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ADMINISTRATOR JACKSON
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US EPA budget calls for greenhouse gas registry (*Low Carbon Economy*)

11 May 2009
The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has laid out plans for the creation of a $17 million (£11.2 million) greenhouse gas registry as part of its 2010 fiscal budget proposals.

In an attempt to ensure that the fast-developing carbon trading market remains transparent, the government department will develop tools to help measure emissions at their source.

To this end, it proposes to invest in establishing "data reporting and implementation, data management systems and guidance for the regulated community".

The EPA has also set aside $2 million (£1.3 million) for the continuation of efforts to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions by three percent per year.

Blueprints for the $10.5 billion (£6.9 billion) annual budget also include measures to help tackle hazardous waste sites and reduce pollution.

Lisa Jackson, head of the EPA, said that the new budget "reflects the president's commitment to growing a clean energy economy while protecting human health and the environment".

She added: "These investments demonstrate that it is possible to work towards both a green economy and a green environment by positioning EPA to lead the way in green jobs, in innovation and technology and in action on global climate change."

The budget proposals have been sent by the president along with those from other departments to the US Congress, where they will be developed, amended and passed into law before next April.

http://www.epa.gov/budget/

AIR
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Climate vote may change lives of all Americans (*Fort Worth Business Press*)

BY ALEX MILLS

May 11, 2009
As the House Energy and Commerce Committee deliberated over a cap-and-trade program, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently declared that six industrial emissions endanger "the health and welfare of current and future generations."
EPA's declaration was the first formal recognition by the U.S. government of the alleged threats posed by climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

The finding probably will change the lives of every American.

It certainly puts a new and different face on the cap-and-trade debate. Lawmakers no longer have a choice of the bill offered by U. S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-Ca.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and U.S. Representative Edward Markey (D-Mass.), chairman of the Energy Independence and Global Warming Committee, or no action at all. EPA has announced that it will draft and implement regulations if the Congress fails to pass adequate legislation.

The greenhouse gases under the watchful eye of EPA are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride.

The EPA lumped carbon dioxide with the other gases, because they share similar properties. All are long-lived and well-mixed in the atmosphere, and they all trap heat.

Greenhouse gases trap heat, and without them the Earth would be frozen. The sun's incoming energy simply would be reflected and radiated back into space if it were not for greenhouse gases.

Water vapor is by far the most dominant of the greenhouse gases, accounting for about 95 percent of them. Approximately 4.7 percent of the greenhouse gases comes from ocean biologic activity, volcanoes, decaying plans, animal activities, etc. Only 0.3 percent comes from human activities (manufacturing, power generation, transportation and other forms of burning fossil fuels).

James Schlesinger, the nation's first Energy Czar before there was even a Department of Energy, and Robert Hirsch, the manager of the federal renewables program at the Energy Research and Development Administration (the predecessor to the Department of Energy), can't understand why the powers-that-be in Washington are pushing so hard to replace fossil fuels so quickly.

"Why are we ignoring things we know?" Schlesinger and Hirsch wrote in the April 24 issue of The Washington Post. "We know that the sun doesn't always shine and that the wind doesn't always blow. That means that solar cells and wind energy systems don't always provide electric power. Nevertheless, solar and wind energy seem to have

captured the public's support as potentially being the primary or total answer to our electric power needs."

Schlesinger and Hirsch point out that "renewables" like wind and solar originate thousands of miles from consumers and the nation hasn't figured out the grid problem, yet. They also noted that wind and solar only produce 1 percent of the nation's energy requirements today.

"The United States will need an array of electric power production options to meet its needs in the years ahead," they wrote. "Solar and wind will have their places, as will other renewables. Realistically, however, solar and wind will probably only provide a modest percentage of future U.S. power. Some serious realism in energy planning is needed, preferably from analysts who are not backing one horse or another."

Dr. Scott Tinker, director of the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin, called EPA finding that carbon dioxide as a pollutant "absurd."

More and more people wonder about the credibility of the actions of the President and the leadership of the Congress when they propose such drastic changes to Americans lifestyle for something that only causes 0.3 percent of the greenhouse gases and a 1 degree increase in temperature in the last 100 years.

Alex Mills is president of the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers. The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the opinions and/or policies of the Texas Alliance.

Area county gets failing grade (*St. Joseph News-Press*)

Lung Association flunks Clinton County in air quality score
by Ray Scherer
Monday, May 11, 2009
Kansas City's thriving industry and heavy traffic continues to spill dirty air over into Clinton County's rural atmosphere.
County officials received the bad news — an academic-style "F" — from the American Lung Association more than a week ago, but are taking it in stride. After all, they and everyone else realize it's a problem inherited by the whims of wind from its greater southern neighbors.
It is the only failing pollution grade the Lung Association reported for a Northwest Missouri county included in the survey.

"There's not a lot that Clinton County can do," lamented Presiding Commissioner Randall Relford. "We're on the receiving end. It's a bad thing for us."

Mr. Relford said officials have ensured their attendance at all related air quality meetings. The county is probably receiving much of the pollution from Kansas City Power & Light's coal-fired Iatan power plant and emissions from heavy traffic, he added.

Clinton County can at least take care of itself by attempting to build green businesses that bring jobs to its communities, Mr. Relford said.

"We're going to do the best we can," he said.

A Missouri Department of Natural Resources air pollution monitor is stationed at Trimble, Mo. Mr. Relford said he believes the spring's moisture and winds have likely helped improve the monitor's recent readings.

Despite the obvious relationship, he said the Kansas City area doesn't deserve the blame for supplying the pollution.

