(cover sheet)

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National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

October 21, 2008

NEJAC Members Present:

Richard Moore, Chair

Chuck Barlow
Sue Briggum
Jolene M. Catron
William Harper
Christian Holmes
J. Langdon Marsh
Gregory Melanson
Paul Mohai
Shankar Prasad
John Ridgway
John Rosenthall
Patricia E. Salkin
Donele Wilkins
Omega R. Wilson

EPA Members Present:

Charles Lee, Director, EPA Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)
Granta Y. Nakayama, Assistant Administrator, EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance (OECA)
Victoria Robinson, Designated Federal Officer

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

I N D E X

October 21, 2008

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I N D E X (Continued)

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KEYNOTE: "---" denotes inaudible in the transcript

"*" denotes word was phonetically spelled

M O R N I N G S E S S I O N

(11:00 a.m.)

Agenda Overview

by Charles Lee

MR. LEE: As you know, this afternoon, we are going to have a Best Practices Forum, which will feature the winners of the 2008 Environmental Justice Achievement Awards. That session is hopefully a dialogue around what they have learned, what they have accomplished, the kind of lessons that we can share with others in order that more of these really good works can be done.

That session will be facilitated by Kent Benjamin. Tomorrow morning we are going to have a dialogue with Granta Nakayama, our assistant administrator. And I guess it is noteworthy that this is a pretty memorable moment for us as far as the interactions between the NEJAC and Granta. This is going to be Granta's last meeting with the NEJAC and I am sure that there a lot of things he wants to share with you as well as things you want to share with him.

So that is tomorrow morning. Some of the major items of business are the report and discussion of the Goods Movement workgroup, and that report is nearing completion so that looks to be a very, very important discussion. It is a very important report. It has a lot of recommendations that have great significance moving into the future. And Shankar Prasad, who is one of the co-chairs of that

workgroup, is going to present the workgroup's update and have a discussion about some of the recommendations.

We are going to have a number of panels and dialogues around some of the important emerging issues for the environmental justice program at EPA, one of which is the panel tomorrow afternoon around the disproportionate impacts of climate change. We know that this is an issue that is really fast -- is going to be a critical one going into the future.

So we want to give you some background in terms of some of the evidence and the thinking around the -- perhaps one of the issues, one of the areas where we can really make a difference going forward, which has to do with the avoidance of unintentional but disproportionate impacts.

We are also going to have a discussion around an effort that has begun, spurred in large measure under Granta's leadership to make environmental justice analysis and the program upon which it is built a substantive program. That has to do with a set of factors for doing disproportionate impact analysis, how to identify and assess environmental justice issues.

That will take place on Thursday. I guess, overall, going into this meeting, a major kind of item to kind of take note of is we worked hard, you and the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice staff, Granta, Catherine and others have worked hard to revitalize the NEJAC, and I think it could be said we are well on our way to doing so.

As you know, we now have two meetings a year, which I think is the minimum for a functioning advisory board. So before I turn it over to Granta I just want to kind of recognize a few people. One, of course, is Russ Wright, deputy regional administrator from Region 4, and thank Russ and Region 4 for hosting this meeting.

I did not say this this morning, but the one reason why we are having this meeting in Region 4 is that six of the 12 EJ Achievement Award winners are from Region 4, so I think that is really a credit to their work down here.

Want to thank Bob Varney, the regional administrator from Region 1, for taking time to be here. You know -- if you don't know some of the history behind environmental justice, I would just want to share with you Bob has been a real champion around environmental justice in his position as the regional administrator in Region 1 in New England.

He is a former member of the NEJAC and served on the enforcement subcommittee. He was the commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Protection in 1994 when the first state environmental justice policy was promulgated under Bob's leadership.

Then I want to make sure to thank Granta and Catherine for their ongoing and continuous support of environmental justice as a national program manager for environmental justice. Without their support, among the top

echelons of the EPA leadership, we would not be anywhere close to where we are today.

Lastly, before I turn it over to Richard, I just want to announce that this is the last time that I will be performing the duty of convening the NEJAC meeting. And that is not because I am leaving or anything like that.

(Laughter)

It is because it is time, I think, that we recognize the many years of hard work by the office's -- NEJAC national program manager Victoria Robinson and promote her to the position of Designated Federal Officer for the Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

(Applause)

It took us -- I really had to work hard to get her to sit up front, but finally, I found something that got her to sit up front of this table. So with that I want to turn it over to Richard to chair the meeting.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

by Richard Moore

MR. MOORE: Good morning.

(Chorus of Good Morning)

MR. MOORE: It is always great to be here with sisters and brothers and friends from Atlanta and throughout

the southeast that have joined us over the last several days. Today for the ceremonies this morning on the awards and I just want to, on behalf of the NEJAC council, congratulate all of you for the awards that were presented this morning.

You know that you have done a tremendous job throughout these years in working in and working with environmental justice communities, and you are to be commended for the work and the dedication that you all and your staffs and members have done throughout these years.

Before we do the introductions to the council members, I had some thoughts I just wanted to share with you if I may. I was thinking as I was traveling here for this meeting about the many, many accomplishments that this council has made throughout this period of time. But also about the tremendous amount of work that the NEJAC council has made throughout these last many years.

We are here to discuss very serious business and that is the business of environmental justice, environmental injustice, and the plight of many of our communities, not only here in the Southeast but throughout this country. And, quite frankly, to a large extent throughout the world. When I was asked -- I had several days in the last several weeks to think about many things in my life and the lives of the others that we have worked together throughout this time period, and I just want to say to you in the most sincere way that this is a tremendously committed council.

It has been an honor to work with you as council members. It has been an honor to work with Catherine and to work with Granta and Charles and others in the Office of Environmental Justice but I think it is also important just for a minute for us to think about what brings us to this meeting.

I was reflecting on the fact that several years ago in Dallas, Texas, community, an African American community that had -- that was cited in that community, Latino and African American community, with a lead smelter, and even some of the discussions we were having yesterday that much of what they did in that smelter was the crushing of batteries and so on and not only the impact that the community was thrust upon but much of the crushing of those casings, those battery casings, also were distributed around the community for filler in driveways and under the homes and so on.

So the property was not only poisoned but many of those members and residents in that community were exposed to lead contamination. And in Texarkana, Texas, and many remember sister Pasty Oliver and the work that took place in Texarkana, Texas, where there was a field, a community was built on top of where they did creosote, and then after that this community was located there and then all of a sudden the trees started dying and the dogs started being born, pups with two legs and three legs and disformed and so on.

And we are here to discuss the very important

business of our communities. In California where a community was built on top of a fertilizer dump, and again we had the children born without arms in some cases and without legs and so on, and the impact on many of the women in those communities in New Mexico where we have a fertilizer plant in southern New Mexico that has been responsible for the poisoning for over the last 15 or 25 years of many of the residents in that community.

And we could go on and on and on, to Savannah and throughout the Southeast and throughout the Southwest and throughout the Northeast and throughout the Midwest and so on with the kinds of examples that really actually bring us to this table today.

So I want us, as we continue this meeting, sisters and brothers, and to think about not only the challenges that we have but the successes and the victories that we have gained throughout these periods of time. And so I want to just for a minute ask, before we do introductions, if we could -- you know you learn a lot sometimes when you spend time by yourself and you spend time with others that are new acquaintances that you just recently met and many friends and relatives and so on.

And I just want to ask us if we can, for just a moment of silence for those that are families and so on that have made it possible for us to be here together to take care of this very important business today.

For those that are here with us in spirit and are

unable to be here with us today, so before we do introductions to the advisory council, if I could, please ask for a moment of silence in memory of not only our family members but our members of our organizations, our staffs and others that have made major contributions to not only environmental justice but social justice across the board.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

MR. MOORE: Again, now we are preparing to begin this NEJAC meeting. Charles has run us through the agenda and so now we will begin with the introductions of the council members. Please, if we could -- Sue, if you could jump --- there with us.

MS. ROBINSON: Just real quickly want to make sure you all know how to operate these microphones. They are not like our typical ones. When you want to speak just momentarily, pull it toward you and hold the lever. If you are going to speak and give a speech, push it forward and it will stay on. Okay?

MR. MOORE: And please remember to cut it off when you finish.

(Committee introductions)

MR. MOORE: I think we are going to hold the introductions from here because we have several speakers and they will introduce themselves as they begin to speak. I think we are going to begin with Catherine McCabe, the deputy assistant administrator for the EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. Welcome, Catherine.

I should say just for those of you who haven't had the opportunity to work with and know Catherine, she has been a tremendous, tremendous staff person overseeing much of the work of the Office of Environmental Justice. Comes out of the Department of Justice with several years of experience, and welcome to the meeting.

Presentation

by Catherine R. McCabe

MS. McCABE: Thank you very much, Richard. I have actually had the honor to be Granta Nakayama's deputy for the last three years and I want to tell you it has been one of the greatest honors and privileges of my professional career.

OECA, as we call it for short, the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, is one of EPA's, in fact, is EPA's largest program office. There are 3,400 employees in this office that work not only in EPA headquarters but throughout all of the regional offices with which many of you, I am sure, are more familiar.

Our biggest job, of course, as our name implies, is enforcement and I do want to assure you no matter what you have read in the papers lately to the contrary, that enforcement at EPA is alive and well and we are very proud of our record, particularly proud of what we have accomplished this year because we have record-breaking results.

Never before in EPA's history have we accomplished

this much in the enforcement program. Over three billion pounds of pollutants, per year, going into the future will be taken out of our air and water and land as a result of the enforcement actions that EPA took this year.

Pollutant reductions, the pounds of pollutants, of course, are our most important result, but I will also share with you that the investment is also a record-breaking number of over $11 billion that companies have agreed to invest in installing pollution controls to accomplish those reductions.

So this shatters all the records that we have every had in the history of this program before, and I want to congratulate again Granta Nakayama, who has been an incredible leader for us. There are many, many other people, 3,400 of them to be precise, that worked hard to bring these results to the American public but Granta takes great credit as our leader.

Pollutant reduction, of course, is our most important measure because the pollutant reductions are, after all, what bring us the healthier communities, healthier children, all the things we are really trying to accomplish through our environmental enforcement work.

And we are working hard, and Charles will be talking more about that as the program goes on, to learn how to measure the results that we get in the enforcement program and in the environmental justice program in what they actually really mean in terms of people's health.

So when they pass an air rule, for example, recently, in the past week, I think it was, Steve Johnson made the decision to issue a regulation that will require the Lead NAAQS to be lowered to very significant levels, and when they make a decision like that at EPA, there are a lot of scientists and statisticians and economists who do a lot of hard work to figure out what is that really going to mean in terms of the health impact on our citizens.

And they promise us miraculous results in terms of lives protected and lives improved, but you don't get those results without enforcement. And you don't get those results for everybody without paying attention to environmental justice.

So we are proud to host the Office of Environmental Justice in OECA. It is not the only place in the agency that it could be but we are very happy that OEJ came to us and is part of our program. And we are really proud of our accomplishments in revitalizing the Environmental Justice Program at EPA in the last three years, again under Granta's leadership.

It is most evident probably to all of you in seeing the appointment of Charles Lee, who is not only a long time well-respected EPA employee but before that a widely respected and well known to all of you community activist. And Charles has brought in and is bringing in an incredibly strong team to support him in the EJ office and, Victoria, I want to congratulate you on your

appointment as the new coordinator for the NEJAC because it is a whole team behind Charles that makes this work.

I want to just take a minute to tell you a few other things that we are doing at EPA to make environmental justice not only part of how OECA does business but how the agency in its whole does business. We are revitalizing the -- what's called the EJ Steering Committee, and that is a group of the top career leaders for the agency from the air program, the water program the waste program and other EPA offices as well as the EPA regions.

It is the top career people who are focusing again with renewed energy on what they can do to promote environmental justice in the agency. Each one of the major programs -- again, air, water, waste are the ones that you know the best but there is pesticides and many others -- issue every year something called the National Program Manager's Guidance, and this is kind of our operations manual for the year about how we will run our programs.

This year every one of those guidances has in it for each of the programs -- air and water and waste and pesticides -- specific priorities for environmental justice that are to be accomplished not only by the headquarters program offices but by the regions during the year.

And the regions and the offices, in addition, have each come up with a specific blueprint that are called EJ Action Plans where they get it down to the concrete of the specific activities that they will undertake to achieve

specific results for environmental justice during the year.

Of course, one of the most important places that EPA needs to think about environmental justice is when we are issuing new regulations. Now, this is not OECA's job. We are the enforcement end of the agency. We don't very often do rule makings ourselves.

But we do have a seat at the table to bring the enforcement perspective when regulations are being developed to make sure that they will be enforceable, and we have fought for and gotten the right to have the Office of Environmental Justice now as a separate stakeholder at that table so the OEJ folks will be there in the rule-making workgroups that are the ones that design, develop and give birth to our regulations.

As we go forward in EPA this is going to be a really, really important role for the Office of Environmental Justice.

And finally you will hear more about this as we go on too, our development of more tools that are quantitative to try to actually measure disproportionate impacts and measure the results that all of EPA's programs can and do achieve for environmental justice.

You have heard about and will hear more about EJSEAT and other screening tools that people are developing, and we are strong supporters of developing these quantitative tools. It is not only the way EPA does business, it is the way the federal government does

business. If you want to be taken seriously you need to have numbers to show the impact you are making on the world.

It is not the world's easiest job. I am sure there will be a lot of healthy discussion here about how we go about doing that but it is a very important part of our work in the coming years.

So we are here today and this week to hear your ideas for what more we can do. I am sure one of the things that is on your mind, as I know it is on our minds, is the political transition that is coming up.

Very shortly -- I am told November 5th -- we will have a parachute team from the new administration team landing at EPA and ready to roll with their new ideas. We don't know which team it will be yet but we are working hard to get ready for whatever that team is, and it doesn't matter to us what that team is. Our message will be the same.

We are strong supporters of environmental justice. It breaks my heart that January 20th will be the last day that Granta Nakayama is my boss but I pledge to him and I pledge to you that I will go forward and carry forward his message and his support for the work of the environmental justice community and the Office of Environmental Justice, and I ask for your support as well. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. MOORE: Thank you for those words, Catherine. Now, I want to introduce Russell Wright Jr., the acting

deputy regional administrator for the EPA Region 4 here in Atlanta. Russ?

Remarks

by Russell L. Wright Jr.

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks, Richard. Good morning, again. Welcome to Hotlanta. Of course, just for this meeting we present you with a great fall morning by special request from Granta.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Region 4, the home of our 8 Southeastern states. Of course, I cannot talk about the Southeastern states with a representative in the house here. Charles Lee mentioned Bob Varney. Bob, thanks for joining us. Bob, for many of you, represents what is known as the New England states.

But to Granta and to Catherine, Charles and all of you headquarters representatives, thanks for giving us the opportunity to host this very important meeting. To our Region 4 staff, Cynthia introduced your group so this group can basically see your reps just in case they need some help here while in Atlanta.

MS. PEURIFOY: I am here.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, they left it all on you. You are it. But seriously, as you meet for the next couple of days, we would like to ask you to make sure that all of your needs are met, and I think Cynthia will either find a solution to your problem and an answer to your question or otherwise we will lean on the Ritz Carlton host, who is

very, very courteous about helping you find your way around the city.

I would like to say again congratulations to all of the award winners. Charles mentioned, and I would like to reiterate, I would like to give a great Hoo-ah to the six winners of Region 4. Congratulations. I will not go through and cite all of your accomplishments but I would like to call your names again for those of you who missed the awards celebration.

I am also excited that, as part of this meeting, you will have the opportunity to share your best practices and to offer and enhance the thoughts and to provide additional information on how you have accomplished the great things that led to your accomplishments today.

I think each of us will leave this meeting more informed, better prepared to offer good things to our communities in the areas of environmental justice. The Center of Environmental and Economic Justice, a minority-owned social justice organization, thank you for your contributions.

Duke University, keep up the good work, for children with environmental health initiative. We need a solution to the lead-poisoning problem that runs across this great country of ours. So we welcome you. We know you can do it. And find us a solution real soon, please.

Medical University of South Carolina, public information and community outreach, thanks for your

initiatives. West End Revitalization Association, long time work at maintaining and sustaining historic African American communities. Thanks for your work, and preservation and stabilization of those communities.

South Carolina DEHAC. Thanks for your work as one of our key members of our 8 state regions. Thanks for your efforts. And finally, Citizens for Environmental Justice, better known as Harambe House, the good Dr. McClain, as I refer to her, thanks for your work in Savannah.

I think we have a great opportunity, ladies and gentlemen, to combine an initiative led by EJ but we also have another initiative called the Care Community. And I just think these two programs are like first cousins. They have a lot to offer and I am just extremely proud that EPA is part of this initiative.

Dr. McClain, I know you have been under the weather a little bit. Take it easy. We need you to finish what you started.

(Applause)

MR. WRIGHT: We are really proud of these organizations and their accomplishments, all of you, all 12. I would like to follow something that Richard started as part of his introductions. As you all know, out of all of the good work that has gone on in this area, it didn't just start by osmosis. There was some motion behind it.

Over this past year, we lost three of our pioneers in this area, and I would just like to call their names,

some of you know them, some of us know them real well, but to ask you again for a moment of silence in terms of what they have contributed and what they have left behind that others will carry on and make this effort even stronger as we move to the future.

Ms. Deborah Matthews of Chattanooga, Tennessee, who passed away this past August. We also have Ms. Leola McCoy, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, also passed away this past August. And the Rev. Lewis Coleman, also passed away in July of this past year. Of this year, rather. The three of these individuals have made great strides and great improvement and great differences in their communities, and I would just like for you to just offer a moment of silence to these individuals.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

MR. WRIGHT: Richard mentioned a few minutes ago that we are here to discuss some very important business, and I quote. Catherine also mentioned that OECA, under the leadership of Granta Nakayama and Catherine McCabe as the principle deputy for that program. The revitalization of the NEJAC program could not have happened without their leadership. As a matter of fact, it didn't happen until their leadership.

And I would like to say to you that we, and on behalf of the regions, appreciate the efforts and the leadership of these two individuals. As Catherine said, we will miss Granta Nakayama, but we have his phone number, we

know where he lives, and if needed we will camp out on his doorstep. He may be outside of EPA but the legacy that he has left will live on and on, and Granta and Catherine, thanks for your efforts. Thanks for your efforts.

(Applause)

MR. WRIGHT: As I close, again, welcome to Atlanta. And for those of you who are here for the first time, I would really encourage you to take advantage of your time here in Atlanta. We have a lot to offer. We are not as bad as the news media make it sound but there are a lot of exciting things to do here while you are in the city. Please take advantage.

I would like to say congratulations to Victoria on your new job or your new responsibility and to offer you that if you need us, let us know as you move into the future, but congratulations on your new role. Welcome to Atlanta.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Russ. And I also wanted to, on behalf of the council, just congratulate and compliment the staff here at Region 4. Russ and Cynthia and many other sisters and brothers that work for the region for your hospitality and your ongoing work and commitment to environmental justice.

With that, I know council members are with a question or two. With your permission, I am going to move on and then we will take the last few minutes and open up for questions or comments and we will report back to the

council for the three or four additional council members who were unable to make this meeting and give you an update on that.

With that, I would like to introduce Mr. Bob Varney, the regional administrator from the EPA, Region 1. As Charles mentioned, Bob and ourselves, many of us on this council and many of you that are present here in this meeting today know of Bob's work throughout the last several years. Bob, as Charles mentioned, was a NEJAC council member and I had the honor, I think, to serve on several other FACAs with Bob. So Bob, welcome to the NEJAC council meeting.

Remarks

by Robert W. Varney

MR. VARNEY: Thank you, Richard. Am I doing this right? Okay, thanks. It is a real pleasure to be here, especially as a former NEJAC member. It is great to see so many old friends today.

Just by way of background, some of you know this but I have a background in urban planning and community development, worked at the local level and regional levels and was director of planning and community development for the state of New Hampshire.

Then when I became the environmental commissioner

in New Hampshire many moons ago, I was the first state environmental commissioner in the country to establish an environmental justice policy for a state environmental agency.

And then as Richard and Charles well know, helped organize an environmental justice summit that was back in the 90s, I believe.

Richard was there, Charles was there and several state environmental commissioners, where for the first time we had EJ leaders and state environmental commissioners in the same room talking frankly about environmental justice issues and how we could improve our overall EJ efforts and better understanding various perspectives and frustrations that are associated with EJ.

Also while I was at the state, I pushed EPA New England, EPA Region 1 to become more active in environmental justice. They really weren't doing all that much. Got them to form a state EPA working group in our region and then lo and behold I became the EPA regional administrator, so the staff quickly said we better get moving on the EJ strategy and really make this an even higher priority than it already is.

Among the many things that we did, and I won't try to go through everything because we have lots of time to talk about best practices, but one of the first things I did was to have mandatory EJ training for every staff person in the agency, from the lowest level to the highest level.

That training included both classroom training as well as going out in the field with EJ groups out in their environment and seeing things firsthand and hearing from them firsthand.

We also really pushed for accountability in the agency. We didn't just produce an EJ strategy but we tracked our progress and we held people accountable for their progress or lack thereof and made adjustments along the way.

As a person who has been deeply engaged in environmental justice, it was really satisfying to me a couple of years ago when there was the national EJ tour -- many of you I am sure, were involved in that.

When it came to our region, I spent that tour on the bus with everybody else, traveled around with everyone to the various sites meeting with the different environmental justice groups in our region, and the thing that struck me was that every site that we visited, I had already been to, and every group that we visited with we were already working with and had partnerships with them.

It was a nice feeling to see the level of engagement that we had. But at the same time, I will be the first to say that we have a long way to go in terms of environmental justice, even in a region like ours where it is a top priority and where we are already doing a lot.

We can do things a lot better, we can be much more aggressive. We can be much more effective in what we do.

