the curriculum includes: learning objectives, in-depth content information about the topic(s) being presented, examples & interactive exercises designed to trigger discussion and help better understand the concepts being presented, and citations and suggested resources.

Fostering Dialogue Across Divides – The Public Conversation Project's new dialogue guide, is now available in Spanish translation for free downloading at www.publicconversations.org.

Featured Upcoming Events



"Social Media for Government: How To Engage Your Employees and Citizens by using Blogging, Podcasting and the Latest WEB 2.0 Technologies to drive communication results" will be held December 3-6, 2007 in Washington, DC at the Marriot Georgetown University Hotel. [Fees are up to \$2,600] For details, see: http://www.aliconferences.com/conf/social_media_govt1207/SocialMedia_for_Govt_1207.pdf http://www.aliconferences.com/conf/social_media_govt1207/index.htm

The International Association for Public Participation's Skills Symposium will be in Scottsdale, Arizona November 12 - 16. This training extravaganza offers workshops for all experience levels taught by distinguished trainers including Larry Susskind, Peter Sandman, Michael Quinn Patton and Bill Lennertz. Training topics include:

- Facilitation skills
- Public participation process design
- Evaluation
- Decision-maker engagement
- Risk communication and outrage management
- Consensus building in the public arena
- Advisory committees
- Charrette planning
- Calming controversy
- Internet P2 tools
- Managing polarities in strategic collaboration
- Community capacity building
- IAP2 Certificate Program (planning, communications and techniques)
- Managing public consultations in government
- Public comment compilation
- Quality decision making
- P2 research
- Appreciative inquiry
- And more!

Visit www.iap2.org today for all the details.

The Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation (C2D2) 2007 Conference

Facing Complex Issues Together will be held November 12-14, 2007 at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre and the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University. See the [programme](#) and [register](#) for C2D2. Review [presenters' profiles](#) and look over post-conference training offerings. [here](#). Expert trainers are offering eight special courses focused on building skills and knowledge at rates well below market value. This conference will enable attendees to gain insights into the constructive role that dialogue and deliberation can play in meeting today's challenges, and learn how to:

- Create conditions for collaborative action on the global and local issues of our times
- Facilitate better informed, balanced actions and decisions
- Transform conflicted relationships and increase understanding
- Encourage people to deepen their understanding, create shared meaning, look for common ground, encourage information-sharing, deepen their awareness of values and help set good direction
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder and public input to influence decisions affecting our future
- Provide decision-makers with the benefit of the understanding and insights of key stakeholders and the public
- Encourage citizens to be actively involved in their communities

Visit www.c2d2.ca for full information and see the [C2D2 blog](#).

The final agenda for **EPA's 2007 Environmental Information Symposium** is now available on the Symposium website: <http://www.epa.gov/oei/proceedings/2007/sessions.htm>

This year's theme is "Getting it Right: Access to Environmental Information." On the first day of the Symposium, November 14, 2007, there will be a variety of valuable training opportunities. Be

sure to check out the website for details on the class offerings and to register to attend the sessions of your choice.

The Opening Session, all Feature Sessions and the Closing Session will be available for viewing via live streaming over the Internet (for viewing outside of EPA) and via IPTV (for viewing from inside EPA). If you are unable to attend the Symposium and plan to view the live stream, please send an email to: meetings@erg.com. Additional information will be provided via email and will be posted on the Symposium Web site.

The 2008 National Environmental Partnership Summit "Accelerating Environmental Performance: Pathways to Action" will be held May 19-22, 2008, at the Sheraton in Baltimore, MD. The Summit will offer a four-day program focused on collaboration, learning, and sharing innovations in pollution prevention, compliance assistance and environmental leadership. The Environmental Summit merges the annual meetings of the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable, the Compliance Assistance Providers' Forum and the Performance Track Participants' Association and includes partner activities involving many national environmental assistance projects and programs. Over 800 professionals committed to working together toward a healthier environment - environmental leaders and innovators from all over the country, every level of government, business & industry and the non-governmental community are expected to attend.