"They're doing their best," he said. "They're changing their traffic patterns" to help alleviate the heaviest doses, he added.

The Lung Association's 10th air quality report covered 2005-07 and actually lowered Clinton County's grade from a "D" for 2004-06, said spokeswoman Michelle Bernth. The data is based on measurements taken from the Trimble monitor.

The Clinton County grade covers ozone (smog) as one of the three most prevalent types of pollution. The county had 46 high ozone days rated at the orange level — unhealthy for sensitive groups such as older adults and those with heart and lung disease — for the three-year period, according to the association.

Ms. Bernth said it's understood that the county is not generating the air that carries the bad grade. Unfortunately, air pollution does not stay where it is produced, she added.

"People move throughout the metro area," she said of traffic.

It's for the exposure to health risks that the association conducts its studies, Ms. Bernth said. For example, officials said ozone pollution such as that found in Clinton County irritates lungs and can cause wheezing, coughing and asthma attacks.

Every county does not have an air quality monitor, which U.S. Environmental Protection Agency spokesman Dave Bryan said the federal government oversees.

Ray Scherer can be reached

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How Business Views The First 100 Days (*BusinessWeek*)

By Staff
How is President Barack Obama doing on the issues that matter most to the business community? As he hits the 100-day mark, the reviews from the executive suite are decidedly mixed.

The President wins strong marks for aggressive moves to revive the economy and the financial sector, even though how successful those efforts will be remains unclear. But there's also growing concern about the high cost of his agenda--and whether business will get stuck picking up much of the tab. "We're happy with the general outlines of what he's done; things are starting to take hold," says John J. Castellani, the president of the Business Roundtable. Nevertheless, "there are still some things that remain troubling."

Castellani is not the only one who's worried. In early May, the National Association of Manufacturers will fly 200 executives to Washington to lobby Congress and the Administration on such issues as proposed corporate tax hikes and plans to curb carbon emissions. "The business community sees itself as a big target," says Hank Cox, a NAM vice-president. "They need money. Guess where they're going to get it?"

The Administration's heavy intervention in autos and finance has also raised eyebrows in business circles. An additional concern is the intrusion of the government into pay, board selection, and other areas of corporate governance. "In the finance and investment communities, I sense there's a lot of buyer's remorse," says Anne N. Mathias, head of research at Concept Capital's Washington Research Group.

Below is a look at where the most critical issues on the business agenda stand and where they're headed. Obama is off to a running start. But the second 100 days are likely to be a lot tougher than the first, Castellani warns--"and a lot more telling."

ECONOMY

The economy has been job one for Obama & Co. Less than a month into office, the President succeeded in getting a $787 billion stimulus bill through Congress. Corporate jockeying for the funds--which will benefit a broad swath of industries, from construction to telecom to green energy--is in full swing. Housing remains a major drag on growth, and it's too early to tell whether the Administration's two-month-old foreclosure-prevention program will do much to remedy that. Portions of the credit markets have begun to thaw, thanks to unprecedented moves by the Federal Reserve.

Overall, though, lending is still severely constrained. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner and his crew have shied away from nationalizing weak banks in favor of a plan to help entities rid themselves of toxic assets. But no one is certain it will work. Luckily for Obama, the stock market sees some signs the economy may be nearing bottom. The

President himself, however, has cautioned that the recovery will be slow.

LABOR

For employers, "card check" figures as one of the most contentious issues on the President's agenda. The legislation would make it easier for a company's employees to unionize: Instead of casting a secret ballot, workers would simply sign a card. Labor says the measure would help workers gain better pay and access to health care. Business counters it will drive up costs and wipe out jobs. Both sides have put muscle and millions of dollars behind lobbying campaigns.

The President, who owes labor a big debt of gratitude for its support in the campaign, has endorsed the bill. Until recently, however, the Administration didn't appear to have enough votes in the Senate to get it passed. But the calculus may have changed with Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter's surprise announcement on Apr. 28 that he is switching to the Democratic Party. While Specter has said he doesn't back the bill as it's now written, a compromise that preserves the secret ballot while giving labor most of what it wants now looks much more likely.

TRADE

When Obama took office, the prevailing wisdom was he would focus on enforcing existing trade agreements instead of pursuing new ones, as his predecessor had done. On the campaign trail, the Democratic candidate even talked about amending the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Now in office, Obama and his Trade Representative, Ron Kirk, are talking up a relatively proactive agenda. There will be no moves to reopen Nafta, at least for now. And Kirk says he will seek quick congressional passage of a bilateral trade agreement with Panama that was negotiated during the Bush Administration. Prospects for two other holdovers--a free trade pact with Colombia and another with South Korea--are less certain. After all, the Administration still must answer to labor unions and their backers in Congress, a bloc that partly blames free trade for the nation's job losses.

HEALTH

Obama has stuck to his campaign pledge to make health-care reform a priority. Business has welcomed the President's proposal to earmark $19 billion for the rollout of electronic medical records, which many consider a first step toward reining in costs and improving quality of care. The White House convened a health-care summit in March to pave the way for more comprehensive reform of the nation's fee-for-service system. But Obama wants Congress to take the lead on drafting necessary legislation. Senate Democrats have promised to have a bill ready for voting by June.

Health insurers are already mobilizing against the creation of a publicly funded insurance company to compete against private plans--an idea endorsed by Obama. But

the rest of business has so far largely stayed out of that fight.