And I am very pleased to see, as Richard and Russ have said, that with Granta and Catherine we have really seen deep commitment to environmental justice and significant improvement. Charles is doing a great job. He is coming up to our region next week.

We have a meeting with the states as well as with the region and the EJ community and I want to recognize also Sharon Wells and Amy from my staff who are here today also.

But the final point I will make is just that I want to thank all of you who are the NEJAC members. I know that it is a big time commitment. You are all busy people. You have lots of things that you could and need to be doing, but as someone who has been involved with the issue before I was on the NEJAC, was on the NEJAC and then have been at EPA and actually had to resign from NEJAC because I started working for EPA, I can tell you today that your role is more important than ever.

I have a deeper appreciation about the role that you play and how critical it is that you keep the pressure on. That you force people to keep thinking about this issue. You force people to be accountable, you force people to not just put out fancy brochures and strategies but make sure that they are on the ground implementing them. And that we integrate environmental justice into each and everything that we do.

You can't have a setaside EJ program and say wow, wasn't that great. We have some nice people, some great

people in the program doing great things but the real effectiveness will depend on the extent to which it is integrated into everything people do, whether it is permitting or enforcement or community outreach or partnerships or grants.

Again, the NEJAC is really important. It is something that not only headquarters and the regions look to for advice but also to be our conscience and to make sure that as things get busy and as budgets get cut and with a federal deficit looming, I am sure regardless of who is in office, we will have to make some very tough decisions in terms of the federal budget.

We need to make sure that EJ remains a top priority and that EJ is a topic that gets high-level attention within EPA and gets the level of attention that it deserves. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. MOORE: I just wanted to -- I think Kent, do you mind please introducing yourself. You stepped up to the table a little bit late.

MR. BENJAMIN: Good morning, I am Kent Benjamin. I am with the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response and I am the EJ coordinator there.

MR. MOORE: Welcome. Kent will also be facilitating part of the session after lunch. Okay, there are several council members that are not with us and I just quickly wanted to update the council.

Donele Wilkins from Detroit will be arriving this evening, so she will be with the council members for the next several days. Joyce King has work conflicts and was unable to make the meeting. Katie Brown has an illness in the family and was unable to be here with us. Jody, you know, is in Texas and within that region around Hurricane Ike and the aftermath of much of what took place in that region.

Elizabeth from the Bronx in New York has a conflict and was unable to be with us for this particular NEJAC meeting. I think we may have then completed -- I just wanted to take the last few minutes here and open up for any questions or comments from the council members. Before we do that, I just want to again thank you all, particularly the working group members that have been meeting all day yesterday, and some have left, and many of you within that working group will be traveling back today for the work that you have completed both yesterday and this morning.

And the two chairs of the EJ working group, both Eileen and Sue, who is a council member, Eileen, thank you for your commitment. Thank you also, Sue, for the work of that particular working group.

Again, thank you all for being with us, not only those of you who are with the agency -- with the EPA, with the region -- but others that have joined us here. I would be a little off if I didn't say to you it is an honor.

The New Mexico environmental department received

an award this morning. The secretary of the environment, Ron Curry, and the deputy secretary for the state of New Mexico -- although we had Thomas and Milton here this morning, the two EJ staff from New Mexico, again, congratulate you all on the work you have done and all of you that received the award this morning.

So council members if you have comments or questions before we break for lunch please flip the cards. Thank you. We have got --

MR. HOLMES: I just wanted to pay tribute to Bob Knox, who many of you remember. It was my privilege to work with him at EPA in the very early days of EJ. A number of us attended Bob's memorial service, which was a fabulous celebration of a wonderful man's life and I am a better man for having known him. I know many of us feel the same way. Thank you.

MR. MOORE: Thank you for that. You know what we might want to do, just mention so that the people that are participating here, just know who the council members are.

MS. SALKIN: Patty Salkin from Albany law school. First, Richard, I want to thank you for your leadership and for always starting off these meetings in such an inviting way, and for really setting a great example, leading by example for all of us interested in working hard in environmental justice. So thank you.

I want to thank everybody from the EPA staff who have shared some remarks with us this morning. I have got

one question and a question/comment. First one for Catherine, it is great to hear what all the different divisions are doing and the guidance documents and the EJ action plans. Are those put together in a single document on the EPA Web site?

MS. McCABE: Charles?

MR. LEE: They are there. You just go to www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice.

MS. SALKIN: And are they reviewed sort of annually for progress, benchmarking?

MR. LEE: Yes. When they were first adopted, they were adopted in 2002 and, you know, you need to be mindful that every office, every headquarter and regional office has an environmental justice action plan. When some of the congressional staff asked me to brief them, they were pretty amazed that something like that actually existed.

I think, you know, we have not been very good at telling that story, and they are very important instruments. When they were first -- and this speaks to Catherine's remarks -- so that was the first I think, real milestone in this.

But I think they could make more meaningful, and certainly one of the problems where we need to align it to the core planning processes within EPA so that is what happened last year was the environmental justice action plans and growing out of environmental justice within the national program guidance. So that is one thing.

Now we are trying to work, look into making these really meaningful in terms of being results oriented. That is a long discussion that we can have sometime later.

MS. SALKIN: Right, I was just, you know, wondering for the future that if there were things that staff thought could be done that have not been able to be accomplished, whether there were things that NEJAC could do in reviewing some of those areas to try to help push things along in the future.

MR. LEE: Well, you know, let's take this out of the context of the NEJAC because the NEJAC has a special kind of role in terms of being an advisory committee. These are really operational documents.

So what we would like is the -- the ultimate, one vision ultimately would be that many of EPA's partners, states and local governments, tribes, many EPA stakeholders, communities, business and industry, environmental organizations are all part of the process of identifying those kinds of actions and commitments that are made by EPA within those action plans.

A lot of what we have been talking about, for example, you know, the kind of background issues behind how do we go about and really build partnerships within states, with states to achieve real measurable results within disproportionately impacted communities?

One of things we would like to see as an outgrowth of that is a linkage between that conversation and the

development of commitments for these action plans. Because ultimately to really make these differences you need that kind of partnership.

MS. SALKIN: My second comment/question, Robert, I am glad to know of your background because one of the advocacy positions that I bring to NEJAC is that it is my firm belief that we need to do more with local planning and zoning in order to address environmental justice issues.

It is absolutely can-do, and I also believe that although the federal government obviously does not control local agency planning and decision making, there is a lot that we can do with training and incentives to change local behavior.

It is my belief that in many communities, not all, local officials are receptive and will be receptive but they just don't know. So I hope that we may be able to work together on some of those issues.

MR. LEE: Just a quick -- I should have mentioned when Chris acknowledged the contributions of Bob Knox, who recently passed away, Bob was the first deputy director of the Office of Environmental Equity when it was established in 1992, and he had worked -- he had a long history of EPA, many positions, one of which was being the hazardous waste ombudsperson for the EPA.

For the last part of his career at EPA, he worked throughout those 15 years at the Office of Environmental Justice. He was the acting director for a period of time

and worked in various capacities until he retired about three years ago.

MR. MOORE: Thank you for that, Charles. Council members? Shankar?

MR. PRASAD: Good morning. I just to take this moment to reflect what Catherine said. I also want to emphasize how important it is for us to acknowledge and be aware of the leadership from Granta and Catherine and Charles have been in revitalizing the NEJAC and its role.

So I want to acknowledge that and I want to thank them for that purpose and also congratulate Victoria on her promotion.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Shankar.

MR. MARSH: Lang Marsh from Portland State University in Oregon. I wanted to second what Shankar said about all of you, and my thanks as well. I wanted to just note something that Catherine said that resonated very much with me as a former state environmental director, and Bob will remember this. For years there was a dialogue between the states and the EPA over the way that enforcement accomplishments are announced and recorded.

In the past, it was always about the amount of penalties that used to be assessed. I was very pleased and surprised really to hear you not mention that at all, but to mention the actual reductions in pollutants and dollars invested in environmental accomplishments by people been subjected to environmental enforcement activities.

I think this is a trend that is responsive very much to the needs expressed maybe a dozen years ago but now are real, and I think now it is my impression that you probably lead the states instead of following them in that kind of reporting.

I look forward to the day hopefully when we can report on sickness prevented and asthma cased reduced and so forth and so on as well as those other accomplishments but this is a very important benchmark and I wanted to applaud you for pushing ahead to make it happen.

MS. McCABE: Thank you for that, Lang. We actually have made some progress in being able to report the health benefits for certain types of actions we take. We, for example, last year took our 10 biggest air pollution cases and were able to actually measure the health benefits we could get from that by using the models that Office of Air used when it enacted the regulations to begin with.

So we are making progress, we just can't get a global number yet because health benefits really depend so much on not only your gross pounds of pollutants but what types they are and who they affect, et cetera. But thank you for the words of encouragement. We will try to keep it up.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Lang. Council members?

MR. WRIGHT: Thanks, Richard. Before we close this out, I think we are getting down to where everybody has had their two cents' worth, it is good to have in your

presence somebody who has really tried and on most occasions made a difference.

You know, we have talked about him but I would for Granta Nakayama to basically say something to you, and the reason I am doing this is personal and selfish.

I won't be here for the entire meeting and I know he is going to say something but I want him to say something where I can here the good, old boy from Griffin, Georgia, have a few minutes to basically tell you how proud he is of what he has done, but also say to you that without each and every one of you we probably wouldn't even be talking about him. We would probably be criticizing him.

I think all of you have made it easy for Granta, who was willing in the first place, and with Catherine as his principal, to revitalize this program, and I would just like for Granta to say a few words to you in terms of wishing you well into to the '09 timeframes and beyond and to keep up what we have started over the last three years and to make it a great success.

Remarks

by Granta Nakayama

MR. NAKAYAMA: Folks, I am not dying.

(Laughter)

MR. NAKAYAMA: I am a young guy, and they start talking about legacy and all that. Let me keep this real brief because I think lunch is the next thing on the agenda and I don't want to stand between anybody and lunch. Let me

just say a few things.

First of all, I do want to say thank you to all the NEJAC members or community groups and our other organizations we recognized today. You folks are the ones doing it, you are the ones pushing the agenda, making good things happen.

My job is just to get out of the way or get obstacles out of the way so people can do the good work, and that is really been my experience at EPA is that most people want to do the right thing, you just need to give them tools and get out of the way and let them know that they are supported.

I do want to share this. As many of you know on the NEJAC certainly, the last meeting we had was in Washington, and the administrator came -- it was the first NEJAC meeting in many, many years -- the administrator of the EPA addressed and we had a good dialogue between the members and the administrator but he came back the next day and at our senior staff meeting he said, you know, that is the first FACA meeting in a long time I have been to where I though the FACA was working.

It was giving us good advice, different viewpoints, robust viewpoints, and not everyone agrees on the FACA, or not everyone agrees on a single viewpoint. There was diverse viewpoints and it was good healthy discussion.

He wanted to know what the secret was. Why does

the NEJAC work? And I think it works because we have good people like you who are really dedicated to the principle of environmental justice. We all come from different perspectives but we understand the job is really important. There are people out there that could really benefit from a better environmental justice program and you guys are committed to it.

My only message is thank you for giving me the honor of working with you these last three and a half years. I have enjoyed it. I have thoroughly appreciated your sound advice. I think we have made tremendous progress. We do appreciate your recommendations. We answer them in writing now, and thank God there is a NEJAC.

As you know, three and half years ago we were kind of at a precipice there where -- in fact, the recommendation internally from many people was to not have the NEJAC and fought very hard to ensure the body continued. We have been rewarded with your very good recommendations, and coming on the heels of, for example, Hurricane Katrina, great recommendations. We have learned a lot and we have incorporated those lessons because we got great recommendations from this group.

So again, continue the important work. I am not going anywhere. I am not dying, Russ. I am here, and I just want to say thank you and that is all I am going to say. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. MOORE: All right, council members, thank you for that, Granta. Victoria also, on behalf of the NEJAC, I would like to congratulate you on your promotion.

(Logistics)

(Whereupon, luncheon recess was taken.)

A F T E R N O O N S E S S I O N

(1:20 p.m.)

MR. LEE: We are running a little bit behind time. Unavoidable circumstances so we are going to try to make sure we have a good discussion but try to also stay on time as much as possible.

EJ Best Practices Forum Overview and Remarks

by Charles Lee

MR. LEE: Like I said earlier, this afternoon we are going to have a best practices forum to hear from the recipients of the 2008 EJ Achievement Awards. And we are going to start with a number of just kind of short overview remarks and then we will turn it over to Kent Benjamin, who is going to facilitate the dialogue for the forum.

In terms of -- and myself and Richard Moore from different perspectives will provide those remarks. So from where we stand at the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice,

in 2006 the NEJAC recommended the EPA institute an EJ, and Environmental Justice Achievement Award Program to recognize organizations in the six state stakeholder categories that are represented on the NEJAC.

Those are community-based organizations, state and local government, business and industry, tribal/indigenous organizations, academia and nongovernmental organizations. The goal was to develop a vehicle to promote positive behavior and best practices in the arena of environmental justice.

Our vision, EPA's vision, is to create over time a truly prestigious award in the area of environmental justice that is widely sought and deeply cherished. That is chosen by a diverse, knowledgeable and respected panel of peers, a sort of -- I guess I have my own characterization of this, Nobel Prize of environmental justice.

Environmental justice, as all of you know, is not a new issue, but it is a relatively new area of societal endeavor and I think it is really important that we note that all worthy areas of societal endeavors need to have appropriate forms of societal recognition and reinforcement.

We need that in order to have this kind of activity grow and thrive. Clearly, this is one of the roles that EPA is uniquely positioned to play. So we want to develop a robust program that has a lot of depth to it in the following way.

It is highly substantive, meaning it addresses

real issues with real strategies that achieve environmental public health benefits for communities with environmental justice issues.

It identifies and promotes new and important issues, new and important ideas, new and important groups and new and important trends. And it promotes values. Like Granta said, principles of fair treatment and meaningful involvement which are also the definition of environmental justice.

It addresses the issues of those communities whose needs are greatest. It fosters empowerment for the communities themselves to shape their own destinies. We want to learn from these examples, learn from your experience and replicate these through a wider dialogue through forums such as these and publications and other kinds of venues and avenues by which we can spread the word.

We are gratified already that these -- we are gratified that these awards are already becoming, as evidence by the ceremony this morning, a good vehicle to convey the excitement, the commitment, the creativity and the accomplishments that exist on a day-to-day basis in communities throughout the nation.

In closing, I want to restate that our vision for this award program is that it becomes a source of great inspiration. As I reflected on what would be a fitting way to convey this vision, I thought of the following words from Mahatma Ghandi. He said your beliefs become your thoughts.

Your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, and your habits become your values, and your values become your destiny."

EJ Best Practices Forum Overview and Remarks

by Richard Moore

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Charles. I actually want to keep my words very, very short since we are running behind schedule but I just wanted to remind some of us that Charles only used the word robust one time.

(Laughter)

Remember the discussion that we had at the last council meeting, particularly those that were submitting for EJ small grants or care grants or the different grants. We said if you don't use the word robust, you are probably not going to get too far, because robust is a word that has a lot of meaning behind it.

But on the other side of that coin, it has got to have all off that kind of inspiration and morale and enthusiasm and all of that that goes along with it, both from a grassroots perspective, but from an academic perspective, from a business industry perspective, and so on.

So I just wanted to say that this particular piece of the agenda and the combination of the awards this morning was, as Charles mentioned, the work of several years actually of recommendations from the NEJAC council, one of

those recommendations where that EJ Awards be given out in several categories, both in native/indigenous, state and local, government, nongovernment environmental organizations and academic institutions and business and industry.

Some of you may have noticed that this morning in the presentations, we weren't able this cycle, you could say, to give out the business industry award but this council and the OEJ and the EPA are very committed to that. There is a lot of work that is being done and we are going to hear some of that. Some of the presentations. There are a lot of partnerships that have been developed. With business entities, business and industry entities in different locations all throughout this country.

Some of them have been very productive, extremely productive and we have seen and we will hear about some of those. So I wanted to just leave it at that so the sisters and brothers that are going to be presenting can begin to do that. Welcome everyone back for the afternoon session. Sorry about the confusion. We will try to take care of that tomorrow so we make sure we don't get behind in the lunch schedules and so on.

Now I am going to turn over the agenda and the facilitation to Kent.

EJ Best Practices Forum Overview and Remarks

by Kent Benjamin

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you, Richard. I want everybody to note that before I had great facial hair and

reading glasses, Richard made me sit over there. Now I am not saying the more I look like him the better I get a seat but --

Now how many of you have been watching the presidential debates? Anybody? You know how confrontational the moderators and the folks have been. Well, it is going to be nothing like that. So I am going to go through and first let me welcome all of you for coming out today.

I have a few notes to go through because my bosses are here and I don't want to make up stuff like I usually do. So first, let me introduce myself again. I am Kent Benjamin. I am with the EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and I am very honored to have the opportunity to facilitate these discussion today.

Some great groups, we are going to hear some good things, and we are going to have a chance to have some interface between the NEJAC and the award winners. And they are award winners not because they have won this award, but because of the challenges they faced and tackled effectively.

And overcoming all the obstacles and the different partnerships and the enemies and all that you have had to face to be able to be recognized today is no small feat. So let's start out by putting a little energy in the room by giving them all a big round of applause for their work.

(Applause)

Best Practices Forum Presentations

Community-Based Organizations

MR. BENJAMIN: I know you all are just after lunch, so you can lean back in your chairs for a minute while I go over the rules of the pageant, okay? What are we going to do? We are gong to have three sections. We are going to start with communities and indigenous populations awardees.

They are each going to have 10 minutes to do their presentation and then we are going to follow that with a question and answer. That question and answer will be the NEJAC members, and I also have some questions to stimulate some discussion.

Then we are going to take a break. Then we will have the state and local government presentations, also again followed by the same type of conversation. We will conclude with the nongovernmental/environmental organizations and academic institutions in the last section, also followed again by some question and answers.

So that is the first thing. I will make some brief introductions of each panelist before they go, very brief because I want to hear from you and not from me.

Before we do that, I just want to say today we are going to hear from these heroic organizations and their representatives, and they are going to share their stories with you in hopes that through that sharing we will not only gain knowledge but hopefully grow new partnerships and spawn

new successful, promising, better or even best practices.

So let's get under way now, and we are going to start with Bishop James Black, and he represents the Center for Environmental and Economic Justice, and just briefly CEJ has conducted forums to educate the community on environmental justice issues associated with environmental cleanups and is working to ensure that regulatory agencies comply with EPA and state requirements. So Bishop Black, thank you.

Comments

by Bishop James Black

MR. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Benjamin. I want to thank NEJAC also for the award that you gave to us, and might I add that the award does not belong to the staff. It belongs to the people in our community, but we are grateful to receive it.

Very difficult to share in 10 minutes what 20, 30 years of work. EJ from our perspective, I am from South Mississippi, spun off from the civil rights movement. It is an extension of that. We have been involved for about three decades or more in this effort.

Our primary EJ movement started in military toxins in military bases along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We dealt with toxins at the --- Air Force Base and the Navy base in Gulfport, which after World War II -- Vietnam, rather, excuse me -- stored Agent Orange on the bases, and to make a long story short consequently dioxins got into the

waterways that went out into our communities, where little old ladies with sunhats on in the deep south fish off banks and eat the fish out of the water.

If you can imagine, this is on the southwest end of the minority communities, and post Katrina we had a new problem. Katrina spread and displaced toxins that were somewhat controlled in specific areas. These same dioxins residue were all over the community, spread north and west and northeast from where the Navy base was.

Along with that we had other toxicity that had spread after Katrina, and we became involved in a community called Turkey Creek, which is a community that was formed right after slaves were freed and slaves --- that community.

Turkey Creek had become poisoned by not only the Navy base dioxins but also the creosote plant that was established many decades ago that had closed down. It is hard to imagine that a creosote plant could really poison a community, talking about 10 to 15 acres of properties, but the creosote had got into the ---, got into people wells and into the creek itself. Had poisoned the fish. I could go and on about what it had done.

We got involved thanks to Ms. Gloria Tatum, who was formerly with MVEQ, who alerted us and got us involved in this process with the community. Prior to us getting involved there wasn't a whole lot of communication between the EMS, Environmental Management Services, which was cleaning up the dioxin, and the community.

We opened some dialogue between the people there and the clean-up organization and we found that the more research that was done, we found that there was more dioxin and more poison than we had imagined. But to talk about best practices, I came out of an era where we had to march and demonstrate and fight against the racism and other awful things in South Mississippi.

But we chose some other tactics as opposed to fighting EMS and fighting the system. We chose to bring them to the table with the community, and we got the community involved, and they began to be educated about what was really happening in the community.

It did not alleviate the fact that the creosote plant had poisoned that community with creosote there, and a by product of that was dioxin. So we had dioxin at the south part of Turkey Creek, and we are talking about a good 20 miles.

To the north of that we also had dioxin with the creosote plant. So we got minority communities over a 20-mile area that has dioxin in the water that they fish out of and have recreation in.

So the clean up continues on. But one way we got the community involved, I want to share that, is that -- because I am a --- pastor, we have a gospel radio station, we use our radio station to alert our communities. We have talk shows that talk about either our dioxin problem or creosote problem there.

We thought we would also do something different. We stated a newspaper in our community. We distribute about 15 copies in our communities and we have articles in it to inform our communities about what is happening as it relates to the creosote and dioxin problem in that area.

It has worked real fine. We allow the clean-up company, EMS, to publish articles in the paper and we also have the voice from the community. We have found that we have a good working relationship. We are kind of in the middle of it kind of facilitating the dialogue between the clean-up organization and the community.

In terms of learning how to address the problem, we found that bringing the adversary to the table along with the stakeholders is working pretty well in our area. Not to say that we still don't have problems. Those who poison our communities are not typically ready to sit down at the table with those whom they have poisoned.

We have found, however, some good grounds to sit and have dialogue.