November 21 is the deadline to submit proposals for papers, panel sessions, dialogues or work sessions. *Click on the following link to get more information and to submit:*
<http://www.environmentalsummit.org/>

Philippe Cousteau, Jr., will give the opening keynote address on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 for the 6th Annual Summit. Bob Willard, author of "The Sustainability Advantage: Seven Business Case Benefits of a Triple Bottom Line," will be the closing keynote. Mr. Willard will also offer an optional training after his closing on Thursday, May 22, 2008.

For More Information: <http://www.environmentalSummit.org/> Phone: 443-904-0752

Until November 15, join a **National Conversation about Energy -- The Energy Problem: Choices for an Uncertain Future**. The [Kettering Foundation](#) and the [National Issues Forums](#) Institute invite you and your group or community to become part of a national conversation about energy and the choices that face the public and policymakers.

The Kettering Foundation and [Public Agenda](#) will be preparing a national report detailing the outcomes of 2007 public deliberative forums held around the country using the National Issues Forums issue book titled [The Energy Problem: Choices for an Uncertain Future](#). Groups or individuals who have led forums on this issue, or who are planning to, are invited to help make the upcoming report as representative as possible of the national conversation.

If you have had a forum on this topic, or have one scheduled, please contact John Doble or Stella Lee at Public Agenda, JDoble@publicagenda.org or SLee@publicagenda.org. The completion and return of post-forum questionnaires will also be an important source of information for the upcoming report. Downloadable questionnaires and more information about the issue book can be found at http://www.nifi.org/discussion_guides/detail.aspx?catID=6&itemID=7743.

The Energy Problem issue book and free moderator guides may be ordered by calling 800-600-4060. If you would like more information about how to convene a forum on this topic in your community contact Ginny O'Connor at ogconnor@kettering.org or 800-443-7834, extension 870.

The **Fourth National Conference on Dialogue & Deliberation** (NCDD) will take place October 3-5, 2008 in Austin, Texas - a city with an active network of D&D practitioners and strong commitment to civic engagement. NCDD's biennial conferences are unique experiments in collaborative planning, and NCDD has managed dynamic planning teams of about 60 people for each of the three previous conferences.

If you're interested in serving on the 2008 conference planning team, you may complete the short questionnaire at www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=GuVbsmnPbFte7tzUvxhetw_3d_3d

NCDD is also seeking co-sponsors, partners and support. [Contact NCDD's Director, Sandy Heierbacher at sandy@thataway.org or : 717-243-5144 to indicate interest.] NCDD's highly participatory conferences bring together practitioners, scholars, public leaders, trainers, artists, activists, teachers and students from all of the various streams of practice in the field. You can learn more about NCDD's conferences at www.thataway.org/events if you're interested.

The **2008 Symposium on Innovating for Sustainable Results: Integrated Strategies for Climate, Energy and the Environment** will provide participants with an opportunity to learn about some of the key innovation challenges of the day. This event is being held January 7 – 10th, 2008, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina in the heart of the University of North Carolina campus.

Representatives from EPA and other federal agencies, State, local and Tribal governments, and the not-for-profit community will be attending. Business and industry representatives will be attending by invitation. On January 8th and 9th, participants will hear plenary presentations and select from a variety of session topics that explore:

- how to realize the full potential of innovative strategies,
- using holistic approaches to environmental protection, and
- collaborating for environmental problem-solving.

Participants will also have an opportunity to attend pre- and post-symposia workshops on January 7th and 10th.

The *2008 Symposium on Innovating for Sustainable Results* builds upon a series of State-EPA Environmental Innovation Symposia and National Air Innovation Conferences. Co-sponsors include the U.S. EPA, the Council for Excellence in Government, and the Environmental Council of the States. For more information, visit www.excelgov.org/sustainableresults

Featured Articles

The Benefits of Collaborative Supplemental Environmental Projects

by Langdon Marsh and Monica Kirk

For a long time, EPA and most states have recognized that enforcement actions can lead to beneficial actions, beyond getting the violator into compliance. Enforcement officials have created Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) to allow violators to reduce penalties by voluntarily undertaking actions that benefit the environment. A recent report argues that greater use of collaborative approaches in developing and implementing SEPs with meaningful community involvement can provide significant benefits for the community, the violator, and the enforcement agency.