CORPORATE TAXES

One issue that has the business community united is opposition to the President's proposed changes to the corporate tax code. Throughout the campaign Obama vowed to end tax breaks he says encourage companies to shift jobs and investment abroad. And he demonstrated that he meant it when he unveiled his first budget. The proposal targets $210 billion in new revenues by going after foreign tax breaks, including limiting the ability of U.S.-based multinationals to defer paying taxes on the income they earn overseas until they bring it back home.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and others have formed a broad-based lobbying coalition, PACE, to fight the move, which they say will wipe out rather than save jobs The battle is likely to be fierce--and will probably drag on into next year.

One possible outcome: a compromise under which some of the breaks are eliminated or curtailed, but the tax rate on corporate profits is lowered from its current level of 35%.

CLIMATE

Obama has demonstrated that he is serious about tackling **climate change.** He chose a hard-nosed former **Environmental Protection Agency administrator,** Carol Browner, as his climate and energy czar and tapped a Nobel-winning physicist, Steven Chu, to head the Energy Dept. The stimulus bill channels tens of billions of dollars into renewable energy programs, and additional funds have been set aside to help carmakers develop more fuel-efficient vehicles. The **EPA's** recent finding that carbon dioxide "endangers" public health, and so may be regulated under the **Clean Air Act,** has put business on notice that limits are coming.

The Administration is also clearing the way for states (think California) to enact tougher controls than federal ones on greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles--a move opposed by automakers. There's a surprising amount of business support for the Administration's goal of introducing a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions. But getting the formula right will take a whole lot of wrangling.

Article published May 11, 2009

Though rural, Clallam attacks climate change (*Peninsula Daily*)

By Paul Gottlieb
Peninsula Daily News
EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a three-part series on local response to climate

change.
By Paul Gottlieb
Peninsula Daily News

Though their annual greenhouse gas emissions weigh thousands of metric tons, the North Olympic Peninsula's two county governments -- Clallam and Jefferson -- emit a far lesser volume of climate-changing gases than urban areas.

Still, both counties have formed climate change committees and pledged to reduce their carbon footprints -- the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide they spew into the atmosphere that, in turn, heats the earth's climate -- by 80 percent by 2050.

Over the last 18 months, they surveyed their energy use to determine the metric tons of greenhouse gases their buildings and vehicles emit, using software provided by the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives.

They don't create enough greenhouse gases to make them fall under mandatory state Department of Ecology reporting requirements that begin in 2009, but they are among about 30 communities large and small -- Langley and Coupeville, populations under 1,000, are among them and Sequim soon will be -- that are taking steps to reduce greenhouse gases.

"It's just important not to lose the forest for the trees," said Clallam County Associate Planner Sam Fox, who also chairs the county Climate Advisory Group.

"It's not so much the direct emissions of the county as much as acknowledging what is happening on a global scale is happening here. This is an opportunity that's been presented to us now for changing our behavior, which we will have to do to reduce our impact on the planet."

Climate change is a global issue no matter where you live, said Amy Shatzkin, the International Council's regional manager for the Pacific Northwest, based in Seattle, and the group's liaison with Jefferson and Clallam counties.

"The effects are global, but aside from that issue, this is a moral imperative," Shatzkin said last week.

"It's also the issue of energy usage and management, and do we want to use this as an important tool and in using energy more responsibly and saving taxpayer dollars in doing so."

Population aside, climate change also affects natural resources near and dear to the North Olympic Peninsula, Shatzkin said.

She suggested examining the work of The Climate Impacts Group of the University of Washington (http://cses.washington.edu/cig/), which has conducted detailed studies of

climate change and how it speeds snow-melt, warms salmon-bearing streams and causes drier weather that increases threats from wildfires, she said.

The federal government, too, will be stepping in with mandatory measures, Shatzkin predicted, as the Environmental Protection Agency has declared carbon dioxide a risk to human health.

"It is expected the federal government will create a regulation system for carbon dioxide, so local governments that are dealing with this now have an advantage in terms of dealing with expected government regulations."

But while Port Townsend and Jefferson County are jointly attacking climate change, Sequim, Forks and Port Angeles in Clallam County have gone their own ways on climate change or are heeding the concerns of constituents skeptical about the issue.

"Like all small towns, we are just trying to get through the year with budget issues and all the rest of it," Forks Mayor Nedra Reed said.

"One of the things we have found is that most of the community has mixed notions on climate change."

The Peninsula Daily News interviewed government officials from across the North Olympic Peninsula over the last several weeks to find out what they've been doing to address climate change since Nov. 19, 2007, the last time the PDN took a comprehensive look at the issue.

Monday: What Clallam County and the city of Port Angeles have done to address climate change.

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CLIMATE CHANGE / GLOBAL WARMING
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'Let me rephrase that,' Democrats say (*Los Angeles Times*)

The GOP also seeks words to make voters nod -- not nod off.
BY Peter Nicholas and Jim Tankersley
DATELINE: WASHINGTON
In the debate over his top environmental goals, President Obama is backing away from "cap and trade."

Not the policy. It's the phrase itself, deemed confusing by Democratic pollsters, that has all but disappeared from the president's vocabulary of late.

Now when Obama talks about forcing companies to bid at auction for the right to emit greenhouse gases, he is more apt to mention "market-based" proposals and "clean energy jobs," hinting at a rich new employment source.

Control the language, politicians know, and you stand a better chance of controlling the debate. So the Obama administration, in its push to enact sweeping energy and healthcare policies, has begun refining the phrases it uses in an effort to shape public opinion.

Words that have been vetted in focus groups and polls are seeping into the White House lexicon, while others considered too scary or confounding are falling away.