It is hard for me to talk 10 minutes. I am a preacher so I am going to stop now because I can feel my help coming, as we say in the church.

(Laugher)

MR. BLACK: We have gone door-to-door, we have talked to people and of course EMS understand if they don't work with us we will go back to our old ways of agitating and raising hell if we don't get cooperation. But thus far

we have been able to get a lot of help from them and answering the peoples' questions.

One thing we did do also, we hired Dr. Wilma Subra, who is an independent chemist, to do research in the community, and the community trusts her, EMS trusts her, so we got someone outside to come in, do the testing and she found poisons, other dioxins in the community, and so it is being cleaned up and we are quite happy with that.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: This may be the first time that a pastor did not take the full time allotted.

(Laughter)

MR. BENJAMIN: I think Dr. McClain will make full use of yours. Next we have --

MR. BLACK: (off mic)

MR. BENJAMIN: Next, we have Citizens for Environmental Justice, featuring Dr. Wilma McClain. CMEJ has formed entities such as academic institutions and agencies network, Acanet, a network connecting communities with academia and government officials and the black youth leadership development institute to increase the level of understanding and participation among youth and young adults in environmental justice issues. And that is just a piece of it. So let's hear some more from Dr. Wilma McClain.

Comments

By Mildred McClain, Ph.D.

MS. McCLAIN: Well, I have been asked not to do the environmental justice dance and song by one of my colleagues. He said he is not ready for that today but I raise it because it, for us, speaks to the culture of the people that we are a part of and that we work with.

And I think that one of the best practices that any of us can engage in is to always respect the culture in which we are from, the cultures in which we work and to advance those cultural behaviors because they are indeed the foundation from which the people operate.

(Singing song)

MS. McCLAIN: And that is sort of our mantra at the Harambe House Citizens for Environmental Justice. One of the best practices is to understand that nothing, no body, no thing, no event, no enemy, no issue should be able to turn us around from the goal that we have set for ourselves for the mission that has been ordained to us by the Creator and the ancestors.

And it is nothing like getting a meeting or an event started, where some very tough issues are going to be addressed, than singing and dancing. Of course you must have the food as well. That is a good practice. Don't come to any meeting in the community without food, I don't care if it is donuts and coffee or spring water and sunflower seeds but come ready to feed the people.

And then we go from on spectrum to the other. The only we don't is we don't serve pork, but we go every which

way other than that. We don't do the pork thing because of cultural practices as well as dietary needs of our people because we are always aware of where our people are and where we want to take them.

Citizens for Environmental Justice and the Harambe House, we have been working for decades but officially we started in 1990. And the organization itself started as a result of people recognizing that there was indeed a need for us to become much more visible in our local community of Savannah and our broader community of Georgia and South Carolina, in this whole issue of environmental justice.

We used to call it something else. It is a good throwdown, we are going to go party, we are going to go protest, we are going to demonstrate, and it was around a lot of different issues because our work actually started way back when in the days of the nuclear freeze and the disarmament movement.

It took off from there, being a part of the civil rights, the antibussing, all those issues that were facing our community some 20 years ago.

In 1992, right here in Atlanta in a hotel, we really began to forge our relationships with the Environmental Protection Agency under the leadership at that time in OSRA of Tim Fields. And he was here conducting an environmental justice listening session and they had planned it and it was all beautiful and people were all working and everything and at the end we said what community was on the

planning committee? Uh, uh was the response we got.

And I said look here, don't come back to the South no more planning no event that we are going to participate in and we weren't at the table at the beginning because otherwise you are going to have a big problem. It is going to be like white on rice.

So from there a best practice has been for us is to insist that in any endeavor -- any federal action, any state action, any local action -- that is in any way going to impact the community, the city, the state, the neighborhood, that those people who live in that area should be a very active and integral part of the planning, the research, the implementation and the evaluation of whatever that was.

We have learned that because we used to leave the evaluation piece off. We would get in there and struggle and duke and everything and then we would say we were successful. But under the leadership of Charles Lee we have learned how to put forward performance measures that are quite robust.

We have learned how to have a theory of change and a logic model and evaluation strategy that we must have in place and that we must work through it. And so we have learned and we try to do the best we can and we fall short sometimes but we keep on plugging at it.

I wanted to talk a lot today but I am not going to. When I first started thinking about what do we mean by

best practices? And I started to think about a lot of people whose shoulders we indeed stand on. And so part of our best practice is to recognize the contribution and the very hard work that is put forward by people who are not here any longer. They have made their transition, they are now ancestors. We hope that they are mentors and guides to us.

But we can never forget what they have done, and the lessons learned and what they have taught us. So I started playing around with some things and I said, well, the first thing I need to talk about is talk about build capacity because that was always my soapbox. We have got to build capacity of the community-based organizations and the residents and other stakeholders to be able to participate and have a voice at the table.

People used to say what is capacity building? That is so general, so broad. I used to say well, you have got to help us create a voice. Or you have got to help us engage in evidence-based decision making. Or you have to help us seek technical and scientific experts who work with us because we come to tell the story of what we are living.

We don't know the science. I am an English teacher. I think I am. I used to be. Really, I am a storyteller. So how do you marry science and what is termed the anecdotal stories of the community so that you come up with what really is?

What is the reality of people's lives, and where

do they need to go and how can you get there? And how can you convince industries and businesses and governments that you actually do have a real story to tell and there are deformities in the community? And a lot of stuff has been put out into the air, into the water, put in the land, and those kinds of things impact us in very negative ways?

But we want to be smiling while we are saying that so that at the end of the day we still get the grant, the money to do what we got to do. So building capacity, and how do we examine the assets and the vulnerabilities that so indeed we are presenting a very realistic picture because often we come from the deficit profile of a community.

But we began to see as a best practice to change that it is not all about the negatives. We do have some very, very valuable assets in the community and we need to build on those, although we have some problems that we have to engage in. So that takes me to the second thing I wanted kind of talk about and that is collaborative problem solving.

How do we engage people in collective work and responsibility, and that they come from different sides of the picture, but they still are able to look at a problem and decide how do we approach this? What is the first step? What kind of resources do we need? What are the limitations here? How do we engage in a robust set of activities that allow us to get from point A to point B?

We say that with the grant that we received to

work in the two communities where we are working, Hudson Hill and Woodville, which are two communities of less than a thousand people that are surrounded by 17 industries, and the major one is International Paper, and for the last 50 years these people have been inundated with all kinds of air toxins.

How do you get them to the table to be able to collaborate with International Paper, who has labeled them -- I got two minutes? Oh my God, I thought I had five minutes from you. Okay.

The other side of best practices is community-based participatory research. How do we engage the community in being able to conduct its own research and build partnerships with academicians and businesses and industries so we can get where we are going?

Another best practice is to develop partnerships to work in alliances, coalitions, networks. How do we work with government, academicians, business, civic, faith-based institutions? And how do we identify champions who help us in all those sectors because we believe you must have a champion like Sue Briggum in Waste Management to say, hey, guys, environmental justice is really good.

We must develop and always be in the presence where both policy and practice are being molded and shaped. And I think finally in my last 30 seconds, what I want to say is that what we have really learned is what our grandmothers and grandfathers taught us.

We must trust in the Creator, we must trust in a Supreme Being, our God, we must trust the people, that the people will be authentic and that they will do what is necessary to be done without exaggeration. Yes, we will be compassionate at moments, Charles, we will be real emotional, but we will come with some scientific data that backs up what it is we are trying to say.

So we got to trust the people. And most of all, we have got to trust the process, that once we get in it we are in it. We are going to give 'em hell, brother Richard as you told me earlier this morning. We are going to keep on running, Bishop Black, to see what the end is going to be.

And yes, David, we are never going to give in. We are never going to give up. We always says see ourselves moving forward ever, backwards never, and as our name indicates, Harambe, Harambe, Harambe, which means let's pull together until the race is finished. Finish the race. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Don't forget, we will be having a discussion after so we are not done with any of you. The next presenter will be for the Safer Pest Control Project represented by Rachel Rosenberg. The SPCP, --- Illinois to become the fifth state to require integrated pest management in licensed child care facilities via legislation passed in 2003.

Before this legislation passed, 3,000 licensed child-care facilities that cared for more than 285,000 children across Illinois, were routinely spraying pesticides and exposing our most vulnerable citizens to their effects.

So let's hear from Rachel Rosenberg.

Comments

by Rachel Rosenberg

MS. ROSENBERG: Thank you very much. I appreciate being here. I think I am the only one from the Midwest. Is that correct? I wanted to thank Region 5 EPA, which was one of our first funders for this work over a decade ago, and thank the committee for bringing me here and honoring my organization with this award.

I am going to talk briefly about my work and I am happy to answer any questions afterward. As you can see, we titled this work "Better Learners Grow in Pesticide-Free Environments." You can go to the next one.

(Slide)

Tell you a little bit about my organization. We were established in 1994 as a collaboration with 5 different environmental organizations. In 2001 we became our own nonprofit organization with our own board of directors. Our mission has always been to reduce pesticide use in Illinois through education, training, policy and advocacy.

We have four main programs of work that we focus on. One is low-income housing, and everything relates to promoting integrated pest management or IPM in these areas.

Low-income housing, working with landlords, tenants and residents on improving environmental health inside their residences. We work with schools in the state of Illinois, also the law that IPM law affects schools in the state of Illinois.

We work with municipal policies in different cities. I am getting them to adopt integrated pest management contracts and policies. And we have a lot of work that we do on outdoor areas such as turf playing fields and homeowners' lawns. We promote natural lawn care to protect our environment and our water quality from the runoff of pesticide use and the impact of these exposures to everybody.

We have a fairly small staff of five. We are in Chicago and we all work really hard. I will talk briefly about why everyone should be concerned about children's' exposure to pesticides. Children are the most vulnerable population to pesticide exposure. Often times this is involuntary pesticide exposure because you are not really sure where you are being exposed.

Their organs are not fully developed. They have increased hand-to-mouth exposures because of their play habits, they are on the floor, their hands are in their mouth. They are just lower to the ground, and they have a much higher metabolism, which makes them more vulnerable to these exposures.

If you think about how much time children spend in

child cares in America, you will see that any time that a child care is spraying pesticides, these children are getting exposed to pesticides, previously without any notification.

(Slide)

In 2003, the school IPM law was created in 1999 and child care was added to that in 2003. This is just for licensed child care. This doesn't affect home day-care facilities. As typical in many states, it was an unfunded mandate. There is no money provided to support this law.

So when I received notice of this law, it was a natural fit that we would start to create a training program that would help support this because it works really well with our school-based training programs. Where was I going to get the money? Well, I decided to start writing grants. I got a grant from PESP, which is the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program through EPA.

And then we -- Chicago is lucky enough in that it has a lot of foundations. These foundations are becoming more and more aware of the connection between children, environmental health, and Chicago is the epicenter of asthma in America.

There is a huge, huge portion of children that are vulnerable to these environmental toxins in the city of Chicago and we -- our focus was to talk about how children are affected by asthma and to promote reduction of pesticide use in the place where they spend the majority of their

time, which is these day-care facilities.

We hope that the message they receive through the trainings to their day-care providers would go home to the parents as well. So what we did is we crated an innovative partnership and training program for Illinois child cares.

(Slide)

The problem was that unlike schools, which is basically, there is one central office, the regional office of education, the child-care community is diverse and complex. So how do you reach this audience? How do you develop the kind of message that is going to work for the very diverse audiences, and many people speak different languages as well.

It is all over the state of Illinois, so there are small daycares, large daycares, you know, an abundant challenge. What we did is we invited all of the participants, like the leaders in the different areas to the table and we created a very, I think, comprehensive -- also the challenge was how to train the audience, and I will talk about that in the next slide.

What is the best avenue of training? Is it train the trainer, is it direct training, is it online training? And then, because these are all grants that we had to report on, we had to survey the people that we trained, how were we going to survey them?

How were we going to track them six months after the survey? We did a pre and a post survey. And how do we

follow them later?

(Slide)

So just briefly, highlights of the program, we created the partnership for child care IPM.

This was about 20 different people that range from EPA representatives, Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago Department of Public Health, Department of Children and Family Services, Health and Human Services, leaders in professional organizations in the child-care community, Illinois network of resource and referral agencies, which are 17 affiliated networks of trainer, trainings, child-care nurses.

We brought everyone to the table four times in the first year and then two times in the subsequent years to get their buy-in, their feedback, their help in creating the most effective kind of program that we could create. We needed them to help communicate it to everybody as well.

(Slide)

Since 2005 we have trained over 1,400 individuals that serve 45,000 children. Because sometimes you have trained one person, or two people from an agency, and depending on how big the agency is, that message is just very effective because it is delivered over and over through their own training.

We also trained all the Department of Children Family Services licensing reps and it is now required to get a license in the state of Illinois to have IPM knowledge and

training and to have a plan or program, it is called.

(Slide)

Seventy five percent of those trained when we first took our pre-survey -- two minutes -- had no knowledge of IPM nor any awareness of the health risks of pesticides.

(Slide)

Surveys showed knowledge increased by 52 percent, which is a lot, and that was only that first survey.

(Slide)

Now what we did was we created original, and, I think, approachable outreach materials, and I have samples of them here. We created posters and newsletters and articles and surveys, and we hired a designer to create -- and kind of demystify a gross subject, which is pests.

We tried to inject some humor into it so it would be of interest to people who are afraid of pests and also people to understand and communicate it to the parent.

(Slide)

Now, one of the most important things was there was no way my organization was going to be able to sustain that kind of funding mechanism. So I worked with my state legislators to create a funding mechanism for this unfunded mandate. The Illinois Department of Public Health got a line item budget for this to hire a state IPM coordinator, through my help, and they contract to us to continue training in the state. This happened two years ago.

We are also working on an online training module

that I am getting funded through private foundations that will create a sustainable way for the -- for the child-care workers, there is a lot of turnover. So how do you keep them trained? I think the way to do it is through an online training module.

We are just in the beginning stages of that. We also serve as a model for other states. We have talked to North Carolina, California, Arizona, Minnesota, and we hope that having the online training module, which will be free and online through our Web site, will help other states get online with training their child-care workers and getting laws passed in their states. Thank you.

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: We might want to get those lights back up. People did just eat lunch. The next one is the West End Revitalization Association. I know this next person is quite the stranger to the NEJAC. It is Omega Wilson.

WERA led initiatives that resulted in first time safe water and sewer services for residences of Mebin, and provided job training for youth and young adults to prepare them to better address their health and economic disparities. So now let's here from Omega.

Comments

by Omega Wilson

MR. WILSON: First of all, I would like to thank

all the folks who were involved in considering West End Revitalization Association for its work for a NEJAC award. Environmental Justice award. I think that is a powerful, powerful thing for a little place that people couldn't find on a map when we first started.

Our relationship with my good buddy, my mentor, my sister back there, Cynthia Peurifoy, back about eight years ago working on environmental justice small grant. From that we moved to a environmental justice grant collaborative problem solving with Office of Environmental Justice out of Washington, D.C.

We used a federal intern to help us with some fund-raising modules and now we are working with Americorps, Vista trained volunteers, working with them to help us. And it turns out to be the first environmental literacy, environmental major, environmental program among Americorp Vista sites, about 80 in the whole state of North Carolina. We were shocked to find that out.

But one of the things that we want to say is just thank you for all of those people who have been a part of it. All the staff came in -- I don't want to start doing that, I will miss some people -- but appreciate everything that you have done, your technical support that has made everything possible.

Our slogan for the West End Revitalization Association is morphed into Set a Plumbline, which comes from a scripture in the Bible. And from that we have taken

that to expand it to Right to Basic Amenities, based on civil rights complaint we filed in 1999 before we had a chance to meet all the people from EPA to actually stop a major highway, a planned interstate highway --

(Cell phone tone)

-- my creative music --

(Laughter)

-- that was going to destroy two African American communities that also go back to Emancipation Proclamation, where slaves were put, former slaves were put on land that was owned by plantation property owners and that have been there ever since.

Cemeteries, the homeownership, housing deeds that go all the way back to 1800s, cornerstones on churches back to 1865.

Some renovated, some relocated but still in the community. Seven 100-year-old churches in the area that we work with. Our situation came alive because we found that the city, the county the state officials didn't need us any more. So they planned a highway to basically eliminate the community with an interstate highway, and they designed the highway to come through to eliminate these communities, which was the major labor force.

That is not my slide. I am just talking. Major labor force in the community. Its cotton mills and textile mills were closing. But one of the things we found out in the process of trying to deal with the highway with the

Department of Justice's NEPA and the organizations, the communities were without basic amenities, things that they should have had.

Streets that should have been paved that had never been paved. There were just dirt paths. The school busses and mailtrucks wouldn't come down to deliver your mail. Without municipal water and sewer services, and some of them were the width of this building from the sewage treatment plant. So it became -- Right to Basic Amenities became our motto.

Of course, we have dealt with that issue and continue to deal with it. Over 500 homes and three historic African American communities that we worked on preserving, stabilizing with safe water and sewer and planned development, which we are still struggling with because of major economic concerns.

Now involvement at this level to create an opportunity to share our voice at a national level, and that is respected and appreciated, I think is a great, great thing.

There is an article in the information. I don't have a Powerpoint presentation but there is an article in here. Before I go to that, real quick, the poster outside that recognizes our award has a couple of pictures on it. One of them is a picture of myself and a young lady by the name of Natasha Bumpers who is Americorp Vista site supervisor for us now.

We developed a Americorp Vista site just to recruit our own people. And another young lady who is from North Carolina Central University, who was our EPA intern. And we are standing in front of the virology lab at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill where we had our water samples tested, we collect surface water and drinking water.

Just beside that is another picture. And this was taken more recently -- earlier this year, as a matter of fact. It is a large pipe crossing a ravine. And it connects one section of West End to another section, where all of the sewer that is in the pipe now will go down in the ravine and in the stream water.

Part of what we did is test the water and it turned out to be 300 times what EPA allowed. And we recognized that figure as being major significance after we saw the story about Katrina and they were reporting the contamination of human waste in the water after the flooding as 300 times and above. I said wow, we are living in a natural disaster situation but people have been living in it all their lives.

So that is one of the things we were trying deal with. So that helped with surface water. It helped with drinking water. It helped with well water and it helped with residents who were right beside the sewage treatment plant get sewer for the first time. People asked well, why is it out of the ground? Is it because of the topography.

They had to run it above the ground in order to connect these streets together to make it work.

So a lot of people see infrastructure they never seen before because of how it was built. The article that you see in here is one of a series of articles that is in the program. Is the West End Revitalization Right to Basic Amenities Movement Voice and Language of Ownership, and Management of Public Health Solutions in Mebin, North Carolina.

This article was written by myself and Natasha, who is in the picture, my son Omar Wilson, attorney Omar Wilson now, and Marilyn Snipes, our board chair, who was fighting the issue before I came along. Basically what we are trying to do is create some intellectual property to the things we have been doing. And we have an opportunity to do that with the help of EPA. We also have an opportunity to do that as a result of other work we are doing.

This particular article is being published now, is being released now. I just signed a release for it. I am showing you the final draft of the galley. So I stepped over a little bit but I am sure Johns Hopkins won't worry about that.

They have published a couple of articles for us and a podcast and an editorial. This is the third article in the series, and they expect to follow us as we grow and develop, and we thought that was a powerful, powerful, honorable thing that they decided to take up and follow our

cause and watch what we are doing.

And they recognize that what we are doing earlier this year by inviting us to Victoria, Canada, earlier this year to make a presentation. To make a presentation about the work we are doing with EPA because a lot of the people in Canada and other parts of the world had never heard of collaborative problem solving. They had never heard of CARE. They had never heard of Environmental Justice small grants. They had never heard of the Office of Environmental Justice.

So it is interesting when we became kind of like international ambassadors just on the spot, and it was a pretty good thing. We were dressed up and had our suits and ties and everything on. We behaved, Charles. It was just interesting how much information people wanted from us because they were community people. They wanted to talk to us. They didn't want to talk to government folks.

And, of course, we have been to Toronto and other places, and people want to know what we think of what we are doing. And I have had to been defend myself. I might have to wear my baseball helmet or football helmet when I go back home because with the community, you have got to reprove yourself, Richard.

Each time because they think if you get recognition or you get your name in ink with something with the federal people then, you know, you have created something so you have to go back to the beltline. So I am

ready for the beltline when I go back Thursday.

But in any case, these articles are part of our creating a voice at the local level, and it is translated to people who speak who never spoke before, who are planners now, advisors now, on the block grants they are actually correcting a problem, where people are actually getting water and sewer put in their community who never had it before.

And now we are here. Not that I am here. We are here, representing a community voice for a lot of you out there, and I hope I am doing a good job for you in representing our own community. So we want to document this. We have been encouraged to document that, and we have been encouraged to create best lessons learned.

The most pinnacle part about all of this is some of the recommendations we have made to NEJAC as part of the workgroups I am working with has been recognized by the National Institutes of Health. I haven't shared this with anybody here yet. I am sharing it now.

The National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences recently awarded WERA a partnership grant with the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Some of our South Carolina partners are at the table now. Glad to see you here. What they are doing is giving us an opportunity to demonstrate our community owned and managed research model that we have been talking to a lot of you about on NEJAC for quite a long

time.

We think that is a pretty good plum that they have decided to do a pilot project on us. So we can look it for the next two years, pros and cons and best practices so they can look at the possibility of our partnering with NIH to peddle it as a national research model. It is a step beyond community-based participatory research that actually drives solutions rather than just collecting research data.

So we want to thank all of your participation and your support for helping make that happen, and our affiliation -- my affiliation with NEJAC was one of the super points in them giving us special consideration and make that work. So we have already partnered with the University of South Carolina. I have a special presentation there with the university on November 6th.

I have another one in San Diego next Sunday. All of this is related to having an opportunity to share the work that Granta, Charles, Victoria, Cynthia and all the rest of you have helped us to -- helping us to help ourselves. Thank you.

