EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency New England

June 2005

Environmental News in New England

The Local Landscape

Dear Municipal Leader:

Municipal officials are on the front line when it comes to public health and environmental protections. To aid you in your efforts, we are pleased to introduce the first edition of our local newsletter to provide you with timely and topical information on important environmental and public health issues. It includes program opportunities, funding sources and success stories at the local level. We hope that you find this information useful.

Sincerely,
Robert W. Varney
EPA Regional Administrator

INSIDE

Save Money *and* Energy: Energy Star Program for Local Governments

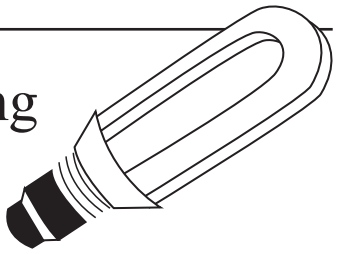
As a municipal official, you probably know that energy is one of your largest costs–typically second after personnel–and prices are rising. Schools alone spend more than $6 billion per year on energy—more than on computers and textbooks combined.

What you may not realize is how much you can save by managing your energy use. Inefficient schools use more than three times the energy of efficient ones. On average, 30 percent of energy used in government buildings is wasted. Surprisingly, numerous studies indicate that good management—not expensive technology—is the most important factor in top energy performance.

ENERGY STAR® offers free tools, information, and resources to help municipal and school officials become better energy managers. Measuring your energy performance, changing management practices, implementing cost-effective upgrades, and tracking results will save your community money while helping the environment.

So what are you waiting for? Everything you need to get started is at : **www.energystar.gov**

Tips for Properly Disposing of Fluorescent Lamps



Using fluorescent lamps makes business and environmental sense because they consume one quarter as much electricity as incandescent lighting. At the same time, spent and broken fluorescent lamps and high intensity discharge (HID) lights need to be handled very carefully because they contain mercury. Most cannot be discarded in the trash in any of the New England states. When lamps and other products containing mercury are placed in the trash, the mercury finds its way into our air, water and soil.

Mercury is a potent neurotoxin; it can impact cognitive thinking,

continued on back cover

From Brownfield to Brightfield:
A Brockton, Massachusetts Success Story

The City of Brockton, Massachusetts is pursuing an intriguing project to transform an abandoned parcel in the city into a money-generating solar facility. The facility will be the largest of its kind in New England. Although construction is still at least a year away, the city's plan is to cover 10 acres of city land with solar panels that could power about 300 homes.

EPA provided Brockton with a $10,000 grant which will be used to help the city develop a marketing strategy for selling the green tags—Renewable Energy Certificates—so that necessary construction financing can be secured. The one-megawatt project also received a $79,500 grant from the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust to complete marketing, financing and other predevelopment activities for the project. A previous planning grant of $30,000 was provided by US Department of Energy. Find more at:**www.epa.gov/NE/ra/gb/archives/2003/20030716.html**

Revitalizing Your Community Through Brownfields Redevelopment

Land & Community Revitalization
BROWNFIELDS

Contaminated lands can rob a community of its economic potential. Thousands of New England properties are abandoned because owners or developers fear environmental contamination and the associated liability. Called Brownfields, these properties are often unused while development consumes valuable open space. Smart investments lead to smart growth decisions. New partnerships are emerging among government agencies and private investors to restore and reuse these parcels.

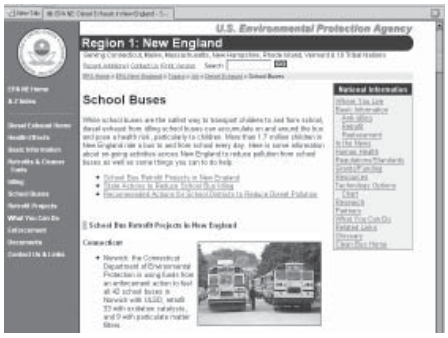
EPA provides funding and technical assistance to local, tribal and state governments, to assess, safely clean, and sustainably reuse brownfields. Additionally, EPA provides funding for communities to develop job training programs and train local residents in hazardous waste site cleanup Programs address the environmental, health, and economical concerns associated with brownfields.

Since 1994, the New England region has received $91 million for work in dozens of communities in the six New England states: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Over $420 million in private investments has been leveraged. Almost 550 students have graduated from the nine Brownfields Job Training Programs, with many finding successful jobs in the environmental technology fields or going on to continuing educations.