Using SEPs to Help Communities Solve Problems

Some SEPs have actively engaged members of the community in identifying the projects to be funded through the SEP. In Colorado, Rocky Mountain Steel Mills proposed a SEP in partial settlement of concurrent federal and state enforcement actions. U.S. EPA Region 8 and the State of Colorado were successful in mobilizing a community of low-income, predominately Hispanic new immigrants and third-generation families to participate in expending the funds contributed by the company. They agreed on nine public health projects.

Another case demonstrated how through collaboration with others a SEP can be integrated with other projects in support of a community objective. U.S. Steel, in agreeing to coordinate its investment in a SEP with other companies, agencies, municipalities, foundations, and individuals, rehabilitated approximately 2,000 feet of shoreline of the Detroit River as part of creating the nation's only international wildlife refuge.

These cases and others demonstrate the potential for SEPs to produce better outcomes and more coordination with other community investments through collaboration with other organizations and individuals. Typically, SEPs are proposed by violators and approved by enforcement officials without assessing the potential for far greater benefits through a collaborative approach than would result from the SEP project by itself.

The Underutilized Potential of SEPs

Better community outcomes through collaboration are envisioned in a new report on SEPs from the National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC). [Environmental Enforcement Solutions: How Collaborative SEPs Enhance Community Benefits](http://www.policyconsensus.org/publications/reports/docs/seps_report.pdf) finds that combining model SEP practices that encourage community input and promote environmental justice with advanced collaborative problem solving techniques can produce larger and more satisfying outcomes from SEPs. http://www.policyconsensus.org/publications/reports/docs/seps_report.pdf

The NPCC report concludes that SEPs are underutilized generally and that newly developed collaborative governance processes can lead to greater community benefits by leveraging SEPs with other investments, actions, and commitments. It recommends that the states and U.S. EPA consider undertaking pilot collaborative SEPs to determine violator and community interest, and that they should develop "best practices" based on a collaborative governance process such as the Public Solutions System developed by NPCC.

The Public Solutions System

Collaborative governance goes beyond traditional community involvement approaches to get political or other leaders in the state or the community to engage with all sectors – public, private, non-profit, citizens, and others – to develop effective, lasting solutions to public problems that go beyond what any sector could achieve on its own. This is the essence of the Public Solutions System advocated by NPCC.

In a number of successful projects in Oregon, NPCC has asked the governor to appoint a legislator, local official, or respected civic leader to bring diverse parties together to work on a common problem. NPCC, as an impartial organization, performs an assessment of the probability of success and assists the convener in bringing together participants representing all interests to reach agreement on the issues. The key difference from other collaborative processes is the deliberate engagement of leaders in getting people to the table.

Several projects are similar to SEPs. For example, in North Portland, which suffers from the highest levels of diesel emissions in the state, community groups, non-profit organizations, and private and public fleets reached an agreement to reduce diesel emissions through fuel and equipment upgrade projects. A typical outcome in an Oregon Solutions project is that participants commit additional resources in amounts three to four times greater than the value of the original project.

The NPCC report suggests that a collaborative governance process could, in appropriate SEPs, be utilized to produce similar results, building on the investment the violator is willing to make and coordinating it with other willing public and private investments in the community. Where environmental justice issues exist in the affected community, a collaborative governance process is especially appropriate, as is recognized by EPA's own model. See Nicholas Targ, *Working Together to Achieve Results: EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model* http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/workingtogethertoachieveveresults_article.html A second recent report on SEPs was written by the Public Law Research Institute at Hastings College of the Law in association with the American Bar Association (ABA). [Supplemental Environmental Projects: A Fifty State Survey with Model Practices](#) reviews and analyzes SEP laws, policies, and practices for every state. www.uchastings.edu/site_files/plri/ABAHastingsSEPreport.pdf

The ABA Survey reports that 28 states and the District of Columbia have instituted formal, published SEP policies. Among its many findings that will help SEP practice is that States have more flexibility than EPA to adopt policies that favor SEPs.

Benefits of SEPs

Collaborative SEPs have benefits to all involved. The *community* benefits from the additional investments in priority projects and builds multi-stakeholder partnerships. The *violator* can build more effective relationships with the various communities. The state and federal *enforcing agencies* will find multiple objectives promoted by more robust SEPs, including enhancement of community sustainability.