Tribal Government and Indigenous Organizations

MR. BENJAMIN: Next, we have the Anahola Homesteaders Council represented by James Torio. AHC's efforts focus on improving the water quality of Anahola rivers and streams, address the needs for proper solid-waste management and creating economic betterment for the North Hawaiians by creating a community center. Mr. Torio.

Comments

by Jimmy Torio

MR. TORIO: (Speaking Hawaiian) Sorry I came late this morning. We are not used to the long flight and the long sleep.

I am not much of a long-winded person but I did make a DVD to show you what we do. In one minute, the photograph you see up there is the site that emerged us into environmental justice and to find a way on how to create partnerships.

If you are a Hawaiian, you know, you travel in the olden days with a canoe, and a canoe is a boat that you navigate. How do you navigate? You get creative. So we have land, like the American Indians, and we have a state agency that manages the land. The way they do it is you don't complain to them, then they know you are doing a good job. But if we complain to them, then they deny anything is wrong.

When you see all the little white dots up on up that green area there, that is 3,000 acres. It is part of the --- a division of the mountains to the ocean. So we are getting close to ocean. But what was our concern was it was former sugar cane land. And all of those little white dots represent contaminated batteries, cars, junks, everything you can shake a stick at, it is there.

The community absorbed this for over 10 years. When we had enough, then somebody like me who spoke up ended

up carrying the torch. So for seven minutes I am going to put a DVD together. This DVD was done by the students that participated in our grant that took them into the watersheds, some seven miles into the mountains.

What happened there was this was the first time we built a collaborative partnership with the folks like Barry Hill and Charles and Marla and ---, this is how we met them. And our deal is if this is a collaborative problem-solving grant, you need to come and help us solve the problem. So if you will just bear with me, in 30 seconds I will start it up for you.

And the end, what will happen is I have another photograph, and for best practice discussion I will hook it back up there and I will show you what the master plan is for that piece of property up to the tune of $291 million. So Harold Mitchell really taught me well. Charles, thank you.

(Playing DVD)

MR. TORIO: Collaborative partnership means you get involved. When this program came to Hawaii, these folks that you see on the list participated in the little grant that we had but the experience that we took with us going forward have grown to the University of Hawaii. The project that we have had because of the raw land, we needed more partners and so we brought in the -- we applied for the Brownsville cleanup because we knew we had a problem.

That Brownsville Cleanup has given us a good

opportunity to go forward. Thank you.

Questions and Answers

MR. BENJAMIN: One of the reasons they asked me to do this is because I do a bad-cop thing. We are going to try to make up a little time so we will have to keep close on the next part.

The people who were on that panel, don't leave because this is the Q-and-A part. Dr. McClain is going out for a sandwich. Come back up here. Where is Omega? All you people on the panel, come back to the microphones.

Okay, we are going to take about 20 minutes or so of questions. I am going to kick it off with the first question, and the NEJAC folks, feel free to put up your tents.

The first question is what kind of unexpected relationships occurred and what caused them to occur. So anybody in this panel, that first panel can take that.

MS. McCLAIN: Currently, we now have a relationship with International Paper. In the beginning of our work they saw us as a adversary, a radical revolutionary organization that was out to get them. But through perseverance and lots of prayer and lots of planning and lots of work we have changed that image.

Charles is aware, he came down to do a site visit, and saw the unhealthy nature of what we wanted it to be as a relationship and so through the years we have developed a relationship with International Paper.

We now serve together on a working group that is looking at a Agents for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry Health Consultation. And as a matter of fact, they have been very instrumental in helping us to initiate what we hope is going to be a sustaining vehicle for these communities that we are working in, which is business industry roundtable.

And we have had our first kickoff and our second meeting is going to be held November 13 and it is going to be facilitated by Tim Fields. We are real excited. That was very unexpected and clearly a miracle.

MR. BENJAMIN: Anybody else on the panel before we take a NEJAC question?

MR. TORIO: What was your question again?

MR. BENJAMIN: What unexpected relationships occurred?

MR. TORIO: Well, the project -- the attractiveness of our self-empowerment and our self-determination to learn. The current relationship we got unexpectedly is we ended up with a finance partner, a California-based, Nevada-based, Montana-based and London-based business investment people that saw this project in Brownsville. The EPA took me all over the state and somebody found us out there.

MR. BENJAMIN: I saw Jolene.

MS. CATRON: Thank you. Dr. McClain, I would like to thank you for your words. I found them very

inspirational, and your wisdom -- I have it written down on my paper so I won't forget. I think the lessons that we learned from our elders, whether they are from our own community, from our own tribe, from our own, or outside of our communities are always very precious and I take that with me, so I wanted to share that with you.

I am really interested, because of the work I do on the Windriver Indian Reservation, on how you get state governments and state entities to appreciate and to fully realize the traditional cultural knowledge is just as important as the Western science aspect of environmentalism.

I think that is always the big questions we have in our communities because the knowledge of our elders, as I mentioned before, is very precious, and a cumulative knowledge is something that we shouldn't ever take for granted.

And so I am always -- that is always the question that I bump up against because it seems like a lot of times we are up against BLM or other state environment departments that think it is just those Indians raising hell again and it scares them. And I think what they don't know is what really scares them a lot.

I just wanted to share that with you. Thank you.

DR. McCLAIN: (off mic) I think the state entity that we work with is the Environmental Protection Division. It was a long a process to get them to both recognize and respect the input of the residents who had been --- through

these facilities for a long time.

In the beginning it was very difficult because the people who were in charge at that time did not appreciate the residents and the expertise that they brought to the table but we continued to engage the state with the residents.

We had ho-down parties and chicken wing parties, we sort of fed them and we learned them and we sort of tried to come in through the back door a lot of times very humble and meek and that was sort of not the image that we had because they thought we were these rabble rousing -- going to beat you up, catch you in the dark out in the parking lot home from the meeting type people.

We proved over time we were diligent in what were saying. We brought the elders to the table who had lived in that community well before the industries got there. We just really worked hard on changing the image and then lo and behold something happened. They got changed.

As a matter of fact, their administration, who was in place was changed and they sent different people to the community, and they were a little bit more sympathetic because they heard a lot of the history that we had behind us in trying to work that issues, and that is particularly with International Paper, Hercules, Colonial Oil, those types of industries that impact communities.

So it was through perseverance and really trying to change the image and to show the value of what these

residents brought to the table. I would think that it wasn't our work that really changed their minds. It was the work of the elders and their persistence that we have a voice. We may not have said these things clear enough or it is not backed up, but we have the experience. And they kept coming to the table.

As a matter of fact, we had to put forth a lot of effort to bring more young people to the table because the elders just kept coming and coming and coming because they said look, we have been living with this, we have seen it, it is our experience, and we do have an expertise to offer.

MR. RIVERS: One of the results in terms of relationships I think for me was the fact that in 1999 we did a leadership environmental justice meeting in Hilton Head. We brought together a variety of stakeholders not only from private sector but government, EJ community, and sat down and had some discussion.

It was a little tough to get everybody to sit down initially. Got some scars to show it, but we came out of that meeting with some nice findings and recommendations for going forward.

Another thing that happened was under Congressman Clarvale's leadership we formed a National Environmental Justice Policy Commission, which Sue Briggum, Richard Moore, Mildred McClain sat on, and we went around this country and listened to people. You know, people in a position like ours, we don't listen very well. We think we know

everything and we want to go to the community and tell the community what they need to do.

We listened and put together a very comprehensive report going forward in terms of environmental justice. And the one thing we learned from the whole report is there is a good cross connection between human health, the environment, environmental justice and economic development. I think we use that as a platform for doing our program at the medical university.

MR. BENJAMIN: John Ridgway and then Chris Holmes.

MR. RIDGWAY: First of all, congratulations to all of you, and thank you for your work. I have a great amount of respect for what has been shared with us today and I hope to take it back.

I represent state and local government on this commission, and so my question really falls to Jolene's, which is I want to take back lessons for the states. Got EPA kind of on one side of the bureaucracy and local government and communities on the far other side and states are somewhere in the middle and sometimes disconnected at both ends, I think, from those other sides.

My questions, are, again, what good advice can we send to the states, to me, and if not now, later if anybody has any advice on that please feel free to catch me in the hallways and I would be glad to take that back but any thoughts in terms of lessons for states, I would appreciate

it. Thank you.

MR. WILSON: I will start if it is all right. This is something John and I have had a chance to talk about more than one time as a part of our partnership with NEJAC. I think one of the things we have talked about, we have talked about for quite a while is states have their own characters and own personalities regardless of where they are. The ones in the west or Midwest, the ones in the south.

Sometimes you have a tendency to lump them all together based on history and culture, but they have their own culture and their own personalities. Sometimes the personalities are transient based on, you know, who is in office, who the major senator of governor is.

Sometimes it is culturally entrenched. One of the things that we know is finding the partners that are willing to talk to you because when we first started trying to work with the states, we thought we were doing something wrong because the Department of Transportation had planned a highway to go through our community.

So we had a tough time even with this arena and all the work we have done over the last several years since we filed the administrative complaint 1999, we have never gotten the department of transportation to officially admit their involvement in environmental compliance issues and that kind of thing.

And some of the officials actually told me that

what they were going to do was they were going to try to figure out how to deal with us and how to get around us, and they have done that very recently as a matter of fact.

They were not going to admit on the record that this was an environmental justice issue, no matter what they do to mitigate the situation we are dealing with. They just were not going to go on record. Some of my partners in the state who happen to be white said you have to understand, Omega, what is going on.

This is an old South type attitude, and their attitude is they are not going to sit down at a table with a black man, face to face, knee to knee, and negotiate on the same table. They are just not going to do it because you have a cultural thing there that even young people are being trained, out of high school and in high school, to maintain that comfortable attitude.

So finding the right people in the right places who are willing to work with you. They may not always be at the top of the heap. When we started doing our testing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in the lab there were a lot of people at the top of the heap who would turn us away.

But we found some students and some professors, and they always had to be tenured, to deal with the fire, where they actually recruited people and their own colleagues, some of their colleagues who were office to office, some of them wouldn't even talk to us. They treated

us like peons, like we weren't citizens.

And there were others who stuck their necks out and they were willing to work. We were surprised at that level of attitude, that, you know, colleagues who worked together, their attitudes were so diverse. And we found the same thing at the state legislature. We found the same thing at the attorney general's office. We found the same thing everywhere.

We found the same thing with the NAACP in our state, where some people want to work with us and others were afraid of us, because some people determined, you are going to mess around and get a bunch of people killed in North Carolina.

But finding the person to talk to, finding the person to work with us -- that is what we had to do, and I think that is going to be the key to getting inroads in states. It won't all come out of the governor's office. It won't all come out of the state legislature. It will come from somebody, somewhere that is willing to work to deal with environmental justice and the policy issues that we have to work with, and it has to be ongoing.

Somebody who wants to put a stake in the long-term issue of development, planning, money, funding and staffing to make it work. And I don't think there is a specific cookie cutter for it, even though we can give each other advice. If that helps.

DR. McCLAIN: (off mic) I think it is also

important to not only for that champion within the state office to work with the communities but to be able to work with his or her colleagues to champion and advocate on behalf of the communities, and -- one exciting thing that happened at --- is that champion was able to convince them to engage in environmental justice training so that the people who would be working with these communities sort of had an understanding of the background and the history of EJ, where successes had been won, where there were challenges and failures.

You need that champion -- you need that championship advocating within the organization because it is one thing to be able to work with the communities, but to be able to convince your colleagues that it is worthwhile looking at environmental justice issues, that the concerns are very real, and that, in fact, they do have some evidence based to go on. It is not just a thing of people coming to the table asking for far fetched.

The champion should work with the community, work with their colleagues and bring some type of training to the organization in environmental justice.

MR. TORIO: If I could add to -- your need is, in a way, we found that the Department of Health immediately became a close ally of our project because we demonstrated that we could bring the right kind of agency staff to the table.

When you saw the video you saw Department of

Health, you saw Office of State Planning, DLNR. These are all the people that really believe in the storybook of what the community feels is important. It is the directors and above that have a hard time understanding how are these guys having great relationships?

But relationships to us meant if you can have an agent in the agency working with the community and then multiplying the community by proper training, you now have eyes and ears and mouth that will then translate back to the state.

But the funny thing about our project is as we built more partnerships with these various state agencies, the very one that supposedly takes care of the beneficiary land management is the one that begins to hate us because we are building so many friends across the table at different offices, the department most responsible for us just don't like us because we are proving we can take care of our own business.

MS. ROSENBERG: We had a lot of problems with a school when the child care law was passed because one of the underlings in the Illinois Department of Health wasn't helping us. I had to go to the attorney general's office and ask for assistance because they were not complying with state law.

Once I could go around that person and ally with his boss, then everything flowed smoothly and continues to this day.

MR. BENJAMIN: Chris Holmes and then Chuck Barlow.

MR. HOLMES: I work in the field of environmental technology, and when I worked at EPA I was engaged in technologies and testing as it related to blood and the environment, --- matters, and first of all I just wanted to say it is a privilege to listen to what you all have accomplished to protect people and the environment. It is really extraordinary. There should be a DVD of what you are talking about.

So I have a question. It was sparked by Dr. McClain's comment about trusting the process, trusting the process. I am very interested in -- well, the problems that Omega, and Jolene and the Bishop and Dr. Rosenberg and Mr. Torio had discussed in terms the impact of these toxics on human systems, and the process I am interested in your talking a little bit about is to what extent do you trust the process as it relates to the testing of contaminant constituents and the blood of the children that you deal with?

I know Dr. Miranda, of course, is a global expert on this and I imagine should be addressing this, but I am interested in your assessment of the process of trust. Little old ladies with screwy hats on that are fishing on the docks and it is going into their system that you have talked about earlier, for example.

MR. BLACK: You asked about testing?

MR. HOLMES: I am interested in the people in your

diocese that are affected by creosote dioxin, and how well are they tested. How well is their blood tested for those constituents and how do you monitor that over a long period of time, and is there a process that you trust to do that?

MR. BLACK: I am not certain of that. We haven't done any testing. We have asked for agency involvement -- excuse me, at the moment of the group here in Atlanta came down that never admit to anything, but they came down to do some testing of the environment but we haven't had any testing of individuals in terms of blood levels, that sort of thing.

Prayerfully, that is a step that will be taken a little bit later on. Right now we are focusing on just clean up in the community and that might be another project someone else does but we have primarily focused on the community and the land right now.

MS. ROSENBERG: In Illinois they did --- testing, you know, they take the blood and see what is in there. There was a lot of press recently, it was last, I think last fall or last winter, and they tested for a lot of toxic substances and they found a lot of, you know, toxins in them.

It is harder to test for pesticides. You really have to -- it is a very expensive procedure, but yes, people do get tested for --- and stuff like that. And there still are levels of DDT and other pesticides that were outlawed in the '70s in a lot of people's blood, so it is a very

persistent pesticide. A lot of those are still there.

DR. McCLAIN: We haven't done any blood testing yet either. We are just entering into a lead-awareness campaign, and part of that campaign we are working with the Centers for Disease Control and the Chatham County Health Department in testing children 6 and under for elevated blood lead levels.

We have had one event at a health fair where we were able to test 23 people, 13 of them children, and we found just one child who had an elevated level. On October 31st will have our second testing, where we will be testing about 600 children working in collaboration with Head Start.

Our goal is to make a dent because there are 12,000 children in Chatham County on Medicaid that have not been tested. So we will have our first round of how do we accept those results.

But I would say in general we welcome the testing so that, again, we have the scientists, the scientific, the evidence to prove what it is we are saying. And that is very important for us because as we move in the future, we want to be able to dismiss some of the myths we do have in the community, that we are all walking toxic time bombs. So, again, this small project that we are working on that allows us to test the children will be our first test case and we will be able to talk to you next year about how it went.

MR. BLACK: Real briefly, if we speak to lead, we

have had --- County Health Department has tested, and we have been asking them for a long time do you test children for lead in our communities? We have a very strong effort on that path to get children tested for lead.

MR. WILSON: We did water testing and we did it over a random fashion because we had surface water in people's backyards and the result of failed septic tanks and straightline black water where people had just run their sewage on top of the ground. So you had open streams. There were failed septic tanks as well as wells, so some of the wells were contaminated.

We did sample testing of the wells and a lot of people at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill basically referred to this as the old kind of thing because a lot of people consider the level of contamination we were finding in our environment as Third World. The kind of E. coli just wasn't supposed to be in the United States of America.

We also found out -- we decided to do surveys as a part of the testing process because it became very difficult to maintain confidentiality because some of the professors we were working with initially -- we had to dismiss with the help of attorneys -- were leaking out information.

So we had some city officials actually coming to the houses of people at night intimidating them because they were involved in the research project. In any case, we found residents who had contaminated E. coli and had kidney

failure. But we didn't test them to find that out, we just asked them, you know, if they have had certain kinds of medical conditions.

Because the cause and effect concern wasn't what we were looking for. We were looking for a demonstrated removal of failed septic tanks. We weren't necessarily trying to find out whether somebody contracted E. coli because we figured if we cleaned up that problem the threat would be eliminated.

So we weren't doing it the traditional scientific model. We were looking at infrastructure and what we found is some people did tell us that they had contracted E. coli, and they told us based on their hospital records, and it was held in confidence and everything.

After we let them know that they had contamination, E. coli, in their drinking well water, and of course, and we were able to determine it was coming from runoff from their failed septic tanks. So some of the streets had a 100 percent failure. 100 percent, every house.

So ditches and streams were just black water. All the green life, everything in the water -- the frogs, and everything -- were all gone. You just had green flies and odors 24/7 for decades.

But what we also found out is we used the city water as a control, and this is where Tetra-Tech, Mark Evans and Tim Fields became excited because they were technical

partners in this. When we used the city water to show the residents, you get on municipal drinking water, you won't have to be threatened by E. coli in your well water.

We got turned around because we did the test and we came out positive, and we double coded it so, you know, double blinded it so the university couldn't tell where it came from, and when we got the results back we said this is wrong. Test it again. They said, this is right. They did it three more times and it turned out to be positive. And that particular code sequence was for the municipal drinking water.

We said what is this? We got to shaking the tree a little bit -- and this is about the same time that Charles came down and Victoria came down -- and it turned out that the city's water was testing positive for E. coli and chloroform in the municipal water for thousands of residents. And people had been drinking it for years. And when we got through shaking the tree, documents were released that showed the city had been hiding this for over a decade.

Two or three times a year, they test every month. So some things happened that we didn't expect to happen because the university did not want to use a quality-control process but we decided to do it for our own reasons. And it turned out to yield some pretty big things.

The city was pretty angry with us for showing that some people's health problems that may have not been traced

to the failed sewer systems was actually traceable to municipal water. So --- questioned the responsibility and liability on an agency that is supposed to be protecting our health and being paid for their water services.

It got to be Third World and it kept being Third World. And it still is Third World where things are just not supposed to be the way they are. We had particular lady who her doctor put her on bottled water. Why? We told her her water tested for sediments that were not in violation of EPA standards. The termidity, as they called it. No viruses or anything like that, no fecal ---.

But her doctor -- she was an older lady, 77 years old, almost 80, said what is happening you have been drinking this water with this sediment for so long it is actually clogging up your system and affecting your kidneys.

How in world can he prescribe bottled water? She said that is what he told me to drink, to stop drinking my well water. So we found some things that were unusual in the testing process, and the worst thing that we found was that the residents who had contracted illnesses, based on their information had not been reported in any way by the hospital providers.

They had shared the information with the health department in order to do intervention and corrective action so it opened up another can of worms, that the compliance process in protecting the residents is not following through for the health-care providers.

Because my understanding is if doctor treats somebody who has E. coli, that is supposed to be another process that takes place to find out where did you get it from so we don't contaminate your whole family, right?

But anyhow, the testing process created a whole lot of chapters in our life that we didn't expect, some good, some bad, and some work still have to be done.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, I am going to have to apologize to Chuck. We are going to take a break now. First, let's thank the panel.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: I know that any one of these groups could give a half a day on the kind of work they have been doing, so -- unfortunately we want to share the wealth and let everybody get a chance to be heard and get some exchange going. So I think Charles wants to say something and then we are going to take -- okay, no -- and then we are going to take a 10-minute break, that is 10 real minutes. That is 600 seconds. We are going to come back and we are going to go on to state and local government representatives. So please go and come right back, and we will keep going.

(Whereupon, a brief break was taken.)

State and Local Governments

MR. BENJAMIN: ---for the notetaker and the court stenographer, if you could please pull the microphone close to you, use it each time. It is for multiple reasons. I know some people don't like using microphones but we do

document the proceedings of the NEJAC, and also the people behind you are really interested in what the conversation is up here. So don't be afraid. We won't let the microphone hurt you.

Okay, do we have Susan Hahn? Do we have Milton Bluehouse? Tom Ruiz? Nancy Whittle? All right. That is going to be the next panel. We are going to go in that order, so thank you all for coming back. There will be door prizes for attendance. I have got a pocketful of butterscotch with your name on it.

We are going to start with Negocio Verde, Environmental Justice Task Force. The task force is composed of members of San Diego County Government departments, local businesses, community representatives and community colleagues. Since 2003 the task force has provided environmental compliance and pollution prevention assistance training to over 6,500 people, the majority in communities with environmental justice concerns.

With that, we will have Susan Hahn.

Comments

by Susan Hahn

MS. HAHN: Hi, my name is Susan Hahn. I am with the hazardous materials division with the county of San Diego, and I am the pollution prevention specialist.

Part of my role in being the pollution prevention specialist is to be a member of the Negocia Verde Environmental Justice Task Force. But actually, we started

in the year 2000 when the US EPA selected a barrio ---, a local Hispanic community in southeast San Diego. And it was one of 15 in the U.S. It says county up there but it should say country.

(Slide)

So when this demonstration project was first formed, it brought together federal agencies, community agencies, local state agencies, and honorary members and community people, organizations. And what happened there is two subcommittees formed. One subcommittee focused on community and the other subcommittee focused on small businesses. I was part of the small businesses.