Today, aides in Obama's Council on Environmental Quality will meet with a research and marketing group that is promoting an alternative to the phrase "**global warming,**" which some pollsters say fails to capture the idea of greenhouse gases threatening the environment.

"There is value in trying to get the messaging right," said a senior White House environmental aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record. "Because at the end of the day this is tricky policy. . . . We want to make sure we're talking in a way that people understand."

Republicans too are rethinking the words they use. The GOP's response to Obama's energy effort is "light-switch tax." Their message is that if Obama gets his way, Americans will be taxed every time they turn on a light.

As for Obama's healthcare overhaul, consultant Frank Luntz led a briefing for Republican aides on Capitol Hill last week to suggest phrases that might prove effective against it.

Luntz especially liked the term "rationing," with its connotation of long waits for medical tests and denial of care.

"The word 'rationing' does induce the negative response you want," Luntz's memo to GOP congressional staff said.

"As you can see," the memo continued, " 'rationing' tests very well against the other healthcare buzzwords that frighten Americans," such as "socialized medicine" and "Hillary-care" -- a reference to Hillary Rodham Clinton's failed effort to revamp healthcare when she was first lady in the 1990s.

The San Francisco firm David Binder Research has conducted focus groups for the

Democratic National Committee, which has shared the findings with White House officials such as senior advisor David Axelrod and Dan Pfeiffer, a deputy communications director. The Democratic committee's expense records show it has paid the firm $87,500 so far this year.

"The problem in the past for Democrats has been once they get elected they revel in talking to each other in policy-ese," said Geoff Garin, a Democratic strategist. "But in doing so, they talk in a language that is incomprehensible to people who live and work outside the bubble."

Results of a recent poll by the Mellman Group were also shared with the White House. The Washington consulting firm undertook a survey for environmentalists that polled 800 likely voters in late March. Its 45-page report recommended playing up the idea that curbing **global warming** would create jobs.

The survey tested 19 phrases and found "clean energy jobs" had the widest appeal, with 42% of the respondents "very enthusiastic" about it.

"Cap and trade," by contrast, ranked next to last, with only 7% registering enthusiasm.

Few people know that the "cap" in the proposed cap-and-trade system refers to the limit that the government would impose on industrial emissions of heat-trapping gases. In order to exceed the caps, polluters would have to buy emission permits from the government and from other companies -- thus, the "trade."

"Cap and trade is a term used by policymakers and insiders, and it's not understood by average Americans," one Democratic strategist said.

Another strategist said the term "trade" reminded people of the volatile stock market, which made them uneasy about the underlying policy.

It seems clear that the White House is absorbing some of these messages. During Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, his website included a section devoted to energy and environmental protection. The phrase "cap and trade" popped up at several points.

In contrast, Obama's White House website carries an energy section that makes no mention of "cap and trade."

A list of energy policy talking points compiled by Obama's Council on Environmental Quality is filled with poll-tested messages, such as variations on the phrase "clean energy jobs."

Republicans' use of the "light-switch tax" is meant to make a simple point: Obama's energy plan costs money. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) used the term on a television talk show in March. Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) and Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) have invoked it too.

"Republicans want to ensure that the American people see the Democrats' energy cap policy for what it really is -- a back-breaking tax on every American in this country who 'dares' use electricity," Brad Dayspring, a spokesman for House Republican Whip Eric Cantor of Virginia, said in an interview Sunday.

Obama privately is advising Democratic members of Congress to pay special attention to the words they use too. Hosting the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the president counseled members to say that the energy and cap-and-trade legislation moving through Congress would create "clean jobs."

"**Global warming**" is a phrase that also may be in jeopardy. Some Democratic pollsters dislike it; others think that jettisoning a term that has been the subject of a vigorous branding campaign would be risky.

One critic of the phrase is Robert Perkowitz, who is meeting with Obama's Council on Environmental Quality today.

Perkowitz said that "90% of people, when they hear about **global warming,** the first person that comes to mind is Al Gore. And if you like Al Gore, you're excited. But if you don't, then that turns you off to **global warming.**"

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Tom Hamburger of the Washington bureau contributed to this report.

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Shimkus, Costello weigh in on cap-and-trade issue (*Belleville News Democrat*)

BY MIKE FITZGERALD
News-Democrat
Metro-east Congressmen John Shimkus and Jerry Costello could not differ more strongly on their stands regarding the dangers of global warming and what human beings can do about it.

Shimkus, R-Collinsville, does not believe it poses a serious danger to human beings, while he thinks there is little people can do to mitigate it, anyway.

In contrast, Costello, D-Belleville, believes global warming does pose a serious threat, and human beings can take steps to slow it.

While Shimkus rejects the conclusions of a long list of eminent climate scientists -- including the Nobel Prize-winning U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change -- Costello said he thinks "the science is there to back it up. The question is how do we address this."

What unites both men, however, is their fierce opposition to a controversial bill sponsored by Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif. -- and strongly supported by Democratic leaders, including President Barack Obama -- that for the first time seeks to put a price on carbon-dioxide emissions by imposing a cap-and-trade system.

Shimkus and Costello agree that this system would unfairly penalize residents and businesses in places such as Illinois that depend heavily on coal-fired electricity, which is the heaviest source of manmade CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions.

"The solution should not be that ratepayers are going to see their utility bills double, triple or quadruple as a result," Costello said. "And that's what I think the Waxman legislation will do."

Shimkus is even more adamant in his criticism of the Waxman bill, one of whose biggest failings is its failure to address the huge amounts of CO2 being emitted by power plants in India and China. In the latter, an average of one new coal power plant opens each week.

The Waxman bill is "going to destroy the economy because we run on fossil fuel economy, and you're not going to get there on wind and solar," Shimkus said.