Conclusion

EPA, States and violators should weigh the pros and cons of implementing collaborative SEPs where the circumstances are appropriate. These enhanced SEPs can provide benefits for the violator, the community, and the agency.

Langdon Marsh is a fellow at the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. He works on collaborative approaches to solving complex environmental and sustainability issues. Marsh was formerly commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and director of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Monica Kirk is an Attorney Advisor on detail to the EPA Office of Environmental Justice from ORC, Region 10.

Putting "Public" back in Public Health work -- The government (Center for Disease Control and Prevention - CDC) engaged communities in seeking input on Community Control Measures for planning purposes at time of a pandemic outbreak in the United States.
By Doug Thompson and Don Greenstein

"When big things are at stake, the danger of error is great. Therefore, many should discuss and clarify the matter together so the correct way may be found." -Prince Shotoku, 574-622AD, a regent and politician of the Imperial Court of Japan

Introduction

"So what are we supposed to do with our children?" a woman asks plaintively. "If we leave them at day care, you say they might get very sick. But I am a single mother and I have to go to work. So what am I supposed to do?"

This woman was speaking at one of four public meetings convened by the CDC and facilitated by The Keystone Center to hear public views about Community Control Measures that will work and have some problems in communities around the country.

Experts say chances of a deadly worldwide outbreak of pandemic flu are increasing. Early in such an outbreak, the United States will need to put in place community control measures to limit the outbreak. Should this situation arise, it leads to difficult decisions about what communities around the country will need to do to stop or limit the spread of a pandemic flu outbreak.

The CDC had a need to develop and issue guidance to communities and public health departments throughout the country on how best to control pandemic influenza in the early days of an outbreak when vaccine is not available. During this early period, community control measures such as 1) treating sick persons at home, 2) keeping those who have been in contact with sick persons at home in isolation/quarantined, 3) closing schools, 4) cancelling large gatherings, and 5) altering work schedules and work patterns, which might be the only measures available to slow the spread of the infectious viral pandemic in a community and throughout the country.

Since 2003, a growing number of human Avian Influenza (H5N1) cases have been reported in Asia, Europe, and Africa. More than half of the people infected with the H5N1 virus have died. Most of these cases are all believed to have been caused by exposure to infected poultry. There has been no sustained human-to-human transmission of the disease, but the concern is that H5N1 will evolve into a virus capable of human-to-human transmission.

The Keystone Center, with support from American State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) in conjunction with the CDC, planned and convened a series of stakeholder and public citizen meetings in the Fall of 2006 to help assess what measures are seen as the most effective and the most in tune with individual values in the case of a world-wide flu epidemic. The recommendations emerging from the process provide guidance to decision-makers in preparing federal recommendations on these topics and they provide a good beginning for the creation of multilevel and multi-sector "Coordinated Action Plans" for early protection against pandemic influenza.

The Public Engagement Project on Community Control Measures for Pandemic Influenza won the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) 2007 "Core-Values Project of the Year award." It was selected because the work of the three sponsoring agencies and all of the individuals who created the CDC Community Engagement Projects carried it out with the belief that citizens who would be most affected by social disruption and economic consequences associated with the community control measures if implemented, should have a voice in whether or not the proposed measures are acceptable, how they can be implemented, and how any negative consequences of these measures might be mitigated.

To conduct this public engagement, the Keystone Center, ASTHO, and CDC used Policy Analysis Collaborative (PACE) <http://www.keystone.org/spp/health-pandemic.html>, an innovative model for engaging both the organized stakeholders and the general public comprised of citizens-at-large [The process aimed to maximize public input over a short period of time at each meeting: Citizens at large came together in a comfortable facility; federal, state and regional experts provided the background and information necessary for people to understand and respond to the issues; neutral convening and facilitation was provided throughout the process; individual small group discussions occurred, allowing all participating to voice their opinions and concerns; and an anonymous electronic polling instrument was utilized allowing all involved to give voice to an opinion after a thorough education and question and answer period occurred. The results achieved were: Over 300 people participated, from diverse backgrounds and regions of the country. The project sought to put the "public" in public health by effectively allowing people to

participate in policy development and helped the CDC create a policy on community control measures which reflects the sentiment of the citizens.