The project partners believed that it had to be solution oriented. We had to figure out what the problems were and we wanted to drive the solutions there.

So originally the project was supposed to end December 2002 but in the subcommittee I was working on with the small businesses, it was such a success and we enjoyed working with each other that we decided to keep going. And then we became the Negocia Verde Environmental Justice Task Force.

(Slide)

So since 2003 through 2007 we have conducted 10 workshops. We have attended 7 environmental fairs and we have reached 5,000 people in the EJ community areas. We have reached more, but word has gotten out about us, so we have been asked to go to different communities that are not

environmental justice. So we go. We are asked, we go. We like doing this.

(Slide)

Right now our partners are BAE Systems, a lot of regulatory agencies. BAE Systems is a big shipyard, and it is in the port of San Diego and one of the environmental justice communities.

(Slide)

I am going to go back here. We also have tapped into our local community colleges, and through those community colleges we have environmental training centers. There they have grants and so forth where they can go to small businesses and they teach them. They teach them ---, they teach them how to deal with hazardous materials properly because these businesses are going to have them. They are going to generate them. They just need to know how to work with them properly.

It is a low cost for the business. $25, $50 -- it is not much to get compliance.

(Slide)

We also have General Dynamics. NASSCO, which is another big shipyard is a member. GK and Aerospace. The Inner City Business Association, which really helped us get that U.S. EPA demonstration project going in the first place because they just formed among themselves in that barrio Logan community.

In U.S. EPA Region 9, they have been really great.

They even provide us a meeting spot where we meet bimonthly.

(Slide)

So our primary focus has been automotive. This is the majority of businesses that are in these areas. You know, people live and work in these areas. Usually they have their businesses there. They work there also. But there is a bilingual there. So what we have done is we have gotten some moneys. We have translated a lot of our information. We have side by side ---. Sometimes the primary speaker is speaking in English. Sometimes it is Spanish. And then we have also purchased translation equipment, so the one that isn't the primary speaker hears their primary language.

And we also have our workshops in the community that we are focusing on. We get churches -- this here is in a library that is in the community. We go to them.

(Slide)

So when we do have our outreach workshops, we make sure that we have the air pollution control --- there. We have hazardous materials. We have storm water. Those are pretty much our three major environmental health regulatory agencies.

So when businesses have questions or they have concerns about the most recent inspection, they don't understand some of the compliance regulations or laws, we are there to answer them. We are there to give them assistance, so that it is like a one-stop shop. We are all

there.

But you know, when I am up there and I am speaking about hazmat and hazwaste and they are there yeah, yeah, yeah, you are just the government, you are just another regulator. I was an inspector. But you know what, when we have the local businesses there. When I am talking about something and representatives from General Dynamics gets up, oh, yeah, I know all about it. That is my experience as a business.

There is a connection there that happens between a respected business in the community and one that is learning. There is more of an understanding. And they are large, the large shipyards. We got a Cal Auto Body. It took a while to gain some trust because they are leery. They are leery of us government folks.

But when we got Cal Auto Body to step in and -- okay, we will check you out. We went in, we helped them out with some compliance assistance and then pollution prevention strategies, and then now they are on the leading edge of technology where they are using waterborne paints instead of heavy metal-based paints. It is attractive. It is attractive to those other businesses.

They are on our side now, and having that interaction -- you said with International Paper -- that has kind of made a great connection, made us all one circle.

(Slide)

Some of the things that we have handed out is a

hydrophobic mop. I am not sure folks know about it, but this mop only -- if you have a big oil spill, it is only going to collect the oil, not the oil and the water or the oil and the antifreeze. Just the oil.

They pick up the oil and they put it in their mop bucket, their dedicated mop bucket and they can then dispose of that in a 55-gallon drum.

Typically, you are going to see a lot of businesses use kitty litter and use that and it gets saturated and they can reuse it and so on. But this creates another waste stream, where they are going to have to pay for it and have it disposed of. If they can collect the used oil as is and put it in their drum, it is just still that one used oil waste stream.

They are not having to pay for more. So once they found that out, and then they found out that NASSCO was using these mops, then it was like oh, okay, we will try it. Because they kind of look like Hawaiian skirts and people have fun with them. Once they found out other businesses were using them and were successful, and they were free, then it was good.

The Department of Toxic Substances Control in California, they provided us with the mopheads. We purchased some mop handles through some of our moneys. We also have found the Department of Toxic Substances, they have a pollution prevention department and they have translated a lot of their information on how to be --

produce less waste.

And that is the goal with pollution prevention is waste minimization. So we have tapped into a lot of that.

(Slide)

We have also partnered with a lot of industry associations. The Automotive Service Council and the California Auto Body Association -- now, of course, they want more members. So they have a motive there but they also going to buy the donuts and the pizza to get people there. As you said, you need to feed them to get them there. They like to eat. That's attractive.

(Slide)

We got our community organizations. There is a core group of us that meet bimonthly faithfully. But then when we go to like National City we are going to pull out our National City connections. When we go to barrio Logan, we are pulling on our barrio Logan community organizations. We want them at the table to get the word out.

(Slide)

We have also tapped into our local community colleges because the students live there also. They are our connection out there, and they have been a great asset. At Southwestern Community College they have an environmental health technology department, where a couple of us serve on their advisory committee for class curriculum.

And then we pull on the students because we have these workshops. And they come and we have pre- and

post-surveys. We used to call them tests but people don't like tests so we call them surveys now.

And we tell them it is just to measure our effectiveness. We want to know what you know at the beginning and then we want to know if we got the message across at the end.

But then if they took it back to the business and implemented any of the practices is another story. We are not sure, so we pulled on these students and they went to each of the businesses that attended and they surveyed, they saw what they were doing, they asked questions, they showed them.

Some of the students, they got some doors slammed in their faces. It wasn't well accepted until some of the businesses recognized them because they also attended the workshops or they lived in the area or they got their oil changed there. That face-to-face contact provides some of us with our -- provided us with our reported outcomes.

(Slide)

We had found that 33 had purchased new equipment. Now the aqueous based parts cleaner -- now that is a new rule in the county of San Diego, where they pretty much have to use an aqueous or a solvent that is less than 50 grams per liter of VOCs.

At that time they had their choice. 20 percent were considering new equipment, 66 percent had started using the hydrophobic mops so they weren't creating a new waste

stream.

43 percent had requested additional assistance, and that additional assistance means my position comes out of the permit fees that all businesses pay for. We have a very active community organization called Environmental Health Coalition, which several of you have mentioned since I have been here. They thought I was a member of that.

They worked with the county of San Diego for my position as a pollution prevention assistant specialist to go out to businesses, and if they are having difficulty with compliance, understanding the laws and regs I go out there and assist them.

I try to encourage more pollution prevention strategies, which is a little bit over and beyond compliance, and then we also have a green business program, that if they qualify they can be there.

So it is a tier program. We want everybody to be in compliance first and foremost, and that usually will help with any discharges or accidental releases and so on. So that is how my position came to be. It is not a regular program for the CUPAs, which is another California term.

(Slide)

We have received some money. We don't have a lot of money. We rely on some of these big shipyards to give some money when we have these workshops. We rely on free locations. We rely on our industry partners to pay for the donuts and the pizza. And some we get from the state

through materials. We asked them for some.

(Slide)

That is pretty -- basically what we do, but we have fun. We, of course, from California so we have got to have our star there, you know that he is a big environmental guy but he was on St. Elsewhere for a while. He was one of our keynote speakers. And then there is a gal, one of our members, wearing the hydrophobic mop.

(Slide)

On behalf of the Negocio Verde Environmental Justice Task Force we just would like to thank you. This is an honor and privilege to be here. I am sitting between two well-spoken people so I am a little nervous. But thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you very much. Our next speakers will represent the New Mexico Environmental Department.

NMED began its environmental justice program with a unique process of strategy and implementation to seek public input about the nature and extent of environment justice in New Mexico. The process was notable for its focus on grass-roots community participation in the planning phase, the involvement of these communities in a series of listening sessions and subsequent community meetings held throughout New Mexico.

So now we have Milton Bluehouse Jr. and Tom Ruiz.

Comments

by Milton Bluehouse Jr. and Thomas Ruiz

MR. BLUEHOUSE: Thank you, and thank you to NEJAC chairperson Mr. Richard Moore. I would also like to thank Mr. Lee, Director Lee for the opportunity to be here. At this time I would like to hand the mic over to my colleague Mr. Ruiz to read a letter from Secretary Curry.

MR. RUIZ: Thank you, Milton. I thought it would be appropriate, given the time we have, to open with this letter. Secretary Curry, the secretary for the New Mexico Environment Department unfortunately couldn't be here. He expressed his regrets but he composed this letter and I want to spend a few moments on it only because it highlights some of the activities going on.

It gives a brief history lesson, if you will, of the EJ activities in New Mexico.

Dear Mr. Lee, EJ Awards Review Committee, NEJAC members and environmental justice community leaders: Thank you for the tremendous honor and recognition in selecting the New Mexico Environment Department as a recipient of the 2008 National Achievement Award in Environmental Justice.

We are humbled by this acknowledgement and proud of the work we, Governor Bill Richardson, the New Mexico Environment Department, New Mexico Environmental Justice working group, industry representatives and New Mexico tribal communities have accomplished.

The EJ program at NMED began in January 2004 with

the creation of a planning committee comprised of stakeholders ranging from grassroots organizations to local governments to industry. Listening sessions were hosted by NMED throughout the state shortly thereafter, and crucial information was gleaned from these sessions, which guide our work today.

This work culminated with the historic enacting of EJ Executive Order 2005-056, which was signed by Governor Bill Richardson in November of 2005. Today, with NMED's EJ liaisons Milton Bluehouse and Thomas Ruiz, we are continuing the work of environmental justice in our state by examining permitting regulations and procedural reforms.

Examples of this, of our continuing efforts, include translation services at meetings and hearings as well as EJ training for all new hires to NMED and strong new solid-waste regulations.

At NMED we realize that there is much more to be done. In the last four and a half years, we have laid the important foundation for addressing environmental justice issues throughout our state; however, we will continue to promote positive activities on environmental justice issues by including all stakeholder groups in environmental decision making.

We will continue to encourage achievement of environmental results in communities suffering from EJ issues and will continue engaging in collaborative problem solving with all stakeholder organizations.

In closing, I would like to recognize and thank former environment department Deputy Secretary Derith Watchman-Moore, who worked closely with members of the statewide New Mexico environmental justice working group and with New Mexico Indian pueblos, tribes and nations. Derith's important work provided the momentum needed to move this program forward and was instrumental in the development of New Mexico's environmental justice executive order.

Again, thank you for this incredible recognition. With deepest gratitude, Secretary Ron Curry.

MR. BLUEHOUSE: Thank you, Thomas. One of the initial conversations that I had with the EPA Lisa Hammond was the presentation on best practices. When we look back from 2004 until today, we see best practices in 8 major areas. The first one is respect. You have to sit down with people whose communities are impacted. You have to sit down with industry members whose industries are also, I think, very instrumental and interests are also there as well.

One of the things that we like to do in approaching meetings with communities or industry members or even meetings among ourselves is to respect one another and understand that we have various roles and our interests are varied as well.

The second part that -- a best practice is listening. One of the things that we learned early on in the review with the listening sessions was the fact that they listened to community members, industry members and the

advisors of the various groups in New Mexico. From that we also come into a third best practice. Seek guidance.

It was mentioned earlier that trust is an important thing. It is also very important in seeking guidance as well. You have to trust the community members, the environmental justice leaders in the communities, industry members as well and seek their guidance on how to best approach issues in the community.

The fourth issue is to communicate. Often times the best thing to do is to communicate with industry members. Also with environmental justice community members and with each other to determine exactly what the issues are, keeping constant communication so there is not miscommunications that are occurring. And make sure those communications are open.

The other thing is that we like to seek participation. In 2005 Governor Bill Richardson had signed the executive order on environmental justice and it clearly states that participation is one of the key goals, meaningful participation is one of the key goals in environmental justice.

While it is one thing to put out notices and to inform communities generally that a public hearing may be coming up or that a permit is under consideration, it is not enough. We have to get out into the communities. We have to translate that into Spanish and into tribal dialects in New Mexico.

We have to be -- in our seeking community participation from community and from industry members.

The sixth best practice is acknowledging mistakes and taking responsibility and moving on. I think that often times as governments, we have a lot at stake in our roles, and industry as well and in community environmental justice leadership.

It is hard to admit that mistake are made sometimes. And it is hard to take responsibility for those things but I think being open and accepting that mistakes often times occur and that the best thing is to take responsibility for those things and move on and learn from those mistakes and learn from those things that may have set you back and move on with a better understanding.

The other thing is seeking interest-based problem solving. How do you figure out those interests? Well, you sit down and you listen, you meet, you communicate, you seek guidance and begin to define those interests that are present from the industry and from the communities, from within the government agencies as well.

One of the things I would like to highlight here, when you begin to identify those interests, you can begin to identify those areas where you see collaboration. And those areas where the interests are opposite? Well, come back to those later after you have had time to build those relationships on those common interests. It may work out better. I have learned that it has with my work with

troubled communities.

The eighth item is to raise awareness of environmental justice within the department, with division directors, bureau chiefs, program managers, technical experts, from the very top to the very bottom. Raise awareness about environmental justice with new hires. Make it a part of the common dialogue, the daily dialogue. The part of the discussion.

Also raise awareness with other governmental entities, federal government, Department of Energy, with elected leadership raise awareness as well because eventually, sooner or later, it becomes part of the discussion that is brought to bear on our responsibilities in New Mexico.

I would like to share some examples of our work in New Mexico and start off with Mr. Ruiz's work along the Mexico, New Mexico border.

MR. RUIZ: I might clarify just before I begin this portion, in New Mexico, we have two environmental justice liaisons, my colleague Milton Bluehouse and myself. Milton, for the most part, handles issues in the northern part of the state and I handle the border issues. I am down in Las Cruces, New Mexico, 35 minutes from the U.S. - Mexico border.

I wanted to highlight really one program, and I am sure many of you are familiar with this, at least folks from EPA. One program that I think, surprisingly, has led to

good EJ collaboration or work in EJ with the communities, and that is the EPA Border 2012 program.

Border 2012, if you are not familiar with it, it actually has its roots back from 1994 just after NAFTA was passed. This was an effort to then have both countries look at specifically the environmental impacts of increased trade along the two countries or between the two countries.

We have now the latest incarnation of this agreement between the two countries, and it is called Border 2012, a 10-year plan, which began in 2002, it is going to wrap up in 2012, to come to the table and address border-environment and border-environmental health issues.

This has been a great vehicle for pursuing environmental justice. I could cite a couple of examples in rural communities along the border, and this is the community of Columbus, New Mexico, which sits just on the other side of Palomas, Mexico, in which that community had never seen any sort of air-quality monitoring.

We managed to get grant together under Border 2012 to do joint binational monitoring in the two communities, and two very poor communities, I might add.

Now the residents of those communities have an idea of their air quality status and are very interested in pursuing that work. So that is just one example of Border 2012 work that has been done to further environmental justice on the border.

I am going to pass it over to Milton now to cover

tribal --

MR. BLUEHOUSE: Thanks, Thomas. One of the biggest things that we work on in New Mexico is the tribal issues. There are 22 tribes in New Mexico, federally recognized tribes. They take up about 10.5 percent of the population and have about 11 percent of the land base in New Mexico.

When I first came on board in December of last year, one of the first things that confronted me was the fact the tribal state relations weren't the best. One of the first things we attempted to do was improve that relationship with a Tribal Summit.

I would like to talk about a policy grocery store here. Usually, the approach had been to go to the grocery store, come back and say this is what I got. The policy grocery store. Here is what I got. Enjoy it.

We had to turn that around and say well I am going to go to the policy grocery store. What is it that you guys need? We opened up that discussion and the tribes said what we need is consultation plans. What we need is training. What we need is funding.

Based on that we went to work. We started developing a tribal consultation plan. We are in the final draft right now. It has taken us seven months. We provided training on well testing, geophysics training, meth lab awareness, believe it or not. That is a very big environmental justice issue when you are talking about

chemical hazards associated with meth amphetamine labs. What do you do and how do you handle those things.

We also did training on solid waste enforcement for communities. The other part about it was the support. One thing we urge tribes is to apply for grants within the department. We awarded $150,000 to the Pueblo --- for tire recycling to repave a walking path. They collaborated with Indian Health Service on a diabetes program for that.

And finally, one of the things we really also looked forward to with the tribal issues is really going out into the community and learning the issues.

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you. I said thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Just testing. To see if you all are still out there. The next group will be the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, represented by Nancy Whittle.

In the past year, DHEC has been called upon to take the lead in the implementation of the South Carolina environmental justice law, and that was on June 15th, 2007. DHEC chairs the South Carolina Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, which studies and evaluates practices at all state agencies related to environmental justice during economic development and revitalization projects. So Nancy Whittle.

Comments

by Nancy Whittle

MS. WHITTLE: Thank you, and thank you for letting me be here today and honoring South Carolina DHEC, or the Department of Health and Environmental Control for this award.

We are truly honored to have this award and don't have time to recognize the number of people that really deserve it.

I do want to thank a colleague from Hawaii who showed several photos of Representative Harold Mitchell from South Carolina. He had wanted to be here today to help celebrate with us and share in this, and he was called into an emergency legislative session in South Carolina because of severe budget cuts. So he does send his greetings as well.

I am going to speak a little bit, more broadly, about some public participation efforts that we have been doing in the state as well as tying that in to the EJ statewide advisory panel that was created with the law.

For a number of years, DHEC has really valued public participation and having citizens engaged in our processes. We have done that through the Office of Community Liaison, which is the office that I now lead.

When I came into the position, I realized early on that we were doing some things okay, and we were doing some things that weren't so good. We still had, we had a lot of distrust -- we still do have some distrust from the citizens. Our processes seem to be stagnant. Our

staff -- well, we have done it this way so we are going to continue doing it this way.

I realized we needed to make some drastic changes and created a public participation task force, internal public participation task force made up of a wide array of staff in DHEC.

One of the first thing we recognized, and you heard this in previous discussions, was that we needed to change the internal organizational culture in our agency so that staff really did value meaningful community involvement.

There was a lot of frustration. It was frustration working with citizens. I would go out in the community and listen for hours about how we don't respond. We keep data from communities. We don't explain it in plain language.

And then I would ride back from public meetings at 12:00 a.m. in the morning with our staff, who, -- you know, we have really done the best job we can. We want to protect the environment. We want to protect the health. Yet it is very difficult going to a public meeting and being screamed and yelled at.

So I think something that Dr. McClain said earlier about understanding those different cultures. So recognizing that we needed to change the organizational culture so that it would sustain when I leave, when my boss leaves, so that it becomes ingrained in the way we do

business is a real daunting task.

For anybody who has worked in a large bureaucracy like a government agency, it is almost frightening at times to think about. But we didn't let that stop us. The task force, as they came together, we really began to talk about -- it is not about changing what we do. It is how we do the work.

It is doing it in a different way so that we listen. We truly respect, we value those stories. We value what the community has to bring. And that we use collaborative problem solving to work on issues so that we can come together, not just with citizens but with all the stakeholders.

As we were talking about this, we had a lot of discussions about environmental justice, and, frankly, some of my bosses, a number of the staff that I work with, scared by that term. What does it mean? And again, it is that fear of really not knowing what it is all about.

So we recognized not only did we need to train and work with staff around their attitude and how they work with citizens, but also make them aware of what environmental justice communities were all about.

I can't give enough thanks to Cynthia Peurifoy. She was with us every step of the way as we created these processes and helped us find funding through the U.S. EPA Office of Civil Rights to bring a very talented trainer from the International Association of Public Participation to

Columbia for a weeklong intensive training on meaningful public participation.

We had 14 staff trained. We did have a few people from other states as well as some citizens as well as some industry present during that training. It turned the light bulbs on for some of our staff in recognizing that truly we were, and I think Mr. Wilson said it earlier, we were using a lot of cookie-cutter approaches. This is how we public notice. This is how we do our public meetings without really going and listening and hearing what folks really wanted us to do and wanted us to talk about.

We came together and we came up with a number of goals and strategies, and I certainly don't have time to go over all of those. In a nutshell we believed we really needed to do mandatory training for all staff and engage them in the process. What does public participation mean to you and your job, and how can you improve in working with the public?

And truly getting that notion across as a state agency we are public servants, which I think sometimes folks in government forget that. We created a public participation orientation video, and we have created a training. And in that training we use that video where we ask open-ended questions to get people talking about what it means for them and their job.

We also use the DVD that EPA developed based on Harold Mitchell's model in Spartanburg, Power of

Partnerships: The collaborative problem-solving model at work in Spartanburg to show how effective collaboration can be in an environmental justice community.

Cynthia and her staff have provided EJ training for us. We need to do a lot more of that. I think from my standpoint one of the key hallmarks of this being a success is that folks higher than me recognized that we needed more staff, and in the past two years we have added five positions dedicated to community development or community involvement work, which to me, really says a lot.

As we have moved through this process, we have wanted to change the internal culture, we recognize we now really need to involve the stakeholders. We conducted in the past year three listening sessions around the state. We brought in different stakeholders from industry, environmental groups, grass-roots citizens, and we used kind of a world café process where we asked them about our processes.

We had over 5,000 comments and found that we still are doing a pretty poor job. People weren't happy with the way we public noticed. They weren't happy with the way we do public meetings. So what we want to create is a statewide advisory panel to help us develop a strategy to deal with that.

Real quick, I wanted to speak about the Environmental Justice Act that Harold Mitchell was instrumental in getting passed. It created a statewide

environmental justice panel that I was asked to chair that DHEC was asked to lead. Harold truly did a phenomenal job getting this passed. It was his first year as a House member, and I told him if I bet money, he wouldn't make it happen.