Meanwhile, environmental groups are pulling hard for the Waxman measure, saying that after eight years of inaction by the Bush White House, it will do two important things: start dealing with a global crisis before truly catastrophic climate events begin -- such as flooded coastlines and severe droughts -- while creating millions of new jobs for a green economy.

Rather than driving up electricity prices, the Waxman bill will encourage greater reliance on alternative forms of electricity generation, said Verena Owen, chairwoman of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign.

"I think what you will see is a definite switch to clean energy production, and that includes energy efficiency," Owen said. "And that will keep the prices down. Fuel diversity is a very good thing."

The impetus to act, and soon, was driven home only three weeks ago, when the federal Environmental Protection Agency proposed a rule declaring greenhouse gases a cause of global warming and a threat to public welfare.

Environmentalists around the world are calling for the United States and other leading industrial nations to take bold action soon. In their view, time is running out.

Unless carbon-dioxide emissions are cut by 80 percent by 2050, catastrophic and irreversible climate disasters will occur, including severe droughts, the loss of polar ice caps, glaciers and lakes and the destruction of countless animal species through habitat loss, environmentalists say.

Shimkus, however, is unmoved by these dire warnings. An adherent of the Biblical story of creation, Shimkus said he does not believe the earth is more than 10,000 years old, while rejecting predictions of impending climate disaster.

"The earth will end only when God determines it is over," Shimkus said during a House hearing on the climate bill in March.

Indeed, if anything, Shimkus believes that the world can even use a little more carbon. Back in the days of dinosaurs, when concentrations of carbon-dioxide were far higher than today, "I would only say that flora and fauna were in great abundance during the eras of the dinosaurs," Shimkus said. "You could argue that the planet was healthier because it had more green things all over, not less."

Meanwhile, the Waxman bill has already run into rough seas from opponents on both sides of the aisle. After two weeks of hearings in late April, Waxman delayed its first markup hearing because of a rift between him and other top Democrats concerning whether it could get even passed this year.

Costello said he is willing to look at a cap-and-trade system, but only if he could be assured that any revenue it raises would be returned to ratepayers and soften the blow of higher electricity prices.

Shimkus rejects the Waxman bill on principle.

"So if you want to have a vibrant country that is successful and competes in the world economy, you need low-cost power, not high-cost power," he said. "You need to have a bigger supply, not a smaller supply."

Contact reporter Mike Fitzgerald at mfitzgerald@bnd.com or 239-2533.

EDITORIAL / OP-ED / COMMENTARY / LETTERS

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Published May 11, 2009

Coal ash spill has long-lasting effect of high chemical levels in soil (*The Olympian*)

THE OLYMPIAN
Dear EarthTalk: What were the environmental impacts of the huge coal ash spill in Tennessee this past December?
– Dave S, Lynnfield, MA
Environmentalists' call for an end to the age of coal — one of the dirtiest and most common of all the fossil fuels we now use — took on new urgency this past December when some 525 million gallons of wet coal ash, enough toxic slurry to flood more than 3,000 acres of nearby land, spilled into the nearby Tennessee River and surrounding areas when a retaining wall at a power plant in the town of Harriman gave way.
The sludge destroyed 12 homes, though no one was directly injured. However, an unprecedented fish kill occurred in the Tennessee River and area tributaries in the aftermath of the spill. According to John Moulton, a spokesman for the Tennessee Valley Authority, which owns the plant, a test of river water near the spill site found elevated levels of lead and thallium, both of which have been linked to birth defects and nervous and reproductive system disorders.

He reassured locals that, although these substances exceeded safety limits for drinking water, they would be filtered out by normal water treatment processes.

But some area residents aren't so sure that they are safe from the effects of the spill, which is estimated to have been over 40 times bigger by volume than the infamous Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989. Calling it an "environmental disaster of epic proportions," Carol Kimmons, a local resident who works at the nonprofit Sequatchie Valley Institute, told reporters that the nasty black ash flowed into "the water supply for Chattanooga and millions of people living downstream in Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky." She added that the spill was 70 percent bigger than a similar one in Kentucky in October 2000 (306 million gallons) that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) referred to at the time as "one of the worst environmental disasters in the Southeastern United States."

More than a year after that Kentucky spill, researchers found levels of lead downstream from where the spill took place that were 400 times higher than the EPA's safe limit. And levels of beryllium were 160 times higher than acceptable EPA levels. "Coal contains huge amounts of heavy metals, and when coal is burned, the organic matter burns off, but many of the nasty chemicals stick around, in higher concentrations," said Kimmons. "Also, coal is 'washed' using some really nasty chemicals, which are also left over in coal slurry." The bottom line, she concluded, is that "coal slurry is really, really toxic stuff."

Ironically, on the very same day as the huge Tennessee spill, a coalition of 39 nonprofit groups delivered a letter to then President-elect Barack Obama asking him to overturn a pending Bush administration rule change that would ease regulations on coal waste disposal. The groups contend that coal ash has already polluted 23 states and that the proposed new rule would only allow more pollution and more risks to human health and the environment. Now-President Obama has pledged to undertake a comprehensive

inventory of liquid coal ash waste and propose new regulations to ensure its safe disposal.

“This disaster proves that regulations around coal slurry impoundments need to be tightened, and not loosened,” said Kimmons. Only time will tell if verbal commitments from Washington materialize into help on the ground.

CONTACTS: Sequatchie Valley Institute, svionline.org; Tennessee Valley Authority, tva.gov.

SEND YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS TO: EarthTalk, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; earthtalk@ emagazine.com. Read past columns at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/archives.php.