The Process

Two to three representatives from approximately ten major sectors likely to be affected by the control measures (e.g., education), were formed into a 50-member national panel. To reach to the larger public, a sample of approximately 260 citizens from the general public, disparate by age, race, and sex, were recruited from each of the four principal geographic regions of the United States and included citizens in: Seattle, Washington; Syracuse, New York; Lincoln, Nebraska and Atlanta, Georgia. The meetings were structured to provide essential information to the participants, to encourage the participants to engage in discussions with each other in small groups, to weigh tradeoffs, and to reach a collective viewpoint on whether and how to take action.

The Public Engagement Project explicitly or implicitly asked citizens and stakeholders three questions: 1) Should control measures be undertaken by government? 2) Can they be implemented? 3) Will the government do it?

The first two questions were answered rather quickly in the affirmative: control measures should and can be implemented. There was strong support for the control measures and citizens and stakeholders were able to think of a number of possibly effective and practical solutions to assure successful implementation or to mitigate against their socially disruptive effects.

The stakeholders worked through all of these ideas and identified four categories of challenges which must be addressed: 1) Failure to implement these recommendations risks; 2) Failure to mobilize the necessary people and resources at the time of the actual pandemic; 3) Failure of citizens to comply with the recommendations and failure of citizens to understand what they need to do and 4) A missed opportunity to reduce the social harms caused by the control measures.

While the question of "will it be done" was not asked explicitly of the participants and they were not canvassed about prospects for success or failure in implementation, they lacked a clear conviction that control measures would actually be carried out successfully. Indeed the participants exhibited uncertainty, and in some quarters distrust, of the government's capacity to effectively execute the necessary actions.

The Recommendations - Implementation of Control Measures

The thirteen priority recommendations to address these challenges were:

To ensure sound planning & preparation:

1. Engage different levels of government and all key sectors of the community in the development of a detailed and fully-coordinated plan.
2. Conduct the planning work in the most transparent and highly visible ways possible to build public trust.
3. Conduct needs assessments to measure and track "pandemic wellness" or "pandemic readiness" scores for both individuals and communities.
4. Create incentives for employers to conduct business "continuity of operations" plans and communicate effectively what employers will expect from their employees and what supports employers will make available to lessen the burdens of the pandemic on employees.
5. Train elected officials for the leadership roles they are unfamiliar with now but will have to fulfill in a pandemic emergency.
6. Develop special focused plans for maintaining the personnel and infrastructure that will be needed to meet surge in demand for health care and the disruption of critical community services.
7. Develop clear and useful guidance for making ethical decisions around the use of scarce resources and other difficult value-laden choices in a severe pandemic.

To avoid undue economic disruptions:

8. Modify workplace policies or create new programs to relax the requirements on employees and to make it easier for them to bear the financial and family care burdens of the pandemic.

To meet the information needs of the public:

9. Conduct an ongoing public education campaign before the pandemic strikes which provides necessary and straightforward information about the control measures, pandemic influenza, and preparedness.

10. Create messages prior to and during the pandemic that motivate expectation that compliance is a socially desirable and necessary behavior with positive benefits for all.

11. Establish specific mechanisms at the federal, state, and local levels for "just in time" communication when the pandemic arrives.

To reduce the social stresses of the pandemic:

12. Connect existing community organizations and volunteer groups into social networks that can deliver information, services and social or psychological support needed to weather the pandemic.

13. Link providers in the social networks in advance of the pandemic with the people in need, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable populations.

Ninety-five percent or more of the citizens and stakeholders supported encouraging sick persons to stay at home, and the same high percentage supported canceling large public gatherings and altering work patterns to keep people apart. A slightly lower percentage--approximately four out of five citizens and stakeholders (83-84%) -- supported encouraging the non-ill contacts of sick persons to stay at home and a similar percentage favored closing schools and large day care facilities for an extended period. Approximately two thirds of both citizens and stakeholders (64-70%) supported all five control measures. Furthermore, citizens and stakeholders supported early implementation of the package of control measures with nearly half (44-48%) supporting implementation when pandemic influenza first strikes the U.S. and approximately one-third of the public supporting implementation when influenza first strikes their state. A relatively low percentage of citizens (4-15%) wanted to wait until influenza first strikes their community before beginning to implement control measures.