He did it by using collaborative problem solving, Going across the aisle as well as involving unlikely bedfellows, working with industry, working with the chamber, working with all those groups to make this happen.

We planned to do five environmental justice sessions, listening sessions around the state using the same kind of format we did before. Part of the process with this group is we have to make recommendations back to the general assembly by January of 2010. We want that input from the citizens and from all the stakeholders of South Carolina.

Just a few lessons learned, best practices. In order to change a bureaucracy you have got to have the top support, and the top has to be there every step of the way, and it has to come down the chain of command.

You have to train, train and train staff more and put them together with folk who are different so they can learn how to communicate in diverse settings and not be over here with just their kind. That is what happens a lot of times with technically trained people.

Partner, partner, partner, and I can't say enough about partnering with the EPA and the funding they have helped us find. I think as budgets get tighter and tighter,

it truly does behoove us all to truly understand what collaboration means because with the resources we have, if we put them together we can really erase the lines that separate us. And thank you again.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you very much. Now we are going to take about 15-20 minutes for Q-and-A with these three panelists. So I will kick it off again with one question, and I see we are going to go in the same order, me and then you.

Questions and Answers

MR. BENJAMIN: The first question is what kinds of skills and resources are most useful on the activities you have done? And that is for any of the three of you.

MS. HAHN: Well, our resources, we had to pull from what was already developed. We used some state resources. In the county, our hazardous materials division, we had a lot of material that we had to translate, primary language of the businesses.

And the people from the community. We have the Environmental Health Coalition, but, you know, when we got to individual small communities within the community, like the church, they would tell us some of the concerns involving a certain business, what they are doing at midnight. So once we gain their trust they would tell us things, and then I would go in there because I go in there in a nonenforcement capacity, unless I see like a corpse and

then I have to report that corpse.

But for minor violations, I can go in there and teach them. Kind of go in there in a nonenforcement type capacity and do that. Once gaining the trust I think that was it, and then having the resources there to give them right then and there, not later or put it in the mail or something.

MS. WHITTLE: I think from a state agency perspective, you really need staff, some staff who are dedicated, who have a background in human growth development, working with people, facilitation skills, communication skills. Just basic communication skills.

We do a lot of training in that area. How do you talk to people in a way that they can be heard and heard first. I think a lot of times, state programs tend to put -- especially in tight times, money times -- they put funding in those more technical kind of positions, and forget that people part of the formula.

I always look back at risk communication and Peter --- when he talks about risk, when you look at it from an engineering standpoint versus when you look at it from a people standpoint, it is the risk plus the human factor, and the outrage and the quality-of-life issues.

And it is 50-50, and yet sometimes we don't always fund those positions 50-50.

MR. BLUEHOUSE: If I may, one of the big skills in working with tribes in New Mexico and with the various

communities, I think with the tribes particularly is understanding the various protocols that come into play with each of the tribes and understanding, I think, the institutional organization of the tribal governments themselves.

The cultural protocol is very important as well, knowing when tribal councils are being held throughout the week. Understanding that you don't hold meetings, say, on Tuesdays or Mondays in New Mexico because tribes are meeting in council on those days. I think with the communities, one of the biggest skills is coming in with an open mind to learn something and to match those resources within the department to the issues that they present.

I think another big part of this skill is understanding the department and understanding the organizational resources that can bear on the issues and matching up individuals within the department with this particular concern and generating the dialogue with the community members and the department personnel and staff.

MR. RUIZ: I just wanted to add my two cents in agreeing with my colleague from South Carolina. In terms of the hiring of two liaisons now we have for New Mexico, J.R. and myself, having a technical background is good, is important, but being a people type person does wonders.

I think that goes without saying but I just want to give an example of here in southern New Mexico, southern New Mexico and the borderland area, the bishop in the

diocese of Las Cruces, Bishop Ricardo Ramirez, who is a champion -- I wanted to say maverick but that word is kind of overused lately --

(Laughter)

MR. RUIZ: He is a robust maverick. No, he is a champion, a champion of environmental justice issues, and being linked in with a group that is overseen by Bishop Ricardo Ramirez is a great, great way to be tied in, a great resource to be tied in with the issues in the south of New Mexico.

MR. BENJAMIN: We are going to got to Jolene and then John Rosenthall and then Chris Holmes.

MS. CATRON: I don't have like specific questions but just some general comments. First, I would like to thank you, all three entities, for your presentations. I think they were very useful. Ms. Webber, I would specifically like to thank you for providing the perspective on the state side and the bureaucracy and the difficulties you face changing that.

I know, you know, firsthand in the work that I do in my community, again, BLM -- the evil BLM -- just getting them to put a public notice in a public place is a huge issue and something I am always fighting all the time.

But training -- I think if you come into a community with that perspective that, oh, I put a notice in the Federal Register. Why didn't you read it? I did this, I did everything that the law required me to do. Still you

are screaming and yelling at me. It sets up the agency for even more screaming and yelling.

So it starts off on the wrong foot to begin with, so I really appreciate your perspective. Then, to NMED representatives, I am very interested in the New Mexico executive order on environmental justice, would really like to learn more about it and maybe talk to you two specifically about how we can get this information out to more tribes on a national basis on how to work with a state in establishing really strong environmental justice platforms such as New Mexico's.

I am originally from New Mexico so I am very proud of the work that you do. I now live in Wyoming, and if you Google Wyoming and environmental justice, you will actually get zero returns. I am exaggerating, but environmental justice and Wyoming don't go in hand in hand whatsoever.

We are a state that is facing huge issues around energy independence and this whole terminology of energy independence and what does that mean.

Our communities, our environmental justice communities, are the ones that are paying for that energy independence and I don't think anybody is paying attention out there. I think what you have done in New Mexico is really inspiring, and I think it would be great to start spreading the word and getting that information out. Thank you.

MR. RUIZ: If I may, in New Mexico I think we are

really fortunate to have Governor Bill Richardson take a really progressive position on issues like environmental justice and tribal relations. With regards to the tribes, one of the things that we are helped out with is an executive order on tribal consultation plans, pilot plans. That directs each of the state agencies to develop consultation plans with the tribes.

In addition to that there are in the great majority, I would say 90 percent of the agencies tribal liaisons that assist the state agencies in their intergovernmental relations with the various agencies. In my role, particularly, it is an issue for me to, I think -- as a Native American, first of all -- to have three citizenships, one with the tribe, one with the United States and one with the states in which we come.

Often times we run into the issue that sovereignty precludes state participation on issues of various degrees, whether social services, environment, law enforcement, whatever. One of the biggest things we have got to come to an understanding to, I think, in the United States, but one thing we oftentimes reinforce in New Mexico is that tribal citizens are state citizens as well and are entitled to all the services that the state provides.

I would like to add where state authority does not infringe or trump sovereignty. So there is a lot of leeway to work with there, and, again, you go back to the issue of intraspace problem solving. What are those interests that

we can both mutually focus on and collaborate on and focus on those and come back to the harder ones later once we have established those relationships.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, John Rosenthall.

MR. ROSENTHALL: You have each discussed the importance of having interest and support from the top. You have any strategies on how you get that support from the top when that support is not there and you don't have a champion in the agency who wants to generate that support.

That is one scenario. The second one is when you have a champion, when you have a person in the agency who should be your champion, but is a little bit reluctant to try to get that support from the top when they know that support is so required and should be there.

MS. WHITTLE: That is a tough question. I was lucky. When I came into the position I was in, the person at the top really already supported this. He had some concerns about environmental justice and had to work on him there.

I think one of the key things, is though, for these positions, they need to be at top level. They need to be where they are looking across all the programs so that you can ingrain it in. That it is not a program in itself. It is a way we do business. For state agencies that is tough where things are kind of siloed, and how do you come across? I think that is an issue.

The other thing is, one of the things that I have

been told -- as you can see I have been around a long time. Hopefully it won't be a whole lot longer, in this job maybe. One of the things I have been encouraged to do, especially with the new folks I have hired and the folks that our program areas are doing really well in this, is to mentor them, get them out there, role model, take them with me. Do that.

Work with communities to start those partnering processes. I think certainly creating mentor type programs to help those folks. Just one quick thing. I have been lucky. I am actually a social worker by training, and a number of years ago was told if you are a good social worker you don't keep a job very long, especially a community social worker, because you advocate.

I have been lucky. I have always had bosses that let me advocate and let me say what needed to be said. Now, that doesn't always happen, so it is a tough question to answer and I am not sure if I really answered it.

MR. RIVERS: --- we want to get some policy statement out, that what we will do is we will do our research, do a nice little presentation and send it to the person in a leadership position in order to inform them about what is going on.

Another thing we do, we do made-for-TV dialogues. You know, people like to see themselves on TV. So what we'll do, invite that person who might have a problem to be a part of a panel discussion. And then that will force them

to get some information on that particular issue, and they become involved and we win them over to our side.

Those are some little nuances that we work on sometimes.

MR. BLUEHOUSE: If I may, one of the things that is successful, at least -- first of all, I would say that we are very fortunate in New Mexico to have the support from the governor, the secretary and the deputy secretary, senior managers and program managers. On the other hand, not have as much exposure or experience in environmental justice issues or information on tribal issues as well.

And so one thing that I found very successful in my work is going out on field trips to the communities, letting them see the issues the communities are concerned about, the tribes are concerned about, and also incorporating information on the importance of environmental justice on particular issues.

For example, we get a call in on a --- storage plant. Most recent issue that came through. Going out there, gathering the information, meeting with folks, coming back with that information and identifying the proper bureaus within the departments and the bureau chiefs, and in going forward with that information and doing follow up, again and again and again.

And so that is sort of how I have approached situations where we have individuals within a department who may not be as familiar with environmental justice issues or

tribal concerns.

MR. BENJAMIN: We will have John Ridgway, who also comes from a state.

MR. RIDGWAY: Examples I have seen work, John, to your question are to get the executive management of the agencies to at least sign off on formal recognition that they support EJ, make sure their staffs see that. That they are briefed regularly on what is going on. That in itself is not going to do it but it does help. The other is to work with legislative staff who are asking hard questions because the senior level managers, they jump when they hear the legislature call and/or their staff members. And they can ask some very healthy if provocative questions of the senior level managers that sometimes get their attention more than the community folks.

Again, that is not a sole answer but it does help.

MR. BENJAMIN: Chris and then Shankar. We have about 5 minutes.

MR. HOLMES: I was fascinated by the way in which you move sequentially, all of you, through learning, communicating, educating and applying -- these matters you deal with are so complex, these rules. As a quick 30 second anecdote before I make a point, when I left EPA I went into industry to take an environmental job. Almost my first day on the job was to sign a Title 5 Clean Air Act permit.

I was sitting in my office. There was a knock at the door, and a person came with a Safeway cart. Now why

they had a Safeway cart I don't know, but in it were about 20 binders, and I said what is that? And they that is permit. That is the Title 5 permit. I said what is in the binders? They said that is all the data that you have to attest to is correct. This was data from 100 gas turbines.

I said how do we possibly know this is correct? They said, well that is the problem. I said, okay. So then I was thinking about your 22 tribes, Mr. Bluehouse, and your best practice No. 6, which dealt with the acknowledgment of mistakes.

And then I was thinking of Ms. Hahn's educating the people on hazardous waste, which is educating them on RCRA, Resource Conservation Recovery Act, which is extraordinarily complicated set of rules.

So what I am wondering in terms of best practices is how do you build into your best practice as it relates to acknowledging mistakes, some sort of forgiveness, so that when people who are being asked to implement these rules, which are unbelievably complicated, and who face the problem of having a translator to do a dialect or do a second language or a third language, face the problem of something lost in the translation?

What happens when you have someone who comes up and says, in essence, I poured it down the wrong drain and I didn't even realize it was a rule. So what do you do, what kind of progress where efforts are made on that element of a best practice.

MR. BLUEHOUSE: My experience --- and realizing that the relationships weren't the best with the tribes, primarily because we weren't communicating with them as we should be. We weren't consulting with them on various issues that impacted, for example, Rio Grande, the water resources flowing on tribe lands and off tribe lands.

Became very apparent to me during the first tribal summit meeting that we were not doing those things. Afterward, it was important to acknowledge that tribal leadership was essentially correct, that we needed to do a better job.

We set about going to tribal communities, visiting environmental programs, sending our communications to tribes, getting those concerns back and beginning to identify those common interests that we shared in protecting the environment.

Second issue is -- and this is really, I think, exemplifies something is that sometimes we just don't acknowledge there are protocols with tribes that are important. One of the issues we had in our tribal summit again, we didn't notify the tribal leadership that the press was present, and without any type of notification that the press was present, the next day we woke up with this great big newspaper article about tribal leadership saying this about the environment, cultural concerns.

The third day we got a lot of calls back from the tribe saying why didn't alert us that the press was present?

And, you know, it was one of the things where I said I take responsibility for it, and I am sorry. We will do that better the next time around. Thank you for this consideration. So, you know, we go as we learn kind of a thing.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, we are going to take Shankar as the last question. Question and answer down to two minutes.

MR. PRASAD: It is more of a comment than a question, and Mr. --- I want to congratulate all of you and also thank you for your insight.

You mentioned trust, respect, two-way communication, training. In California, many of you are on the team and all of my presentations I have always been proud that California was the first state which wrote EJ definitions into the law and we are doing this, we are doing that. And one of my last presentations I also said we are at the crossroads now.

So with all these things, what has happened, at least in our state, we --- an acknowledgment, we include awareness, and we took the people on the tour, and there was a champion at the --- and also ---, so we made progress. Then the champion left. California's EJ advisory committee is nonexistent today.

We had EJ policies and action items that were adopted by the board and said there will be an update every six months. Since 2005 April we have not seen an update.

We took two years, and I was inside the bureaucracy, we took two years to tell --- policy, on the tribal policy, which never saw the light of day.

So also expectation on the side of the community also changes over time in the terms that it is not a question of improving the communication, making them understand. Will a decision be modified? That becomes the challenge to the next part after establishing that. So are we ready to take that kind of an action, which will satisfy or which will be relevant to the community needs, and how do we bring about that decisional tree change, how we make the decisions, and how we change the tree is also important.

I think --- some states are going through this improving the process --- but essentially ultimately we will have to deal with what is the product going to be. How is the decision -- will it be changed or will it be modified.

I don't have an answer, but I think it is very important that the champion piece is very important and how do we continue that? And that is also another place where if the champion is not there, we always want to talk about -- like for example here, you have an EJ office, OEJ, which continues to embark on that.

So it as important to institutionalize these things as much as you want to integrate into the programs because the existence of EJ office will make those things to continue on, at least strive for that but otherwise it becomes very difficult part of it.

MR. BENJAMIN: All right, we are going to first thank the panel for their presentations.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Judging from the body language and the need for a little technical timeout, we are going to take a two-minute stretch break -- don't go anywhere -- and we are going to get back with the last panel.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

MR. BENJAMIN: Charles said if I don't crack the whip I don't get paid next week. You know, with the mortgage crisis, it is all 50-50 anyway.

All right the order of the remainder of the day will be Bill Gallegos, Communities for a Better Environment. And I am also saying this for the folks queing up your presentations. Lynn Miranda from Duke University, David Rivers from Medical University of South Carolina and then all pressure goes to Dr. Beverley Wright to bring it on home.

All right, welcome back. Thank you all for coming back promptly in exactly two minutes. As you can see that was government time. It was much like how we do our government accounting.

This next session will start out with Communities for a Better Environment.

Non-Governmental, Environmental and Academic Institutions

MR. BENJAMIN: This is our section with non-governmental, environmental organizations and academic

institutions.

CBE was a leader in getting the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to adopt a flair control rule on July 20th, 2005, the first rule in the nation requiring all feasible measurements to prevent petroleum refinery flaring.

Emissions from flares were cut by 90 percent in the Bay Area. Flares had been the area's largest unregulated air pollution source. So let's hear how CBE did that with Bill Gallegos.

Comments

by Bill Gallegos

MR. GALLEGOS: Thank you very much and I want to thank Charles Lee and Richard Moore, my mentor, one of my mentors in the environmental justice field and the entire counsel. It is such an honor to be up here with the other awardees who are incredible leaders in the environmental justice movement.

I want to thank --- that stuck it out. Just so you know that is my high school graduation picture and that is when I was still robust.

(Laughter)

(Slide)

MR. GALLEGOS: Just to say that the premise for our work is that our society has to transition off of fossil fuel. If we use all the fossil fuels that are still in the ground under the ocean, the planet dies. So if the premise by which we work, based on the work of Dr. Hanson from the

Goddard Institute and others, is that we really don't have long time to get it right, that we have to now effect a very significant transition to clean, renewable energy.

So just as California is a big contributor to the problem, it could also be a big contributor to the solution. Cities in California dominate the list of the U.S.'s top 25 worst for air pollution. One of the areas where we work, Wilmington, is the most overpolluted area, most densely populated and overpolluted, in the southern California region.

As one of our allies, Jesse Marcus, likes to say, we're No. 1. climate change will increase the number of bad air days by 75 percent by the end of the century, which is medium warming. Bad air days is kind of a very benign term for really horrible, more intense, hotter, and more frequent heat spells, and the last significant heat spell we had resulted in over 134 deaths related to the heat, which was about 15 times what the normal average is.

California will lose its snowpack water supply and there will be heatwave deaths, and runaway wildfires will drastically increase. We are already having those problems.

(Slide)

If California was a country, it would be the 12th largest emitter of greenhouse gasses, so there is a significant problem.

(Slide)

The industrial pollution in California is

responsible for about 20 percent of its greenhouse gas emissions, and oil refineries are about 40 percent of those industrial emissions. It is the largest industrial emitter of greenhouse gasses and all the other bad stuff that comes out of the pipe.

They are the largest energy using industry in California, and the most energy intensive industry in the United States. And we are the third-largest refining state in the country after Texas and Louisiana.

Right now the trend in terms of fossil fuel production and refining is toward expansion. This is very serious, because at the same time we should be going in the opposite direction, there is a real push by the refineries to expand, and obviously taking advantage of people's concerns about rising gas prices.

The problem is it is not just the expansion in itself, which is bad enough for the front-line communities and for global warming, but the trend is toward refining, put infrastructure for refining dirtier, heavier grades of crude oil, and, of course, they are looking to the --- of Canada, which are the most toxic.

So this is a very, very serious trend that we are concerned about.

(Slide)

This is just a little graphic that we put here. A USA study found that air pollution may actually cause asthma and not make it worse. This is something new. It has

always been as exacerbating the problems of asthma but now it is actually seen as a causal factor. Nonsmoking refinery neighbors had worse lung function than people without refinery pollution and high smog areas. And, of course, they are the worst for children.

(Slide)

Just to give you a sense, those green dots are toxic release facilities. And you can see that area, the red area is where people of color represent more than 80 percent of the population.

So you can notice there, I can't quite tell you where Beverly Hill is at, but I can guarantee you there are no green dots in Beverley Hills. Most of those are in Wilmington, South L.A., East Los Angeles -- the poorer communities, which are mostly African American and Latino.

So the question, is there still a problem with environmental racism, yes, there is. This is one example of it. I know this council is aware that this is very typical of problems all over the United States and in Alaska and other parts of our country, that this is a systemic problem.

It is not a problem just confined to southern California or Richmond, California. It is a systemic problem that requires systemic solutions.

(Slide)

Just a little bit about Wilmington, which is a large refinery community. We have two really large refinery communities in California. Northern California is Richmond,

Contra Costa area, and in southern California it is Wilmington and Carson, down in what we call the southeast Alameda corridor.

We have the Valero refinery, we have the Shell refinery, Conoco-Phillips --- asphalt refinery, BP-Arco. The 110, the 710 freeway. The port of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which together constitute the second largest port in the world.

(Slide)

And you can imagine all the cargo traffic. We have the ships, we have rail, we have trucks -- all of them just a horrendously sticking out diesel into the air.

40,000 diesel truck trips per day along the Alameda corridor. We have sewage treatment plants, recycling facilities, auto-body shops -- hundreds of facilities there in what I mentioned was the most densely populated area of southern California.

So it is just an environmental and public health disaster.

(Slide)

Some statistics about Wilmington. It is interesting because Wilmington, in many of the cities in southeast Los Angeles at one time were primarily white. They are actually white flight communities.

They were communities of whites that had fled the inner-cites as they became darker and went to the southeast Los Angeles area. Then, as the demographics have changed

again and now you can see Latinos constitute nearly 85 percent of the population of Wilmington.

They are poor. Their per capita income is lower, their poverty rates are very, very high. And these are really -- we are always conservative in our figures and these are conservative figures. But you get the sense that it is a poor community of color.

(Slide)

I don't know where that slogan came from but I kind of like it. Drill, baby, drill. This is a neighborhood where we work in Wilmington. Wilmington is part of the city of Los Angeles, and there is a 24-hour a day, 7-day a week oil drilling operation. This is not your little grasshopper going up and down. This is a full-scale oil derrick in the heart of a residential neighborhood right next to a little-league baseball field.

So here are some of the comments people made as we did a survey of the residents. One of them -- every morning you find black film all over the cars. Actually, all over the sidings of people's homes. So you can imagine if it was getting there where else it was getting into in terms of children and the people who live in that community.

(Slide)

San Francisco region is another --- oil industry center. Some youth that worked with us performed a heath survey in a public housing development in Rodeo. A refinery fence line and found very high reported asthma rates,

actually greater than 50 percent.

Just know that for both Wilmington and Richmond-Contra Costa area, childhood asthma rates are much higher than both the county and the statewide levels.

(Slide)

What are we doing about it? Our approach is actually to work from the bottom up. We really do believe in working with as many folks as possible and we try to work with folks at the top and the regulatory agencies and staff and so on.

But 80 percent of our time and resources goes toward organizing, and that is reaching, knocking on doors, doing house meetings, reaching out to them. We go to them, we don't expect them to come to us.