Visit **www.epa.gov/ne/brownfields** for additional stories and information on how EPA's Brownfields Program is rebuilding New England, community-by-community, or contact: Carol Tucker, Chief of the Brownfields Section (617) 918-1221

Clean School Buses: The City of Boston is a National Leader

With funds from supplemental environmental projects resulting from two separate enforcement actions, Boston school buses are being retrofitted with advanced pollution controls and being fueled ultra low-polluting diesel fuel. The project will benefit more than 28,000 school children who ride the buses every day and help improve air quality in the surrounding community. Upon being completed in 2005, Boston will be the first major city in the country to have retrofitted its entire school bus fleet.



For more information visit: **www.epa.gov/NE/eco/diesel/school_buses.html**

EPA Recognizes Local Environmental Leaders

Each year EPA's England Office recognizes governmental entities, individuals, non profits groups, and businesses for outstanding contributions on behalf of New England's environment. Join us in applauding the work of two recent municipal award winners.

Managing Health, Environmental and Safety Issues: A South Portland School Success Story

Like many schools in New England, Memorial Middle School faces a wide range of environmental, health and safety issues. The South Portland experience began with a vision of bringing together educators, health professionals and environmental regulators to pilot a comprehensive approach to managing environmental, health and safety issues by creating an Environmental Management System (EMS). South Portland's EMS team helped the school develop a basic framework, and, in partnership with National Institution for Occupational Safety and Health, applied it to an indoor air quality problem at the school. School personnel identified the source of a mold problem, which was the cause of staff complaints, and developed a process to resolve the problem. Memorial Middle School has shared its experiences internally through training meetings and newsletters to parents, and externally, through participation in the American Lung Association's Safe and Healthy Schools network, at a regional symposium, and on the schools' web site. In the end, the team found that the documentation created through developing an EMS is not as important as the journey that was taken to change the way the school manages environmental concerns. Today, there is interest in expanding this approach to the entire school system.

Robert Beaudoin
Lexington, Mass. ,
Superintendent of Environmental Services

Robert Beaudoin, Superintendent of Environmental Services for Lexington, oversees curbside waste and recycling in the town. Although Robert was hired to run the Pay as You Throw program, this program was tossed out by a court that decided Lexington had violated a town bylaw. Despite this challenge, Robert had to continue to reduce trash while increasing recycling rates. Robert managed to do this through a number of methods, including: public recycling receptacles; recycling flyers and hazardous waste postcards sent to homes; free recycling boxes to civic organizations; complementary kitchen scrap composting buckets; and a public fluorescent bulb recovery program. His most daunting challenge was developing a composting program that maximized the breakdown of yard waste and made the program self sufficient. He negotiated with another town to deliver yard waste to this facility, then marketed compost products to local landscape companies. In the past year, Robert has improved the environmental health of the town, earning him additional recognition from the town DPW and the local Chamber of Commerce.

For more information on EPA's Environmental merit Awards Program, visit: **www.epa.gov/region1/ra/ema/index.html**

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Making Environmental Issues a Priority at your DPW

In 2001, EPA partnered with the New England Chapter of the American Public Works Association to communicate our shared belief that environmental issues should be a priority at municipal Departments of Public Works (DPW).

To that end, EPA New England sent letters to more than 1000 municipalities in New England advising them that public agencies are responsible for complying with the same environmental standards as private companies, and offering assistance in complying with those standards. Municipalities were invited to use EPA's Audit Policy to identify environmental violations, disclose those violations to EPA and voluntarily correct them. If specific conditions were met, the policy allowed for reductions of up to 100% for penalties that might otherwise be assessed through an EPA enforcement action. Facilities joining the DPW Audit Initiative became a low inspection priority for a year, meaning they were unlikely to be inspected unless EPA received a complaint or became aware of a condition that potentially threatened human health or the environment.

Three hundred and twenty-two (322) DPW's participated in the Audit Initiative, audited their facilities and discovered and disclosed thousands of violations covering a wide range of environmental requirements. The most frequently disclosed violations involved hazardous waste regulations, including: failure to make waste determinations; unlabeled or open containers of hazardous waste; improper storage and disposal of hazardous wastes; failure to provide training to personnel who handle hazardous wastes; and, inadequate contingency/emergency plans.