According to some participants, The Public Engagement Project on Community Control Measures for Pandemic Influenza may itself have served as a trust-building exercise for those citizens who participated. Greater use of this model or other such participatory and transparent group process mechanisms may be needed to assure both the soundness and the implementation of plans to slow the spread of pandemic influenza.

A full evaluation of the project was conducted by the independent University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, titled "Evaluation of the Public Engagement Project on Community Control Measures for Pandemic Influenza"

http://ppc.unl.edu/publications/documents/PEPPPI_FINALREPORT_DEC_2005.pdf

The report concluded that the project met its 9 major goals:

1. Attract citizens to participate in the public meetings in four locations: Georgia, Washington, New York, and Nebraska.
2. Recruit participants with diverse perspectives and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and income.
3. Understand what motivated citizens to participate in the process
4. Provide information to participants so they have sufficient knowledge about pandemic influenza to adequately consider and discuss community control measures. (The process results in a balanced, honest, and reasoned discussion of the issues while respecting diversity of views.)

5. The process results in a balanced, honest and reasoned discussion of the issues while respecting diversity of views.
6. Citizens and stakeholders deliberate and consider multiple points of view and the process affects the opinions and judgments of participants related to values and implementation of community control measures.
7. Citizens contribute useful information for the stakeholder deliberations, and stakeholders considered and integrated citizen input into their recommendations.
8. Citizens and stakeholders are satisfied with the process and believe their input will be considered by decision-makers.
9. Citizen and stakeholder input receives serious consideration by decision-makers and adds value to the input already being received from expert groups.

Lessons Learned

While the independent review and the award point to a successful public engagement process, some things could have been done better with the benefit of hindsight. The partners in the project would have liked to have had: a larger pool of public citizens involved from a broader region of this country; more time allotted for in-depth discussion with a more diverse group of experts from the local, state and federal sectors; more meeting time than six hours on a Saturday. It also takes time to prepare for these meetings and most of them occurred with a time span of less than 8 -12 weeks from initial contact with a community to the meeting itself. A three to four month time period for pre-planning and working in the community on recruitment to get the most desirable mix of people which represent the demographics of the local community would yield better and more consistent results. We learned that people do want to participate in major policy issues and value the government's willingness to listen.

The mother who asked the earlier question about what to do with children attending day care learned that day care centers will likely be closed for an extended period of time at time of a pandemic outbreak for fear that such a place will promote the disease rather than help children and others avoid contracting the pandemic virus. This mother and all involved were able to share their insights about what would work and what would not within their own region of the country. All such information was helpful to the CDC in creating the final Guidance on Community Control Measures which will be used throughout the US at time of a pandemic outbreak as well as for future pandemic planning efforts.

Doug Thompson and Don Greenstein are Senior Mediator/Facilitators at the Keystone Center. Their work involves public community engagement, facilitation and mediation of highly technical, environmental, and health related projects.

Thompson spent over twenty-five years with USEPA in various regional technical and management capacities, including chief of wetland protection and chief of water enforcement. As part of EPA's dispute resolution program he served as a mediator and facilitator for a number of environmental issues as well as working on assignment as a program associate to the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution in Tucson, Arizona during 1999.

Greenstein is a "reformed lawyer" after 15 years of Government service (Dept. of Justice, US Navy, US Postal Service) whose work has involved environmental, health, tribal, community, work place, inter personal as well as cross-cultural conflict resolution. He is trained as a critical incident stress manager (CISM) and has supported the EPA peer CISM team.

Don and Doug also asked that Network News credit Catherine Morris, Sr. Associate and Director of the Keystone Energy Practice Area, and Justin Kram, able intern and 2003 Brown University graduate, for their help in preparing this article.

Americans' Knowledge of Nanotechnology

National survey findings released on September 25, 2007 indicate that Americans' awareness of nanotechnology remains low. Popular awareness is nearly as small as the tiny nanoscale materials and nano-enabled devices and products now flowing onto the market from this rapidly progressing technology that experts believe will usher in a new industrial revolution.