Our approach is to build a multiracial grassroots movement but at the center of the movements that we build are African Americans and Latinos because we know these are two of the communities that are most impacted by environmental resources and that often get played against each other.

So we are very intentional about building black and brown unity, and that includes in the training that we do for our members about black history and Mexican and Chicano history, Latino history, Asian history. We are very intentional about building respect and unity among people who are affected by these problems.

For example, we had some very interesting

discussions about language issues, about language equality, because when you translate a meeting, even if it is simultaneous, it takes longer. And we had that discussion. Why do we do this? Why is it important?

One of our African American members who was talking to some other members from her church, and they were saying why do we have to do this? Why can't they speak English? And she said have you forgotten anything about our history? The first thing they took away from us when we came here from Africa was our language. Won people over. People understood it.

This was a part of our efforts to build a democratic and equal society. So these are some of the things that we do, and we don't just fight against things. We fight for very affirmative things like expanding the democratic process, building more democracy and fighting for real alternatives to fossil fuels.

(Slide)

The thing that we received the award for is flaring. Flaring is kind of that poster child, that is the Dante's inferno. The flames are coming our the smokestack of the refineries and that is when they are burning off excess gasses. It is only supposed to happen when there is an emergency, but we found that most of the refineries were doing it all the time because it was cheaper than installing the best available technology.

There was one exception, and we have to give them

their due, and that was Shell. Shell did the right thing and we offered Shell as the example for the industry, and of course we were ignored for a long time.

(Slide)

It is a very toxic kind of practice. Flaring emits SOx, VOC, PMs -- just all the bad things that you see on there. The oil industry, of course, claimed they were only doing it for emergencies, but when we started actually monitoring this, we couldn't get the air quality management district to do the monitoring so we did some of our own and we found out it was happening all the time.

(Slide)

It took a long time, really like about 10 years, and I have got to say that the key was an organized community. That was the critical thing. We had the science for a long time. We had all the studies, we had all the data, we had all the research to show this was going on, that it was bad. So it wasn't that the decision makers didn't have the knowledge.

We had the legal expertise on our side. Our organizing includes organizing research and legal support and our attorneys, of course, knew all the laws, all the regulations. They provided all of this information to our members and to the decision makers, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. But the key was when our members came on to the scene. When they became the decisive actors in this drama.

This particular meeting, especially that picture photo at the bottom, that is Carla Perez, who was our lead organizer in this campaign. When we went to one of the hearings at the AQMD and the didn't want to let folks in and we said this is a public hearing we are going in. We packed the place.

It is funny -- it is kind of interesting that our science acquired a new validity. We were taken much more seriously. Our legal arguments seemed to get a much better hearing when they saw the room filled with angry residents from the community. This is really, really very important.

(Slide)

This is some of the things that were going on there, all the folks that were part of our effort. That is Dr. Henry Clark, an environmental justice pioneer from -- there with the glasses, from Richmond.

(Slide)

What did we get? Well, we got them -- when we started, they had a gross underestimation of one-tenth of a ton per day. They found out when they reviewed their data it was closer to 22 tons per day on average, over 200 times higher than the start of the regulatory process.

(Slide)

The short of it is we won the most stringent regulations on refinery flaring in the country. After we won the campaign in northern California in the Bay Area, the southern California, Los Angeles, the southern California

Air Quality Management District, in some kind of a friendly competition, I guess, with the Bay Area, adopted similar regulations.

So it was a really significant victory for us. What was the key for us? One is some of the things people have talked about. Really have respect and rely on the community to speak for themselves and to be the primary actors in these kinds of policy discussions.

Secondly, build broad relationships with as many as you can. So we worked with AQMD staff. We met with Bay Area Air Quality Management District board members and we got the refinery workers union, which is the steel workers, very interested. They took a neutral position, which was an incredible victory for us because they didn't oppose us. That was decisive in us wining these regulations.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, we have got to wrap up.

MR. GALLEGOS: Thank you very much.

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Next up, going to go back to this side of the country to Duke University and the Children's Environmental Health Initiative, which will be represented by Dr. Marie Lynn Miranda, a recognized leader in lead poisoning prevention. Duke University has developed childhood lead exposure risk models for several communities across the United States.

The Children's Environmental Health Initiative has

addressed this issue using advanced spatial and statistical analysis to develop the childhood lead exposure risk model. So let's hear some more about that. Dr. Miranda.

Comments

by Dr. Marie Lynn Miranda

DR. MIRANDA: Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here. We were incredibly honored to receive this award. I will just mention that my name is pronounced Mahree Lynn Miranda. I am immigrant so I get to pronounce it however I like and for those of you who are Spanish speakers it is Marielena.

But it is not really just me who is here. I always like to point out that all the work that we do at CEHI is very much the product of a partnership with many, many different community groups, some of which I am delighted to say, traveled to Atlanta with us from Durham and they are sitting back there. They are part of the faithful who have stayed here.

(Slide)

So I will just start by reminding everyone that lead poisoning is the foremost environmental threat to U.S. children today. There is a lot of people in the U.S. who believe lead -- been there, done that, we are done. But, in fact, there are many lingering effects associated with lead poisoning.

It affects many, many children in the United States, but we know that low-income and minority children

have the highest risk. And there are well-documented risk factors, which means we know a lot about which kids are getting exposed.

Which to me sort of begs the question of if we know a lot of about the problem that lead causes and we know a lot about which children are getting exposed why isn't it that we haven't done a better job of preventing those exposures?

And that is very much what we have been working on. The whole idea here is to change the paradigm. As just a little reminder to everyone, I am not sure how many people are aware that this week is National Lead Poisoning Prevention week. Not Lead Poisoning Screening Week but Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, and what we like to emphasize is that we really to change the paradigm.

The current approach is that we wait for kids to get elevated blood lead level, which we detect by going out and doing these screenings, and then we go out to their daycare centers, their homes, their grandmas' houses, their schools to try to figure out where the exposures occurred.

And if you think long and hard enough about that, what you realize is that we are using children as sort of little biosensors in the environment, which doesn't seem like an appropriate thing to do.

So if we really want things to be preventive, we need to be proactive, we need to be strategic, and we need to figure out the places where children are likely to get

exposed and clean up those areas and protect children before more are actually exposed.

(Slide)

At CEHI, the Children's Environmental Health Initiative, we do a lot of work on lead. I am going to talk very briefly about three projects. One is on the link between early childhood lead exposure and educational outcomes. Our lead exposure risk model and lead in drinking water.

What I will say is that every single one of these projects is both a research and education and an outreach project for us, but each project was born out of community members coming to us saying we are really interested in this question. We are trying to figure out some hard answers to some hard questions so that we are in a better position to advocate for the children in our communities.

For me, it speaks very much to the points that -- and the technical bailiwick of my group is in the spatial analysis of data, and it speaks very much to me to the points that people from both South Carolina and New Mexico were making about how you can't just have technical people. You have to have people who can communicate well.

What I really like about the spatial mapping work that we do collaboratively with the community is that the technical work is displayed in this very easily accessible map-based format, and the maps that we generate are very much the product of the questions and the drive that is

brought to us from the community.

So the community has posed the questions. Our technical people have come together to try to figure out what are some meaningful ways to answer those questions. And then the results are sort of mapped in a way that are widely accessible to people, and I will give you some examples of that.

In our early childhood lead exposure and educational outcomes, I will just say briefly that what we did is that we linked the childhood lead surveillance data, which was provided to us by the Children's Environmental Health branch through a negotiated confidentiality agreement.

We linked that to the state end of grade testing exams because we were approached by multiple school districts about their concerns that they had many children who were coming from high lead neighborhoods, that they had school districts that were high lead neighborhoods and they were concerned that this might be part of the issue with the achievement gap in their areas.

What we discovered is that if you link these two data sets -- we are able to demonstrate the current CDC blood lead action level is 10 micrograms per deciliter of lead in blood. What we find is that we see detrimental impacts on both reading and mathematics scores at lead blood level scores as low as two or three micrograms per deciliter.

So if you look at the --- data it says at that CDC blood lead action level of 10 micrograms per deciliter, it is between one and two percent of kids in the U.S. that might have blood levels that high. But if you look at this analysis and say what if I go all the way down to 2 or 3 micrograms per deciliter, then you are talking about one out of every three children in the U.S. having blood lead levels that high.

And most of the children who have blood lead levels that high, they are much more likely to be children of color and children who are poor.

So that is what we found with our lead exposure in educational outcomes and we are working with a lot of school districts and thinking about all the issues of the achievement gap and what it means.

Secondly, we have this childhood lead exposure risk model, which I will talk about, and this lead in drinking water work. But if you look at that it is just sort of boring, right? There is three bullets and a bunch of words and it, you know, some nerdy matrix algebra, GAS person sitting here and it is not really interesting.

What makes it interesting and meaningful is when we collaborate with community advocates and public health agencies. That is when we get the real bang out of all of this. And that is, for all of us in our collaborative groups what makes these partnerships so satisfying.

(Slide)

So the childhood lead exposure risk model, again the idea originated in a community meeting where people were saying you know, it is really not that helpful for you to tell me which counties have high blood lead levels or even for you to tell me which ZIP codes have high blood lead levels.

I need to know on an individual house-by-house basis. Which houses are most likely to have biologically available lead?

So what we did is we combined, in these conversations that went back and forth, we were able to identify relevant data and identify a way of building a model that would be useful to end users. So we took blood lead screening data, U.S. census data and tax parcel data, and by tax parcel I mean the house you live in and the piece of property it sits on constitutes one tax parcel.

And the beauty of tax parcel data is that it is usually really, really good because that is how counties collect their taxes so they keep really good track of it.

So we combined all this data to build a model that compares the relative risk for lead exposure across different geographic areas with any given county. As I mentioned it is resolved at the individual tax parcel level.

So I know on a house-by-house basis where I am most likely to find biologically available lead. We have developed it for 43 counties in North Carolina with a goal of developing it for all 100 counties, and we have multiple

national replications sites.

(Slide)

To give you an example of this, this is the area of central Durham. That is 147 that is running through town from the northwest down to the southeast. The white areas are commercial areas. The darkest blue parcels that are colored in there are ones that we call our priority 1 parcels or the ones that are most likely to contain biologically available lead.

The dark green are priority 2. The light green, priority 3 and the buttercream color priority 4. The way we decided on these four priorities is that we refer to this as our 10-10-40-40 map because the blue parcels are the top 10 percent of the housing stock in terms of the risk for lead. The green parcels are the next 10 percent.

So we could divide this up in any way, it is very straightforward. Why did we decide on this 10-10-40-40 map? Because that is what the health department and the housing department told us would be useful to them. That they wanted to be able to know where to focus their efforts.

To give you a sense -- I am going to zoom in on this area here. Normally I would do a real-time GIS presentation but I am just going to give you a few flat maps.

So that is a zoom in of that particular red square on the larger map. You can see these are individual tax parcels and you can see this real mosaic pattern of where

houses are higher or lower risk. And this allows the county to target its resources.

What I could also map on top of this if I were doing my real-time GIS presentation, I could map where the schools are, where the churches are, where the day care centers are, where the pharmacies are, all of the venues for community interventions.

So it provides this powerful tool. When the Durham County Health Department decided to use this tool to direct its blood-lead screening program, they had a 600 percent increase in the capture rate of children with elevated blood lead levels with 0 percent increase in cost. This made the health director very happy.

The housing department is using this to prioritize its lead rehabilitation dollars so that we are getting in there and cleaning up the highest-risk houses first.

(Slide)

So what was the impact of this model? We identified the 6,300 highest-priority houses in Durham. I will point out again that we have done this for multiple counties in North Carolina and multiple replication sites across the country.

The model is used by community advocates as well as public health and housing officials to prioritize both housing and health interventions. One of my favorite projects, which we are building right now, is one where when a child is born, we look at their residential address, we

see what the lead priority is in that house, and we have a home nurse visiting program in Durham County.

We are trying to work toward when the nurse goes out, if it happens to be a high-risk house for lead, we are teaching lead-safe cleaning practices to those families long before children are starting that hand-to-mouth behavior that is particularly problematic. We are trying very much to switch to a preventive approach rather than a mitigative approach.

MR. BENJAMIN: One minute.

MS. MIRANDA: So the counties in North Carolina use the model, recruit landlords into their programs and we use it to enforce the federal Title 10 disclosure provision.

(Slide)

Lead in drinking water was motivated by incidents in Washington, DC, and Greenville, North Carolina that demonstrated an association between water disinfection processes and childhood lead levels. So we demonstrated that and we were able to identify the houses that were most vulnerable to these water-management changes.

Shortly thereafter there was a Durham child who was lead poisoned and the source was determined to be household plumbing. This led to the creation of the Durham Environmental Lead Collaborative. The thing that I like the best about this is even though the immediate media crisis at the moment was about exposure through lead in drinking water, everybody recognized that the primary source of lead

exposure was still deteriorating lead-based paint, so the emphasis was on all sources.

So we got all the stakeholders together to address the issues together rather than separately. We came up with action items and timelines and specific people who were obligated to act on those.

We did all of that in a public kind of lead summit setting so that all the commitments that were made were made publicly and therefore people that -- we included action items and timelines. It really changed the way people committed to things. This is an example of the action plan that we came up with.

(Slide)

I will conclude by talking about the lessons that we learned. I always argue that good analysis can provide a substrait for better decision making and community-based interventions. But that is what it is, it is a substrait. What you still need is that community engagement and community empowerment to make it meaningful.

Secondly, it is really important to engage stakeholders at all of the different levels. Certainly at the community level but to think about who are your allies and who are the people you have to get on board at all the other levels important as well.

It is important to think comprehensively and look for synergies. For example, with the home nurse visiting program, anytime you send somebody into somebody's home it

is a very, very expensive proposition so let's try to figure out ways that we can hit multiple items at the same time.

Focusing on shared goals, looking for new partnerships and remember the ultimate stakeholder. I think we talk all the time about we have to remember to bring in this community group and we need to bring in this church and we need to bring in this government agency.

But really the ultimate stakeholders are these guys right here. The ultimate stakeholders in all of these children's environmental health issues are children themselves and we need to keep our egos parked outside the door and keep our mind focused on the children in order for us to do our very best by them.

(Slide)

I will conclude by acknowledging the many people who funded our work, our community partners, the Office of Research Support at Duke. It is very, very difficult to do any type of --

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, I really need you to --

MS. MIRANDA: And this is my last five words. It is really important to have that support from the university. And I will finally, finally say that I always like to conclude by acknowledging my own children, who help me to be a better scientist, and who remind me every day when I go home that fostering environments where all children can prosper is all of our responsibility.

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, our next presenter will be representing the Medical University of South Carolina, David Rivers. As early as 1999, MUSC collaborated with EPA in a South Carolina state university to organize a national environmental justice conference with more than 500 attendees.

From 2003 through 2007, MUSC has participated in numerous environmental justice programs, initiatives and meetings, including the national environmental policy commission and its five listening sessions and meetings. Let's hear from David Rivers.

Comments

by David Rivers

MR. RIVERS: Thank you very much. As I told Sue Briggum, I think I suffer from ADD, and this is the longest period of time I have sat in one place in my life, I think. So thank you very much for getting to me.

(Slide)

I would like to start by going to some of the things we do in our program. I think when we talked earlier today, we talked about the benefit of listening sessions as a foundation for what we do. I think recently we have done some reports. We have looked at disasters, the role of first response. The role of first responders in South Carolina.

We had a horrific accident in a place called

Graniteville, South Carolina, where we had a train that derailed with chlorine gas on the track. So we did an analysis of what happened, what went wrong and what were some of the things we could do to prevent that or get the word out in our community should it happen again.

One of the things we found in that response was that people didn't know where to go, what to do. People who were supposed to be first responders didn't know what to do. They weren't trained to do some of the work that was required, and obviously people in the homes didn't know what to do because they had no way 1) to be alerted in that regard.

In some cases the first responders are the first receivers. The hospitals didn't know what to do because they didn't know what had happened. So we did a nice little report that made some recommendations for going forward in case of natural disasters or accidents made by man.

Our great joy was the publication on the work that was done by the National Environmental Policy Commission, which I said earlier, Sue Briggum and Richard Moore and Mildred McClain serve as one of 13 members around the country, which was appointed by Congressman Clyburn to go around and do listening sessions to talk about environmental and health issues.

I will tell you we got ears full of issues that we were trying to codify into one publication. Everything from lack of proper drinking water, water and sewer issues,

talking about some of our health issues, talking about energy issues -- you name it, people had a lot to say.

We were able to, with the help of our commission, to put together a final report. And believe me, that report has been circulated throughout the United States at colleges and universities, governor office, government offices around the country. It has some good recommendations for the foundation for environmental justice issues.

That was published in 2003.

(Slide)

Again, we use listening session because too many times we go into communities and we think we know what the communities want. Give you a good example. We worked with Cynthia Peurifoy I think in early 2000. We had a community in Charleston, and they were concerned with environmental issues.

We were trying to get the community to come up with a listing of their key environmental issues, and I think after our third day, a man by the name of Roscoe Mitchell said look, that is not our issue. Our issue, and what we want, is a community health center. So let's talk about a community health center. What can you guys do to help us get together a community health center?

So working with the city of Charleston, working with the city of North Charleston and working with the county of Charleston and the medical university, we were able to get funding, land for a center that was funded about

10 years ago. That center right now in terms of a health center is still functioning in Charleston and North Charleston right now.

People thought it would go under because low-income people couldn't afford to pay for the services but we established a sliding scale fee, and that center right now is still functioning. Again, that is what the community want, but we went there initially to start another kind of effort.

(Slide)

All these are listening sessions. Next slide.

(Slide)

Another thing we do on an annual basis is working with our congressman, Congressman Clyburn to look at environmental issues that he thinks is necessary to be addressed during the Congressional Black Caucus leadership meeting in Washington, D.C., every year.

As you can see, we talk about environmental justice. We talk about health care issues.

(Slide)

We talk abut energy issues or any other pertinent issues that the congressman and the community deem necessary doing a braintrust. Next slide, please.

(Slide)

Braintrust dealt with -- I know people laugh at this -- but we are talking energy and how to reduce our dependency on foreign fuel. We had done some braintrusts

before on hydrogen. We looked at farm to fuel.

And last month we looked at the application of nuclear technology as a way again, to reduce our dependency on foreign fuel. I guess you might say that might have some detrimental environmental impact. One thing we do in all of our programs, we look at four things that came of the National Environmental policy commission.

We look at the impact on human health, we look at the impact on the environment, we look at environmental justice issues and we look at economic development. We think that in order to develop any policy, you have to look at those four issues in going forward -- for making a balanced decision in going forward. Next slide please.

(Slide)

The next thing we do in community, we look at Community Leadership Institute. We have done about eight institutes now in the state of South Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico. We go into communities again and we talk to community leaders and we see what do you think are some of your key issues because we are trying to look at healthy communities.

When you talk about a healthy community, a lot of people make it very narrow. We look at it in terms of health care, we look at housing, transportation, environmental justice, poverty, education -- all those things that makes a community healthy.

What we do is to bring in leadership from around certain agencies that will address the concerns that have been expressed by the communities, and we have people from the various agencies to come in and provide us with information and other kinds of discussions about those issues. We have done again 18 of these leadership institutes around the country. Next slide, please.

(Slide)

You know, when you go and do a leadership institute and you provide all this information to a community in two days, they are saying well, what is the next step? Are you through? Are you going to come back and help us again?

So what we do, we go back and do a technical assistance workshop using that information to say look, in order to address some of these issues, we know for a fact it is going to cost you resources, so we will bring in people to talk about good grant writing, good contract development, 501 C3 -- what it is. And we help them go online and look for information that will help them be competitive in the grant world.

Since that has happened, we have had a lot of our communities go online with our help and have gotten grants from the federal government, from foundations or what have you. That is the only way you are going to get a community engaged. They got to see tangible results. It is one thing to come and talk the talk and go away and not help them go

through and get resources to address those problems. Next slide, please.

(Slide)

We also, like Mildred always tells us, we always are mindful of youth involvement, of the youth role in all that we do, so we also have with AME church, with the bishop, we have leadership institute during the year where we have about 200, 300 kids, and we give them a heavy dose what we do also in terms of health issues, environmental issues or any other issues that we have through the medical university. Next slide, please.

(Slide)

As you can see, we have done a lot of summits, too. South Carolina is what we call the stroke highway of this country. We have more strokes in South Carolina for some reason than any other state in the country. So we do a lot on health care, health and environment because we think there is a direct link between some health disparities and environmental stresses.

We think they go hand in glove, and we know for a fact that the environment can and does have an impact on human health. Next slide, please.

(Slide)

Another thing we do is made-for-TV dialogue where we look at everything from health issues to environmental issues. We do statewide made-for-TV dialogues. We do national dialogues, international dialogues, looking a

variety of -- everything from environmental justice to health care to energy.

I know for a fact that we have had some national discussion on environmental justice because some of the people like Sue Richard and Mildred have participated in our dialogue. What I have given you is simply a thumbnail sketch of how we try to work with the community to get desired results. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you. Next, in our ultimate presentation today, Dillard University Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, represented by Dr. Beverly Wright.

Since Hurricane Katrina, DSCEJ has focused much of it work on the research, policy and community outreach needs of the displaced minority population of New Orleans. DHECJ has been engaged in job training and placement related to environmental cleanups, with a focus on training displaced New Orleans residents. So now Dr. Wright will share that with us.

Comments

by Beverly Wright, Ph.D.

DR. WRIGHT: Thank you for the award, and thank you to everyone who is present at this very important meeting today.

Dillard University, which is a university that was hit very hard by Katrina, for 13 years I was at Xavier University, that was also hit very hard, and I can tell you

that my campus is extremely excited about receiving this award. So I want to thank you again for raising my status on a new campus, in that we are new on that campus and they don't know us -- a big plus.