ENERGY

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A Green Building, for Those Without Much of the Green Stuff to Spare (*New York Times*)

By SUSAN DOMINUS.
E-mail: susan.dominus@nytimes.com
The green movement has something of an image problem in that the sheen of luxury clings to so much of it, with Whole Foods, hybrid cars and organic silk sweaters pricing themselves out of the lives of most consumers. If you want to find a market that really hates energy inefficiency, try people who are short on money -- like low-income New Yorkers -- people who spend an absurdly high percentage of what money they do have on utilities, a crowd that has the least money to waste on waste.

That's why Christine Prince, 35, an unemployed single mother of three, doesn't mind that the lighting in her two-bedroom apartment in the Bronx is on the dim side. "I don't need that really bright light," she said last week in her home in East Crotona, her 16-month-old son toddling nearby. She walked to her bathroom and flushed the toilet. "See how the water doesn't come all the way to the top?" she said with pride, pointing out a low-flow feature of the plumbing. "It doesn't spray up all over the place."

Since March 10, Ms. Prince has been living in an apartment in the Intervale Green complex, on Intervale Avenue between Freeman Street and Louis Nine Boulevard, an infamous strip of South Bronx urban blight (it served as backdrop for some of the most gruesome scenes in the movie "Fort Apache, the Bronx"). Ms. Prince talks about the new, green, low-income housing development to anyone who will listen, so much so that she is afraid people are going to tell her "to shut up about it." The building, developed by the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation, or

Whedco, a Bronx nonprofit group, opened to qualified low-income residents in February, and has filled about a third of its 128 apartments. And, yes, Ms. Prince does have bragging rights. Designed with a large, glass-windowed lobby, two green roofs and a sculpture-filled courtyard, the development, tasteful, sparkling and eco-friendly, could give many cookie-cutter luxury buildings a run for their money.

Two green roofs? A sculpture garden? What, no indoor pool? Given the current citywide crunch in affordable housing, given our assumptions about green goods as status symbols, it's worth wondering how the social and environmental benefits of a green building are weighed against the additional costs. Very carefully, says Nancy Biberman, Whedco's founder and president.

"This is a subject of intense debate," she acknowledged. But it's her hope, and belief, based on the oversight of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, that the investments in the building's costly, highly insulated windows will easily recuperate their value by reducing the cost of heating. And the costs for residents may end up lower as well. With **Energy-Star** appliances, lighting fixtures designed for compact fluorescent lighting and other amenities, Ms. Biberman says she expects residents' utility bills to be 30 percent less than they would otherwise be.

Even the most skeptical could at least consider Intervale Green a worthwhile experiment -- the state authority provided some financing for the $38 million project and is making the building part of a program to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of green affordable housing.

Ms. Prince, who previously lived near Jerome Avenue in a mice- and roach-infested apartment paid for by the Department of Homeless Services, says that in her new home she can finally breathe easily. And she's not speaking figuratively. "This time of year, I've usually been to the doctor three times for allergies," she says. "But now" -- she inhales deeply through her nose -- "I can breathe in like that." A graying woman loading laundry down the hall immediately commented on how much better she felt since moving in; she said she usually suffered from asthma, but hasn't had so much as a twinge since she moved in a few months ago.

Ms. Biberman is the first to admit that green roofs, as far as she knows, have not yet been proved to reduce energy costs (they cool buildings and reduce storm water runoff), but she says that the roofs, like the generous landscape design, were something her organization deemed worthwhile. "Green has to be something you see, not just what's behind the walls," she said.

The South Bronx was once known exclusively for its burned-down buildings, drug wars and piles of rubble. When historians look back at the current era in the borough, they'll still see intractable crime and poverty, but they'll also see, out of the nonprofit group Sustainable South Bronx, an early program to train unskilled workers in green careers, which may prove to be a model nationwide for stimulus-funded green job-training programs. They'll also see Intervale Green, which Ms. Biberman says is currently the

largest affordable green housing development in the country.

Both the Bronx and the green movement have image problems; the involvement of one with the other may prove crucial in permanently turning both around.

Cut energy use, make your home efficient with easy steps (*Associated Press*)

Story also appeared: *Baltimore Sun*

By Sandy Shore
The Associated Press
May 11, 2009
DENVER
Despite the recession, consumers have even more incentive to take control over those budget-busting energy bills this summer.

Homeowners can take advantage of federal, state and municipal government tax credits and utility rebates.

You can spend nothing or tens of thousands of dollars.

First, find out where most of your energy dollars go to determine where your biggest savings lie. There are several Web site calculators that can do the job, or you can hire a professional.

Here are some ideas to get you started.

Free of Charge

Cold-water laundry -- Savings: At least $40 a year if you have an electric water heater and $30 a year if you use natural gas. Time to recoup cost: none.

Air-dry dishes -- Savings: Estimated to cut a dishwasher's energy use by nearly 50 percent. Time to recoup cost: none.

Faucet, showerhead and pipe repairs -- Savings: A leak of a drip per second can cost as much as $1 per month. Time to recoup cost: none.

Adjust Thermostat -- Savings: Up to 5 percent in energy costs by raising the thermostat a degree or two in the summer. Time to recoup cost: none.

$300 or Less

Water heater insulation blanket -- Cost: $30 or less. Savings: Up to 9 percent of the

water heater's electricity costs per year. What it does: If your water heater is warm to the touch, an insulating blanket can cut the heat loss. Time to recoup cost: Varies.

