

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

A publication of the United States Environmental Protection Agency  
***EPA'S PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT NETWORK NEWS***



*"Public Involvement brings the pieces together"*

**Summer 2006**

Welcome! We are pleased to present the fourth issue of "Public Involvement Network News" – an electronic publication of EPA's National Center for Environmental Innovation, designed for public involvement practitioners within and outside EPA.

In this issue we are featuring several articles related to the work of EPA's Environmental Justice Program developed for *Network News* by EJ Staff at Headquarters and the Regional Offices.

We want *Network News* to help you carry out your vital work as effectively as possible, so please tell us what kinds of articles and information would make *Network News* valuable for you. We also want this to be a forum where practitioners can share their experience and knowledge with each other. Please send us your ideas on what you can share, or what you would like to learn from others – or better yet, just send a draft article to [bonner.patricia@epa.gov](mailto:bonner.patricia@epa.gov)

***In This Issue:***

- ◆ **Working Together to Achieve Results: EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model** - - Despite increased attention to environmental and human health issues in minority and low-income communities since the signing of Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," (Feb. 11, 1994), many communities continue to suffer disproportionately from the interrelated environmental, public health, economic, and social concerns endemic to the issue of environmental justice.
- ◆ **Partnership Strategies Used to Rebuild a Community** - - On January 6, 2005, a Norfolk Southern train hit parked rail cars outside the Avondale Mills complex in downtown Graniteville, South Carolina. Three chemicals were released: liquid chlorine, kaolin, and diesel fuel. One of the rail cars leaked an estimated 60 tons of chlorine that spread rapidly into the community. As a result, 9 people died, more than 500 people sought medical attention at area hospitals and physicians' offices, and approximately 5,000 individuals were evacuated from their homes for approximately 10 days.

- ◆ **Building Capacity in Communities** - - EPA efforts in many communities are intended to "build local capacity" to deal with environmental problems. Such "capacity building" efforts paid off in the urban Southern California communities last year. One Los Angeles neighborhood with 200 Latino and African-American families took advantage of an EPA Collaborative Problem-Solving grant to make home improvements that reduced their risk of lead poisoning.
- ◆ **EPA Launches Collaboration Practitioners Network** - - More than forty people attended the first meeting of EPA's Collaboration Practitioners Network February 21, 2006. This intra-agency community of practice will develop, examine and evaluate best practices, tools and services in the field. Meetings will be quarterly with information posted on an Intranet site.

### *What's New!*

- ◆  Want to liven up your public involvement activities? Check out the extensive Tools and Techniques Links on EPA's Public Involvement web page at <http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement>

### *Featured Upcoming Events*

#### **National Environmental Partnership Summit 2006**

[\[http://www.environmentalsummit.org\]](http://www.environmentalsummit.org)

The 2006 Summit, to be held May 8 -11 in Atlanta, will explore the theme of environmental stewardship. This meeting is for all who want to become better stewards of the environment: individuals or representatives of small, medium or large businesses or industries, local, state or federal government agencies, federal facilities, non-profits or community based organizations, and educational institutions.

#### **National Community Involvement Conference** - Register at

[\[http://www.epa.gov/ciconference\]](http://www.epa.gov/ciconference)

entitled "Something Good is Brewing: Achieving Environmental Results Through Community Involvement" will be held in June 27-30, 2006 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. FREE REGISTRATION for EPA Employees; \$130 for non-EPA attendees.

#### **Sustainability Now Workshop**

Certification Workshop for sustainability practitioners [\[http://www.sustainability-now.org\]](http://www.sustainability-now.org)  
April 17, 2006 Washington, DC

#### **PATH: Participatory Approaches in Science & Technology**

[\[http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/PATHconference/index.html\]](http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/PATHconference/index.html) June 4-7, 2006 Edinburgh, Scotland

#### **International Association of Facilitators "The Art & Mastery of Facilitation"**

[\[http://www.iaf-world.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3365\]](http://www.iaf-world.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3365) June 15-17, 2006, Baltimore, MD

**CIVICUS World Assembly "Acting Together for a Just World"**

[<http://www.civicassembly.org>] June 21-25, 2006 Glasgow, Scotland

**Association for Conflict Resolution Environment & Public Policy Section "New Directions in Public Policy Dispute Resolution"**