(Slide)

I want to talk to you a little bit about Katrina, and I generally start off with what I call the peril. After working for many years in environmental justice, I would say that this is the first time I was a direct victim of a disaster. You wear a different shoe when it hits you very personally. Not that living in cancer alley didn't mean that I wasn't hit but this was a little bit different. It was much more personal --

(Slide)

This is contraflow. This is people attempting to leave the city. These are the people with cars who absolutely could not get out of the city because of traffic jams and running out of gas and a lot of hoopties that ended up on the side of the road that couldn't make the trip.

Sadly enough, the people with the hoopties were mostly minority -- young, single mothers with children and those types. This is what it looked like. It was very difficult to leave.

(Slide)

This is what the disaster did.

(Slide)

An aerial view of the flooding, literally flooded

just about all of New Orleans and the surrounding areas if you know the suburbs of New Orleans. They were also flooded. This is an aerial view that I like to show because it really was these guys who actually helped so many people, plucking them off the top of roofs. I had an elderly uncle who was in that situation and he was saved by helicopters.

(Slide)

This is a close-up view of what some people came home to.

(Slide)

Another aerial view. You can see the amount of water. A close-up view of just how high that water was. And the pain of losing everything and not knowing where you would be going was seen everywhere.

(Slide)

People who were left behind finally being rescued, and if you look at crowd, you see it is mostly women and children and, of course, all of these people are African American.

80 percent of African Americans lost their homes in Katrina.

(Slide)

It was a lot of pain.

(Slide)

Once again, you see women and children, elderly woman very ill, who did not make it, by the way. Once again you see children, elderly people, white and black, who were,

in fact, left behind.

(Slide)

The cavalry comes. We are not quite certain what they are doing but watching us, looking at us but they were there from some part.

(Slide)

Those who made it to shelters, signs of lost children and people who actually helped us get some of our children out even though we didn't know where they were taken, which is why they were lost.

(Slide)

The famous Superdome and the thousands of people who were actually in the dome trying to get out. There were fires. People died.

(Slide)

Coffins do float in New Orleans. We are above sea level and they were all over the place.

(Slide)

Gasoline, Atlanta, Georgia, $5. Went up to $6 a gallon.

(Slide)

People taking care of what they could. A woman feeding a dog with a dead body, and I am sure she did not see -- contamination, mud. This was my neighborhood. This is what it looked like when we returned home. That is what it looked like when we dragged all of our belongings, molded belongs outside. That is a close-up view of it. This is my

bedroom. That is the way it looked when I got home. And the --- that everyone talks about. That is the bar that broke the levees back.

(Slide)

This is a better view where you can see how the community on the right-hand side was completely washed away. That is a close-up look at it. Another close-up look.

(Slide)

And then after Katrina, what did we have? Well, Katrina, of course, left behind debris and hazardous waste. You have heard all of this. Toxic contamination and health threats, although we hear a lot less about that after the storm.

(Slide)

And homes destroyed. Communities destroyed. People left with no place to go. And schools were completely closed. Children left without a place to go to school.

(Slide)

It was also the end of public housing. This is what New Orleans looked like just a few months ago. Large housing projects built with WPA money, many of them bricks. Very difficult to tear down. So what Katrina could not do, HUD did, actually tearing down perfectly good housing stock with people homeless all over the city.

We are living with this right now.

(Slide)

But I also wanted to talk about the progress, which takes you to the project that we started right after the storm. It was called the Katrina Survivors Project. We contacted displaced New Orleans residents and cities where large numbers of us fled. Of course, most of us went to Houston, you probably heard that.

The rest of us went to places like Baton Rouge, Birmingham, Alabama. And a large number of us actually came to Atlanta, Georgia, but Atlanta, Georgia, got our more educated, more upwardly mobile citizens. They got the best of the lot and many of them are still here.

(Slide)

We held meetings in all of these places passing on information to them about the state of the city and what they needed to do to get home. And in our attempt what we found was that people were concerned about contamination. They wanted to go home but they wanted to know just how contaminated it was.

After looking at EPA's samples what I determined was that we had a big, brown field but it wasn't a --- so after working with people who actually live in sites and areas that were like 100 times more dangerous than where we were, I was convinced it was something we could do to come home.

(Slide)

So we started the Safe Way Back Home project. What made this project unique is that it was a collaboration

between universities, labor and environmental and community organizations. It basically offered homeowners, whose properties were flooded by Hurricane Katrina an opportunity to join with us with a proactive approach of cleaning up their own neighborhoods.

(Slide)

What is interesting about this particular project is that we worked with former foes or adversaries as well as persons who had been friends with us. In particular, Motiva Company. We have held many demonstrations against them.

This particular time of trouble they actually came to our aid. Their workers came, they came with water trucks because we had no water and provided the water trucks that had the pressure that we needed to wash down our streets.

(Slide)

To give you an idea, I hate to do a shortened version of this, but we had 180 volunteers from around the country that came to our city. I selected on block. It was the block where I live because we had a lot of legal papers that needed to be signed and you needed the cooperation of the citizens. But my attempt was really to show the federal government what they needed to do to bring people home safely so it was a demonstration project.

It was our hope that they would see it, follow suit. Didn't happen. So we are still at work. But the people were trained in HAZMAT. What you see here, we had classes for the young people so they could work with us in a

safe manner. And then so you have a class on the left, and suiting up on the right, where they had to wear protective gear at that particular time to work in our neighborhood.

We actually went about removing top soil six inches in particular and picking up the debris. That big machine that you see there is actually a FEMA, I don't know what you call it, it is just a big thing that picks up dirt. That is what I call it.

(Laughter)

DR. WRIGHT: Some kind of shovel. The technical term, a big dirt picker-upper. And on the right-hand side at the bottom, that is the steel workers who actually partnered with us on this particular project.

(Slide)

The bottom slide actually shows the group that helped to organize this. They are all steelworkers, and the woman next to me is one of the hardest-working women I know. She could outwork any man on any job.

The Deep South Center has a grant from the National Institute for Environmental Health Scientists where we actually train young men and women in hazmat and a number of other things -- lead, asbestos, mold removal, mold as well. At one of the meetings they kept asking me what can I do to help?

So after about three glasses of wine I said can you help me clean up at least one block as a demonstration project to show the feds what they need to be doing to get

people back home safely and they said sure.

Well, when we all sobered up we realized we had actually committed to a very elaborate project and we didn't know how we were going to get it done. But that is the group and that is how we are moving on.

Looking now at just some pictures, this is exactly what we did. We removed six inches of top soil from 23 houses on the block. We relandscaped it and we also washed down the curbs and even the sides of houses because there was this film all over everywhere, even on the sides of the houses, when we got back home.

(Slide)

This is a picture of the sod, volunteers at the bottom. And I want you to notice the bottom picture because there is a young woman in the back pushing the wheelbarrow but the guy in the front is --

MR. BLACK: Supervising.

(Laughter)

DR. WRIGHT: I am not sure but the women really, really worked. The men worked also. The Red Cross showed up and gave us our Oreo cookies. There we are laying the sod. That is my house at the top. That is kind of what it looked like when they were finishing. When we finished the whole block we actually had a block party. That is what the block looked like after completion.

(Slide)

And, of course, whenever you do something good

politicians show up so there they are grinning for the picture. And I call this the tipping point because this is a house around the corner and this house was done before we got started. It actually ended up being a lady that attended many of our meetings. When we told them what we had to do, I went to her door and knocked on it and she said environmental lady, I heard what you said, and I told her to get to work.

And they actually beat us home and that is how beautiful it was, replacing the grass.

(Slide)

That is our logo, and since that time we have continued block by block, house by house. Even schools, we have actually remediated Martin Luther King Elementary School, and those are the volunteers that keep showing up.

(Slide)

This is our project. Best practices, very quickly. One thing that we learned is that collaboration and partnership is key to winning any battle, even when it includes some of your adversaries. And that we need to build capacity within the community by increasing their knowledge base and their training so that the project has a legacy, which means once we leave, community people can do the work on their own. We don't have to be planted in that community.

We need to invest in human capital, particularly young people because then you can get the help that money

cannot buy with the energy of young folks. And that is the end. I have lots more to say I have been told time is up. Thank you very much.

Questions and Answers

MR. BENJAMIN: All right, thank you. Thank all of the panelists. We are going to do another round of questions. We are actually going to do this in 15 minutes exactly, and I will kick off questions -- let's try to do some folks who haven't had a chance to ask questions first.

I am going to give you a multiple choice to pick from. Either what groups did you fail to connect with and you wish you had and why, or what would you do differently in a similar situation now that you have gone through what you have gone through. So any of you.

DR. WRIGHT: Well, I wouldn't say there was a group that we failed to connect with but I do believe that there was a failure in our inability to get the federal government to follow through on our proposal, and that was -- there was so much politics involved in the whole Katrina situation.

For example, the EPA's data basically said that the soil was contaminated and we had their own numbers. And then we were told that it was completely safe to live there. But after we did our project we couldn't get FEMA to pick up the dirt because FEMA said it was hazardous.

So the community was actually left with a mound of dirt, in other words we followed hazmat procedures, this is

a training program sponsored by the federal government to train people how to remediate soil. We got volunteers to do it and then we couldn't get rid of the dirt.

EPA says it is not contaminated but FEMA wouldn't pick it up because it was and the staff for that wouldn't allow you to pick up hazardous materials. So we are stuck with dirt.

Our suggestion was that the federal government give each homeowner about a $3,000 grant to remediate their own property, which meant that by the end of the process, New Orleans would probably have been the cleanest urban area in the country. But instead of being able to push them in that direction, we were unsuccessful because some people thought if they moved forward on cleaning up New Orleans, it would make people fearful to come back.

Not recognizing -- so the city politics was no, we shouldn't tell people that it is really contaminated. It is going to hurt business, which is what environmental justice people hear all the time. You won't be able to get any businesses to come to the city and so on. But the citizens were just stuck in the middle.

Whereas a $3,000 grant would have made such a big difference in people returning. So we were unable to make that connection. We talked with EPA, we talked with FEMA. Too many lawyers in the process -- when you have lawyers in the room you can't say anything. Can't own up to anything.

That is my personal opinion, and I was told this

by lawyers, which is some of the reasons certain things couldn't be said. It just sort of stands in the way of progress.

The connection that we did make that was positive was that we were able to engage citizens, and citizens, as we speak now, implementing what we told them to do to be safe. People will come home, they just want to make certain they can make it safe to come home.

MR. RIVERS: I think she answered for all of us.

MR. BENJAMIN: Then my NEJAC list is Chuck, Lang, is that Paul, and then Chris.

MR. BARLOW: Dr. Wright, I am Chuck Barlow. You and knew each other in a former life when I was with the Mississippi DEQ and we were in some meetings together ---. I have an office in New Orleans and go back and forth. I just wanted to thank you for the work that you have done for New Orleans.

Our corporate headquarters, we had to move it up to Jackson after the -- and got back into New Orleans as soon as we could but I will never remember -- we always talk about loving to live in peace and quiet but I will never forget the first time I went back to New Orleans, and New Orleans was quiet. And in New Orleans that is a bad thing.

New Orleans isn't supposed to be quiet. So I really just wanted to say thank you for helping to bring some noise back.

DR. WRIGHT: Thank you very much.

MR. MARSH: You know, we always talk about wanting to pursue a collaborative problem-solving process and democratic methods and openness and transparency and so forth and several of the presentations today have reminded us that sometimes you have to do something before that can happen in terms of getting the attention of the people responsible for pollution or the government agencies responsible for doing something about it.

I think that is a useful reminder. I guess my question is whether any of you, particularly those of you who had difficulty getting the attention of government and responsible businesses for contamination have discovered that after you got their attention through whatever it was -- lawsuits or political action or whatever it was, did you find that there was an opportunity for further collaboration with them that potentially got even larger results by encouraging them to invest more in the community?

MR. RIVERS: I think Cynthia Peurifoy is still here? About 10 years ago we started a project in Charleston and we call it looking at Brownsfield. We had about over 300 acres of contaminated land and nobody wanted to touch it.

When Cynthia came in we did a thing called community-based environmental protection program, CBELT, whatever it is. Anyway, we went out and started talking to EPA, got a Brownsfield grant, starting doing some testing and a little clean up, and then we engaged the private

sector, the business community to come in and look at that land.

All of a sudden, working with EPA and working with DEHEC and we got some friendly letters of releasing some of the liability from the prior owner, and right now that is one of the biggest developments going on in the state of South Carolina right now, and the biggest community is all over it.

They got everything from housing to office space to golf courses to school and everything else. It is one of the big programs that is being sponsored in Charleston right now. So you can get them once they see that there is something in it for them.

MR. GALLEGOS: I would say we haven't had a great experience. I will give you an example. The Chevron Corporation, they offered a $61 million community benefits agreement if the community would drop its opposition to the expansion and the community said you can't put a price on the health of our children. You just can't.

This is kind of an obvious tactic and we just don't agree with it. We could use the resources, that would really be good, but what we really need is responsible practices by the Chevron Corporation.

We have actually had much greater success from small and medium-size businesses because we do advocate for them. We do think that sometimes they want to do the right thing and they don't have the resources to do it. So we are

there with them to say these folks need help, whether it is technical assistance or access to credit or access to grants and loans.

So we have much more success with the small and medium-sized businesses because we don't want to kill jobs. When we were advocating for firing we said this will actually create more work. That is actually part of the reason that the refinery workers' union, the steel workers were willing to be neutral on the position.

They were only neutral on the local because the international said you can't support these guys, but they said we want to go neutral. Because we said you can't just add this new equipment and then speed up the workers. This will create new jobs, good jobs and help to clean up the environment and protect public health.

So that is our experience is that -- especially we found with our energy and the oil companies, they just have so much money and so much power that it seems that is what they respond to, power, organized power from the community.

We always reach out our hand to them. In the case of the a power plant they are trying to put in southeast Los Angeles, we said if this is solar wind, we are there with you. We will be at the ribbon cutting, if you make this a clean, renewable energy project.

So we don't have a position that we don't want to work with a business community. We found out very often they tend to want to respond to us the better we are

organized and the broader our alliances. It generally is that, so our emphasis has always been on the smaller and medium-sized businesses.

DR. WRIGHT: We are having a different kind of issue in New Orleans. I could talk about older stuff that we did with Shell, but I think since my presentation was on New Orleans. In the city of New Orleans right now we have just created so much garbage and waste, white goods, you name it. Everything. Then tearing down the housing projects, you know, lots of concrete.

In my neighborhood we have 26 illegal dump sites. Before this storm we had more than that -- we had less than that. It has gone up. We don't have anyplace to put the garbage so the community has been pushing for recycling.

We found a pretty good recycling plant and I told them to follow the California model community betterment agreement. They looked at -- came up with a wonderful plan, and right now we have an all-out attack on the recycling plant by the garbage industry. The --- garbage people putting out all kind of horrible things about the recycling plant, exciting people so they will fight against recycling company.

We are dealing with educating the community on recycling. We got some recycling people who wanted to do good things and have it clean and green and all of this, but now we are fighting the garbage industry which seems to have unlimited resources to scare the community because recycling

means that is less garbage going into their landfill.

So this is a whole new fight, environmental justice fight now between recycling and plasma -- there are all kinds of other things, but the garbage dumps are the ones that are giving us the biggest problem. And that is not Shell but for right now it is like Shell in the city of New Orleans.

DR. MIRANDA: I guess I will add to that, that I think we are in the long run, as any project matures, you want to have the full suite of actors on board. But when you are starting a project, I feel like you always need to think about two things most importantly. The first one is who has got a shared interest, a mutual goal.

The other thing is, within these various private companies or public sector organizations, who has the agility because sometimes even if you have the interest in the large bureaucracy within state government or even within local government or within the federal government, they don't really have the capacity to lead because they are not agile organizations.

So as you are sort of creeping in there and getting your project moving, if you can identify the places within all these various organizational structures where you can find people who have both interest and agility, then you can sort of get the project rolling.

I think, as Dr. Wright made eminently clear in her presentation, once the ball is rolling, everybody wants to

get on top of a good idea and it is a lot easier to bring some of those more sort of larger, not unlike the gigantic dirt-moving instrument, to bring those larger organizations into the game.

But at that starting point when you are really getting going, sometimes you just need to say in the long run we want all these people in it, but right now, here are the key people who can help us get things going.

MS. HAHN: On a regulatory standpoint, our division -- when we have some of these businesses that are not compliant with the hazardous waste laws and rights, and they keep ignoring us, our authority is we write violations and we want compliance for education.

If you keep ignoring us time after time after time and time again, we are going to take you to enforcement. A lot of times our enforcement cases, like if we have BPARCO, we will charge them with a supplemental environmental project. Some of that might be to have us put on a workshop. They might give us some money to do that to educate the small mom-and-pops.

We will put an article in the trade magazines. Instead of just fining them and giving us money, we want them to put it to good use. So we will put it back into the where they are covering their environmental businesses, their industry sector.

MR. BENJAMIN: Paul and then Chris.

MR. MOHAI: Thank you very much. I want to say

how impressed I have been with all the projects I have heard about today, the scope and various issues everybody has faced and the great work that you have all done. It has really been very impressive.

It has also been heartening to hear how, at so many levels and so many different places, these kinds of projects are going on so I want to congratulate everyone who has received an award today.

My question is focused specifically to the academics, and since I am a fellow academic I think I am in a uniquely good position to ask you a question that will put you on the spot. My question is to what level of involvement have you had from your students, and what impact do you think that involvement has had on them?

MR. RIVERS: In our program, we actively seek to involve our students in all of our programs. We have alliances with South Carolina State. We have it with the University of South Carolina. We do leadership institutes focused on getting kids in the pipeline, whether it be in the scientific, medical or whatever arena, we tend to engage them early on the get them in the pipeline early on.

DR. WRIGHT: At Dillard University we have chemistry students who have become really involved in this whole issue because of levels of contamination that were found, and some of the responses by EPA to that contamination.

So they have actually gone out, they have taken

samples, they have put EPAs samples up before and after the storm and so many months away, even when we were told that things were just fine, and they have come back showing that levels have actually increased in arsenic and those kinds of things so they are really, they really become engaged at that level -- the chemistry and biology kids are all around taking samples. They become involved with a number of projects that other groups are involved in.

When we do our landscaping, we actually have our students test the soil before we remediate it and then they come back and test it after with our Professor Agwaramgbo, who is sort of in charge of these students. So I would say we have a cadre of 10 students at Dillard really on the science area becoming very involved.

Then the social science area, students have become more engaged in what you would consider environmental policy because of what they have seen happening around the environmental impacts and really looking at disparities and responses. When you look at the Katrina incident, how long it took, kids are getting really engaged in writing more and more papers.

But they are also interested in processes within government. For example, how it is that, if you are looking at levy protection and we begin waiving everything to move large Army Corps projects ahead to secure, to make the levy safer, and then after three years you find out the only people who got any protection were white and rich.

Students are asking how did this happen? What is the process? They have been delving into the whole process of how projects get into the hopper and how they come out and when. And they have gotten some very interesting findings.

So I believe that because of Katrina and the work we are doing, our students at all levels -- the basic science work they are doing and the social science work has really increased, and the interest in GIS mapping is through the roof. You remember, I think our center got one of the first GIS mapping projects funded by EPA. That has been like 12 years ago, before we even knew how to do it.

I am just amazed how far GIS has advanced. We have students interested in GIS for the first time, I believe, in larger numbers.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay we are going to need to tie a bow on it so Chris we will give you a real quick one-minute window for your question and answer.

MR. HOLMES: It is just an observation. You have all had these great successes and I would think the tremendous need to replicate --- in California with Jolene's work, and the ---, and there is going to be another Katrina, and another Katrina, and the issue is whether DHS is going to be able to capture and apply the knowledge that you have put out there.

I would think this is a great opportunity for the EJ office of the EPA to be able take these bodies of

knowledge and look for ways to have them replicated elsewhere in the administration at the onset of the new administration. Well done.

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you all. I am just going to wrap it up and then pass it back to Richard. First, I want to thank all the presenters today for taking the time to be here. And also thanks to the organizations all around the country who are working hard to do what is best for their communities.

Want to thank them for seeing the problem and taking it on. Thank them for organizing, for collaborating, for being tireless and for holding our feet to the fire in all areas of public service.

Many groups have struggled with little or no money, and sometimes more enemies than friends, and in many cases without the support of agencies like EPA. But we have turned the corner now and through partnerships and collaboration and some infusion of resources we are moving forward.

So I want you to take a moment and imagine the world without the people you have heard from today. Imagine New Orleans without Beverly Wright's efforts. Imagine Durham without those young children not having to face the lead issues. They have made a difference and they have saved lives.

They have shown that one person can make a difference. That you can make a difference. They have used

different approaches, different cultures, different tools, different resources. But in the end, they all achieved results. And it is not that you get there, but that you try.

So I want everybody in the room to give them a great round of applause.

(Applause)

So I thank you for your indulgence and I will pass it back to Richard.

Reflections and Closing Remarks

by Richard Moore

MR. MOORE: Just wanted to begin to close this session for this evening. Just ask Granta -- Granta, did you have any comments you would like to make?

(No response)

MR. MOORE: Okay, I just want to again on behalf of the council, and I think Kent did an excellent job of speaking on our behalf, congratulate all of you, the awardees, for the terrific work you have been doing throughout this long, long period of time.

I will say as we do that in closing, it is very, very important on the part of, I think, both business and industry, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, environmental organizations, and the indigenous tribal organizations and so on that we understand the significant resource that grassroots organizations bring to the table.

I think as many of you have given your presentations today, you have made those linkages between the partnerships and so on.

I will say that much of the work that has been done throughout this country, as you all know from the environmental justice movement perspective, as we speak for ourselves, as we continue to build this movement and strengthen our movement and bring environmental injustice into the environmental justice arena, that without the strength of people like yourselves, those council members that are sitting with us today, and many who have joined us throughout this period of time, that would be a very difficult measure to take.

So, again, thank you all. We are going to reconvene back in the morning.

(Logistics)

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.)