Municipalities were invited to use EPA's Audit Policy to identify environmental violations, disclose those violations to EPA and voluntarily correct them.

EPA's Audit Policy is available at: **www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/auditing/auditpolicy.htm**

EPA New England's audit initiative is helping municipalities comply with their environmental responsibilities.

Managing Environmental Concerns in Your School

If you're lucky, none of the schools in your city or town have been in the news for chemical management problems, drinking water contamination, poor indoor air quality, pesticide issues, mismanagement of asbestos, or other environmental problems. Mismanaging school environments can lead to health problems, legal liabilities, injuries, environmental contamination, and embarrassing press for a community.

EPA New England wants to help schools address their environmental responsibilities. This means developing a plan to evaluate conditions, set priorities, and identify resources to correct what's wrong. In Massachusetts and Maine we've pilot tested the use of Environmental Management Systems in schools. For information about these projects, visit: **www.epa.gov/ne/assistance/ems/projects.html**

EPA provides internet support to schools at: **www.epa.gov/schools**. A new draft tool, "the Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool," may be accessed at this website. Massachusetts and Maine have generated comprehensive environmental checklists for schools that can be found at: **www.mass.gov/dph/beha/iaq/schools/schools.htm** and **www.maine.gov/education/const/FMThomepage.htm**

Clean New England Beaches: 'It's A Shore Thing!"

Thanks to the Federal Beach Act, EPA has funded nearly $5 million to help build state beach programs and fund water quality testing at coastal beaches. In 2002, EPA launched its Clean New England Beach Initiative, which focuses on improving public health, education and water quality at New England beaches.

As part of this initiative, Flagship beaches have been designated in each state to highlight federal, state, and local efforts to reduce beach closures and track progress. Earlier this year, EPA and NEIWPCC hosted two tremendously popular workshops entitled "How to reduce and prevent beach closures": Strategies for detection, correction and financing. Presentation information and success stories from these workshops are available at: **www.neiwpcc.org/beachworkshop**

Visit **www.epa.gov/ne/eco/beaches** for more info on our beach initiative. This year EPA NE will be awarding $1.1 million to five coastal states—and as in years past we encourage municipalities to work with us to enhance their coastal beaches.

EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee

By Bruce Tobey, Former Mayor of Gloucester, Massachusetts

EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee is an advisory panel chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Its goal is to provide the citizens of the Nation with more efficient and effective environmental protection by strengthening the partnership between local government and EPA.

Representing a broad array of perspectives, LGAC's membership comes from every EPA region. Some are present and past elected and appointed local officials, while others come from state and county government, labor and business, and environmental groups. Together with Whitney Hatch, Regional Director for the Trust for Public Land, I represent our region on LGAC.

Our focus in the past year has been to provide practical advice to EPA when its work and the interests of local government intersect, including:

- ***The Indicators Initiative**, which will redefine how environmental compliance is measured by looking to pragmatic outcomes relevant to the environment and human health;*
- ***The Small Local Governments Compliance Assistance Policy**, which aims to promote environmental compliance through collaborative outreach when local resources are scarce.*
- ***Water Quality Standards and Financing**, with a special focus on CSO issues and the infrastructure financing gap; and*
- ***Homeland Security Strategic Planning**, as the agency works to blend the need to enhance the nation's safety with its charge to protect our environment.*

Bruce Tobey, the Director of Business Development for Aquarion Services Company and the former Mayor of Gloucester, MA, may be reached at btobey@aquarion.com and Whitney Hatch may be reached at whitney.hatch@tpl.org

"In The News"

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In The News **www.epa.gov/ne/inthenews/subscribe.html**

Greenbytes **www.epa.gov/ne/ra/gb/subscribe.html**

Fluorescent Lamps *cont.*

memory, attention, language, and fine motor and visual spatial skills. Mercury contamination is so widespread that more than 40 states have issued advisories warning pregnant women and young children not to eat certain fish, including all the states in the Northeast.

All mercury-containing lamps, regardless of the amount of mercury, should be handled as a hazardous ("universal") waste and stored carefully to avoid breakage. To get more information about specific state regulations and more information on mercury-containing lamps visit: **www.newmoa.org/Newmoa/htdocs/prevention/mercury/lamprecycle/#stateregs**

For more information about **mercury www.epa.gov/mercury**

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