Programmable thermostat -- Cost: $30 to $100. Savings: About 10 percent of heating and cooling costs per year. What it does: Presets temperatures for different times of the day. Time to recoup cost: Varies.

Power strips -- Cost: As little as $5. Savings: Up to $110 a year according to the think tank SmartPower. What it does: Televisions, computers and similar appliances use energy even when they are powered off. You can disconnect entirely by using centralized power strips. Recoup time: Varies.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs -- Cost $3.50 each (13-watt). Savings: About $9 a year per bulb. What it does: A CFL bulb uses less energy and lasts longer than an incandescent light bulb. Time to recoup cost: About three months.

Caulking -- Cost: About $8 or less. What it does: Seals drafty windows, doors, light switches and vents.

Weather-stripping -- Cost: $3 to $15 depending on materials needed. Time to recoup cost: Varies. What it does: Blocks leaks around doors and windows. Time to recoup cost: Varies.

Insulation -- Cost: Varies depending on utility rates, individual home needs and climate. Use this Energy Department calculator to determine what would suit your needs. http://www.ornl.gov/roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html What it does: Stops air leaks in attics, basements and crawl spaces. Time to recoup cost: Varies.

(The Environmental Protection Agency estimates insulation, caulking and weather-stripping can save 10 percent of the total energy cost). Time to recoup cost: Varies.

$1,000 and Up

Energy-efficient windows -- Cost: The Efficient Windows Collaborative Web site explains each type of window and offers a calculator to determine what would work best for a consumer. Savings: $126 to $465 a year if single-pane windows are replaced with Energy Star-certified windows. Time to recoup cost: Varies.

Solar System -- Cost: $51,000 for 6.5 kilowatt system. Savings: A 6.5 kilowatt system can cut monthly bills by about 85 percent. Time to recoup cost: In New Jersey, a state with generous incentives, about five years.

Appliances -- Cost: Varies depending on model. Savings: 10 percent to 50 percent less energy and water than conventional models. Time to recoup cost: Varies.

Sources: The Energy Department; Energy Information Administration; Alliance to Save

Energy; SmartPower; American Council on Energy-Efficient Economy; Environmental Protection Agency; Efficient Windows Collaborative; Geogenix solar systems.

AP energy writers Ernest Scheyder and Chris Kahn contributed to this report.

GRANTS
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EPA sets grants for Maine (*Associated Press*)

Story also appeared: *Foster's Daily Democrat*

Monday, May 11, 2009
AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — The federal Environmental Protection Agency is planning to announce funding for 20 grants to Maine communities.

Monday's announcement is set for 10 a.m. at the Sanford mill and Aerofab site in Sanford.

The grant money comes from the American Recovery and Revitalization Act of 2009 and general EPA funding. It's to be used to help revitalize former industrial and commercial sites.

Grants are slated for Bath, Greater Portland, Howland, Sanford, Augusta, Lewiston, Orono, Piscataquis County, Washington County and Windham.

EPA to fund cleanup at Mass. Sites(*WHDH-TV*)

HOLYOKE, Mass. -- State and local leaders are joining with officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to announce grants to help Massachusetts communities clean up polluted sites.

The 20 grants, funded with federal stimulus money, will help revitalize former industrial and commercial sites and turn them into community assets.

The formal announcement takes place in Holyoke on Monday at the former Mountain Road Firing Range.

The communities and areas receiving grants are Framingham, Holyoke, New Bedford, North Brookfield, Worcester, Lowell, the Berkshires and the Merrimack Valley.

EPA funds will help with mine cleanup (*Citizens Voice*)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has given the nonprofit Earth Conservancy a $200,000 brownfields cleanup grant for a piece of mine-scarred, environmentally degraded land, U.S. Rep. Paul Kanjorski, D-Nanticoke, announced in a press release.
Published: Monday, May 11, 2009 4:02 AM EDT
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has given the nonprofit Earth Conservancy a $200,000 brownfields cleanup grant for a piece of mine-scarred, environmentally degraded land, U.S. Rep. Paul Kanjorski, D-Nanticoke, announced in a press release.

The funding, which comes with a 40-percent match, will be used to reclaim 37 acres of the 390-acre “Hanover 9” site, which is located partly in Hanover Township and partly in Nanticoke, near Concrete City. The land was strip-mined by the Blue Coal Co. and abandoned when the firm declared bankruptcy in the 1970s.

“Reclamation of this site is important to Earth Conservancy because of its location within the City of Nanticoke and its potential to spur economic revitalization once completed,” Earth Conservancy President Mike Dziak said in a statement.

The site is a main source of acid mine drainage in the Nanticoke Creek watershed, and the land is further marred by illegal dumping and all-terrain-vehicle riding, according to Kanjorski.

Earth Conservancy has put the project out for bid, seeking a contractor to reduce the mine drainage runoff, bring in topsoil and plant grass in the area, Dziak said. He estimates work could begin in June.

Kanjorski helped create Earth Conservancy in 1992 to reclaim former coal mining land so it can be used for recreational, industrial or residential purposes.

“This grant from EPA will enable the organization to continue the beneficial work they started over 15 years ago to recycle mine-scarred land into productive use that can create jobs,” Kanjorski stated.

PESTICIDES
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Good night? Not if the bedbugs bite (*St. Petersburg Times*)

Florida
May 11, 2009 Monday

PAC; Pg. 1PAC
I've seen what bedbugs can do to a 6-year-old child, and it's not a pretty sight.

Last month the EPA held its first National Bed Bug Summit to address the resurgence of these nocturnal bloodsuckers. The pesky critters are on the rise, especially in motels and public housing, but I remember encountering them back in the early 1970s when I was teaching far back in the Tennessee mountains.