The poll also finds that most Americans continue to prefer that government, not industry, oversee and manage risks associated with advances in new areas of science and technology like nanotech, even though public confidence in U.S. regulatory agencies overall is declining. The poll, a follow up to a similar poll conducted last year, surveyed 1,014 U.S. adults by telephone on August 27-28. It, as well as the prior poll, was commissioned by the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies [www.nanotechproject.org] at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and conducted by independent research firm Peter D. Hart Research.

Even with an estimated \$50 billion worth of nanotechnology manufactured goods on the global market last year, only 6 percent of Americans – or fewer than one in 16 – say they have “heard a lot” about nanotechnology, as compared with 10 percent in 2006. In 2007, 21 percent say they have “heard some” about nanotechnology, unchanged from the previous year. Similarly, as in 2006, about 70 percent of adults say they have heard “just a little” or “nothing at all.”

Women of all ages, older Americans, and individuals with less education and lower incomes are least likely to have heard about nanotechnology. “Even though the number of nanotechnology-enabled consumer products – from dietary supplements to skin products to electronic devices [www.nanotechproject.org/consumerproducts] – has more than doubled to over 500 products since last year, the ‘needle’ on public awareness of nanotechnology remains stuck at disappointingly low levels,” says David Rejeski, director of the Wilson Center’s Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies. “Efforts to inform the public have not kept pace with the growth of this new technology area. This increases the danger that the slightest bump – even a false alarm about safety or health – could undermine public confidence, engender consumer mistrust, and, as a result, damage the future of nanotechnology, before the most exciting applications are realized. If they do not effectively engage a broad swath of the public in steering the course of nanotechnology, government and industry risk squandering a tremendous opportunity.”

Specific polling questions examined opinions on the safety of our food system as well as the use of nanotechnology in food packaging and products. Over 60 percent of the public feels that the food supply has become less safe in recent years. Of the federal agencies most responsible for food safety, all earn similar public-confidence ratings: 57 percent to 59 percent of adults say they have at least a “fair amount” of confidence in the agencies’ ability to maximize benefits and minimize risks stemming from advances in science and technology.

Key findings specific to food and nanotechnology include:

- Only 7 percent of Americans say they would purchase food enhanced with nanotechnology, while slightly more (12%) say they would buy food-storage containers enhanced with nanotechnology.
- Substantial majorities – 62 percent in the case of food and 73 percent in the case of nanotechnology-enhanced food containers – say they need more information about health risks and benefits before deciding whether to purchase such products.
- Adults who have heard a lot about nanotechnology are almost three times more likely to use food storage products enhanced with nanotechnology (31% compared to 11%), and are two and a half times more likely to use foods enhanced with nanotechnology (15% compared to 6%).

Other key findings from the 2007 poll include:

- About half (51%) of the public are unwilling to make any judgment about the anticipated risks and benefits of nanotechnology, and another quarter of Americans think risks and

benefits will be about equal. Of the remainder, 18 percent say benefits will outweigh risks and 6 percent think risks will exceed benefits.

- Once provided with a brief description of the potential benefits and potential risks of nanotechnology, those who completely lack awareness of it are significantly more likely to shift to the opinion that the risks will outweigh benefits. Among the 42 percent of adults who had heard nothing at all about nanotechnology, the proportion who said risks will outweigh benefits increased 27 points, from 4 percent to 31 percent, after being read the statement about potential risks and benefits.
- Confidence in business dropped, falling five points since 2006. Forty-four (44) percent of Americans have a fair amount or a great deal of confidence in business to maximize benefits and minimize risks of new products and technologies they produce.

“As in previous polls, the results of this survey indicate that public wants more information about nanotechnology. Most Americans will be reluctant to use nano food and food-related products until they know enough to evaluate the merits of these products,” according to Rejeski.

From a news release of the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies (www.nanotechproject.org), an initiative launched by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and The Pew Charitable Trusts in 2005. The Project is dedicated to helping business, government and the public anticipate and manage possible health and environmental implications of nanotechnology.

Network News Staff

Pat Bonner

(202)566-2204

bonner.patricia@epa.gov



“Public Involvement brings the pieces together”