[<http://www.mediate.com/acrep/pg17.cfm>] June 28-30, 2006 MIT, Cambridge, MA  
The conference will offer participants the opportunity to network with each other while learning from top theorists and practitioners of Public Policy Dispute Resolution and Deliberative Democracy (democratic civic engagement). Keynote addresses and workshops will focus on the intersection of theory and practice in resolving public disputes as a means of deepening civic engagement, the role of practitioners in resolving intractable disputes around social and moral issues such as abortion and rebuilding the Gulf Coast, and work that goes on in other countries to resolve conflicts. The conference will also take a ground-breaking look at public dispute resolution as a business, leveraging financial and other data gathered from surveys of the top dispute resolution individuals and firms.

**International Society for the Systems Sciences "Complexity, Democracy & Sustainability"**

[<http://www.iss.org/conferences/sonoma2006/>]  
July 9-14, 2006, Sedona, CA

**National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation** [<http://www.thataway.org>]

August 4-7, 2006 San Francisco, CA

*Let's Talk...Questions, Tips and Stories*

This is your section of the newsletter. Do you need public involvement advice? Do you have questions about process design, evaluation or techniques? Do you have a great tip on process or technique you'd like to share with the PI Network? Do you have a success story or a lesson learned to share?

Send your contributions to [GroupStakeholders@EPA](mailto:GroupStakeholders@EPA) with the Subject line: For Network News. To be dropped from the mailing list, write to [bonner.patricia@epa.gov](mailto:bonner.patricia@epa.gov)

*Featured Articles***Working Together to Achieve Results: EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model**

Nicholas Targ,  
Associate Director for Environmental Justice Integration  
Office of Environmental Justice

Despite increased attention to environmental and human health issues in minority and low-income communities since the signing of Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," (Feb. 11, 1994), many communities continue to suffer disproportionately from the interrelated environmental, public health, economic, and social concerns endemic to the issue of environmental justice.

Due to the complexity of environmental justice issues, frequently no single stakeholder (e.g., government, communities, business, or industry) has the means or ability to address the situation. In addition, the affected community may lack the clout, organizational structure, and/or expertise to bring the necessary groups together to improve conditions. Therefore, environmental justice concerns tend to persist in the absence of a plan of action and coordinated efforts on the part of many.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designed the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-solving Model (CPS Model) and the Collaborative Problem-solving Cooperative Agreement Program (CPS Program) as vehicles for change—to help serve as a roadmap and catalyst for concerted, collaborative work to address these vexing and complex environmental and public health concerns.

### **Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-solving Model**

The CPS Model offers a flexible, but structured, process that community-based organizations and others can use to establish and maintain partnerships capable of producing meaningful results. Seven elements form the core of the CPS Model. These include the following:

1. Visioning and Strategic Goal-Setting;
2. Community Capacity-Building and Leadership Development;
3. Consensus Building and Dispute Resolution;
4. Development of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and Leveraging of Resources;
5. Constructive Engagement with Other Stakeholders;
6. Sound Management and Implementation; and
7. Evaluation.

Recognizing that the elements are interrelated, the model should be applied in a strategic, ongoing, and iterative manner. Collectively, the elements establish a system that can help communities work effectively and collaboratively with others in environmental justice situations, where relationships are sometime highly stressed.

### **Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-solving Cooperative Agreement Program**

EPA's Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) established the CPS Program in 2003 to assist community-based organizations develop and implement locally-based solutions to environmental and/or public health concerns in collaboration with others. Specifically, the CPS Program provides: (1) \$100,000 directly to each selected applicant; and (2) technical assistance in the use of the CPS Model.

The first round of 30 awards, which OEJ made in 2004, included a diverse group of community-based organizations that faced an equally diverse set of issues. Among others, the communities included:

- Residents and stakeholders in East Baltimore, Maryland, working together on urban redevelopment issues;

- Native Hawaiians seeking to restore culturally important lands that had become contaminated;
- Low-income residents in Mebane, North Carolina, seeking improved drinking water, sewage, and drainage services.

However different the projects may be, a defining feature of each community-based organization is the desire to collaborate with others to improve local environmental and/or public health conditions.

**Conclusion:**

Environmental justice issues can be highly resistant to change without a plan of action and concerted, collaborative efforts. Working together, however, communities and others can identify assets and opportunities and produce results.

*The next round of CPS Cooperative Agreements will be announced in Summer 2006. For more information, please call OEJ's 24-hour hotline (1-800-962-6215) or visit: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-cps-grants.html> .*

**Partnership Strategies Used to Rebuild a Community**

Karen Sprayberry, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

In the wee hours of January 6, 2005, a Norfolk Southern train hit parked rail cars outside the Avondale Mills complex in downtown Graniteville, South Carolina. Three chemicals were released: liquid chlorine, kaolin, and diesel fuel. One of the rail cars leaked an estimated 60 tons of chlorine that spread rapidly into the community. As a result, 9 people died, more than 500 people sought medical attention at area hospitals and physicians' offices, and approximately 5,000 individuals were evacuated from their homes for approximately 10 days. Within those 10 days, state and federal government emergency response staff, along with railroad staff, would work to contain and address the spills, monitor the air, and ensure that when those residents returned to their homes, they would be safe. When it was time to return to their homes, community involvement staff would be available to assist with this. Approximately 875 facilities (mostly homes) received air monitoring before citizens were allowed to reenter. It was an intense time for everyone involved.

After the initial emergency response, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) staff was contacted by a former board member asking us to come and meet with her and other community leaders to address some of the environmental and health concerns they and others in the community had. Staff initially met with this group on February 16, 2005. During the initial meetings, DHEC staff listened to their concerns. Their concerns not only dealt with environmental and health concerns, but quality of life concerns as well ... and they wondered if they trusted what DHEC said in response to them.

The group decided they would call themselves the Graniteville Community Coalition; DHEC staff would facilitate the meetings, and provide technical/administrative support. The initial group consisted of local pastors, a school principal, a representative of the



local water company, and other interested parties. DHEC asked for the GCC's assistance with holding a series of meeting where the appropriate individuals would come to address their concerns. The GCC agreed to help promote and coordinate the meetings; a partnership was formed. Three public meetings were held within one-week. The same questions/answers that members of the GCC asked were put into a handout and were discussed during these meetings. It was important to DHEC that as many people be given an opportunity to hear the same message ... the food they eat, the water they drink, and the air they breath is all safe Although not all the concerns were addressed, an initial step had been taken to meet with the public and give them an opportunity to express themselves.

A few weeks after those meetings, the GCC held a debriefing meeting. At the next meeting, the GCC worked on their mission statement, value statement, and their goals. Another public meeting was held by DHEC, and again the GCC assisted with promoting and coordinating the meeting. The GCC saw that most concerns were being addressed.

However, one concern that was not being addressed was the mental health aspect. Being from a small town, where people had great pride, a lot of those individuals were not interested in going to a "mental health" facility to discuss their deepest fears. The GCC partnered with another group in the community to coordinate a picnic, where the University of South Carolina's Social Work Department (USC) was brought in to assist. This picnic provided a fun, family atmosphere while allowing all attendees to tell their stories to be published in a book prepared by USC; thereby giving trained staff an opportunity to offer follow-up to those in need. The event was a huge success; DHEC staff began to see the GCC take ownership of their events. As requested during the public meetings, DHEC set-up and maintained a health registry and held a health evaluation clinic for those most impacted.

In the fall, DHEC staff assisted the GCC with submitting an application for an EPA Environmental Justice Small Grant. The GCC received the grant. They will use the money to conduct three workshops on the following topics: 1) Environmental Concerns that Pertain to Chlorine; 2) Health Concerns that Pertain to Chlorine; and, 3) Transporting Toxic Chemicals/Emergency Response. On the 1-year anniversary of the train wreck, one of the members of the GCC coordinated a candlelight vigil and a ceremony that many of the citizens attended. A special song was written to commemorate that day.

Throughout and still to this day, members of the GCC strive to address issues that pertain to race, class, and basic distrust of each other, state government, and the train company. Although the health and environmental departments are housed together, technically they work separately. However, during this exercise the two came together to work as one. This has been a challenge at times, but we have worked together to resolve the discrepancy. DHEC staff has worked hard to build capacity, develop a relationship, and to maintain the partnership that was formed with these local leaders. DHEC staff has used the golden rule of risk communication – provide the right message, at the right time, to the right people. In a time when everything seems to be going wrong, this partnership seems to still be going right.

This case study will be discussed at the 2006 EPA Community Involvement Conference & Training. To learn more about our activities, please come to this session, or e-mail Karen Sprayberry at [spraybkj@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:spraybkj@dhec.sc.gov).

## Building Capacity in Communities

Karen Henry, US EPA Region 9

"An ancient Chinese proverb says, "If you give a man a fish, you have eased his hunger for a day,  
but if you teach him how to fish, you have eased his hunger for a lifetime."

San Diego, California is composed of a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial sites. During and after World War II, the San Diego area experienced remarkable development due to rapid population growth and a huge investment in the military and in industrial complexes. This unexpected growth and development did not allow for proper residential planning for the development of communities. So, residential areas and industrial zones were integrated. As a result, some areas exhibit an unhealthy mixture of homes, schools, and environmentally hazardous facilities. In the communities of Barrio Logan and Pacoima, the residents live in close proximity to chemical intensive industries which produce, store, and emit toxic chemicals and waste into the neighborhood. Although these industries produce some of the largest quantities of hazardous waste in the city of San Diego, the community just recently, within the last twenty years, learned about the health-risk associated with living there.

Once informed the community decided they wanted to "learn to fish rather than be given one fish". They came together and organized a group to address the many environmental health risks facing their community. With EPA's assistance, Barrio Logan and Pacoima developed the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) based on efforts intended to "build local capacity" to deal with environmental problems. These "capacity building" efforts paid off in Pacoima and Barrio Logan last year.

In Pacoima, a neighborhood of Los Angeles, 200 Latino and African-American families took advantage of an EPA Collaborative Problem-Solving grant to make home improvements that reduced their risk of lead poisoning. The community group involved, Pacoima Beautiful, also surveyed local physicians and found that only 28% of low-income children were being tested for blood lead levels because physicians mistakenly thought there was no danger. The group persuaded 25 doctors to get training on lead poisoning prevention and screening.

In Barrio Logan, the community along with EPA, California-EPA, and the Environmental Health Coalition began a pilot project collaborative in 2000, to address the concerns of the community regarding the health effects of large commercial trucks parked on neighborhood streets. These big rigs not only posed a threat to the children crossing the streets walking back and forth to school but they would also lay idle for hours, pumping carcinogenic diesel exhaust into the air. The Collaborative worked with city government staff to develop a simple but effective way to virtually eliminate truck idling: they changed street parking to diagonal spaces too small for the big rigs, posted more "No Parking" and "No Idling" signs, and worked with traffic enforcement officers to ensure that the new rules were enforced. Trucks stopped parking in the residential area, allowing residents to breathe easier. Further, they posted slow down and speed limit signs and installed speed bumps near the schools to help reduce the speed of the trucks traveling through the neighborhood near the school crossing routes. For more information on this project, contact Karen Henry at 415-972-3844 or



[henry.karen@epa.gov](mailto:henry.karen@epa.gov) or go to [www.epa.gov/region9/features/barriologan/index](http://www.epa.gov/region9/features/barriologan/index) or you may also go to [www.epa.gov/evaluate/barriologan.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/barriologan.pdf).

## **EPA Launches Collaboration Practitioners Network**

Leanne Nurse, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation

The Network, we hope, will grow to be a Community of Practice to develop, evaluate best practices, tools and services.

More than forty people attended the first meeting of EPA's Collaboration Practitioners Network February 21, 2006. This intra-agency community of practice will develop, examine and evaluate best practices, tools and services in the field. Meetings will be quarterly with information posted on an Intranet site.

During EPA's 35 years, the number of people doing different types of collaborative practices has increased significantly. Most of EPA's major laws now require some type of public involvement and collaborative work beyond standard "notice and comment."

The Collaboration Practitioners Network will serve as a learning hub for anyone interested in collaborative methods to improve environmental protection. Some topics network members say they want to learn more about include:

- Definitions - shared terms of reference across different applications
- Evaluation - more ways to show that collaboration works
- Training - more staff and managers need to understand the strategic case for collaborating with other parties

There are plans to include other EPA practitioner networks (voluntary programs, environmental justice and community relations) in meetings which focus on specialized topics of mutual interest. The next CPN meeting is set for early May 2006. Contact: Leanne Nurse, 202-566-2207.

### *Public Involvement Staff*

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