Lois, a first-grader in my class, fell asleep around noon every day. Another teacher and I were curious enough to ask why. Lois said she couldn't sleep at night because bugs bit her.

We asked a few more questions, then she peeled away her threadbare sweater. We were horrified! Lois' tiny back was almost blood-raw. I'd never seen bedbug bites before, but I ventured a guess that was confirmed by health department workers who went to the isolated mountain home that was little more than a hollow shack.

Lois and other children in the family slept on makeshift beds that were infested with bedbugs. Health department workers took over, and their management of the situation, though common for that time, is now almost as startling to think of as is Lois' chewed up back.

They handed us a tin can, similar to a large salt shaker, and told us to keep it outside on a peg mounted on the wall. When Lois arrived each day, we were to sprinkle the white powder on her coat and leave it outside. The white powder was DDT, a once widely used insecticide that is now banned.

Something worked: In a few weeks Lois was able to stay awake, the bug problem solved.

I've had only that one encounter - which was enough for me - but friends have told me about their experiences with the nasty bloodsucking insects in motels along interstate highways. Apparently the hard-crusted, apple-seed-size insects have been lying in wait and multiplying rapidly. That, coupled with difficulties on how to control them, has created problems for travelers and establishments trying to ensure cleanliness without losing business.

Recent reports say bedbugs are reaching high numbers in many hotels, even some of the pricier ones. They're also being found in movie theaters, dorm rooms, public transportation, nursing homes and low-cost housing, according to a report from the University of Kentucky Agriculture Department.

The tiny, brown flat bugs can be seen easily and usually hide out in bedding, particularly in the seams and folds of mattresses. They wait for an innocent victim to lie down, then they launch their attack on exposed body parts, piercing the skin to draw blood. When asleep, the victim may not even feel the bite but may notice welts and itching upon

awakening. The bites are not known to transmit disease but can cause infections and allergic reactions.

The Pasco County Health Department has had only a few inquiries about bedbugs, said Deanna Krautner, the agency's health education and communications coordinator. She said questions regarding hotels and motels, nursing homes and public housing go to appropriate agencies for each, who then deal with potential problems.

So what can the average person do besides cringe and suddenly go into a fit of itching at the very thought of these insects?

Awareness and vigilance are probably two of the best techniques in dealing with bedbugs. As summer vacation time arrives, it's best to keep the little critters in mind and use precautions.

When checking into hotels and before even taking luggage or bags into the room, peel back sheets and bed covers to mattress level. Check the seams, and if there is spotting or signs of anything suspicious, report it and ask to be transferred to another room far away from the original one. Repeat the check in the new room. For extra precaution, even if you see nothing suspicious, place luggage and bags on stands or shelves off the floor.

In the event bedbugs are encountered and taken home, the problem goes to a new level.

Of course DDT is no longer available. But extreme heat and cold can be just as lethal.

Infested items can be placed in a clothes dryer of medium to high heat for 10 to 20 minutes. This can be done prior to or in conjunction with washing. Items can also be bagged and sealed in large zip-top bag and placed in the sun or a hot, closed automobile for several days. Or toss the bagged and sealed items in a freezer for a couple of days.

In extreme cases, it's often necessary to fumigate entire buildings, an expensive procedure.

Thankfully, bedbug bites don't have a lasting effect. Lois made a rapid turnaround and carried on with her first-grade work. Most victims endure the itching and continue with what they usually do, and with the right treatment they can make sure they don't let the bedbugs bite again.

RECYCLING

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May 11, 2009 Monday
NEWS; Metro; Pg. 1
State revisits ban on new incinerators;

Opponents fear impact on recycling initiatives (*Boston Globe*)

By David Abel, GLOBE STAFF
SAUGUS - With its two boilers brewing fires at more than 2,200 degrees, the massive incinerator along Bear Creek burns 1,500 tons of trash a day, mounds of which are hauled to the aging plant on tractor-trailers and deposited in an 85-foot-deep pit piled high with soggy cardboard, ripped plastic, and loads of other refuse.

In addition to generating enough electricity to power 47,000 homes a day, the incinerator - one of seven left in the state - releases a constant plume of carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide, and an awful, nose-burning stench.

``Ah, the smell of money,'' John O'Rourke, the incinerator's plant manager, joked during a recent tour.

For the first time in 15 years, environmental officials are considering whether to end the state's moratorium on new incinerators. As part of their effort to revise the state's solid-waste master plan and reduce the 1.5 million tons a year of trash exported from Massachusetts, environmental officials have held meetings around the state over the past six months to seek public comments about whether to revise regulations that have prohibited new incinerators and the expansion of existing plants since 1994.

Over the years, to the chagrin of environmental groups, waste management companies have lobbied aggressively to lift the ban, arguing that new technology significantly reduces emissions and that it's better to burn the trash and collect the resulting energy than dump it in the state's rapidly filling landfills or ship it out of state, sometimes as far as South Carolina.

``The more waste-to-energy plants, the more likely we will reduce overall pollution, because it would mean not having to burn as much coal or oil for electricity,'' said Frank Ferraro, a spokesman for Wheelabrator Technologies, which operates the incinerator in Saugus as well as two others in North Andover and Millbury, all of which provide enough electricity to power more than 150,000 homes a day. ``If you increase the capacity of a waste-to-energy plant, you make more electricity that doesn't have to be created elsewhere; you're not going to have the carbon pollution from transporting it out of state; and we recover metals from the combustion ash.

``There are not enough landfills or waste-to-energy plants,'' he said. ``So the state should have the choice of exploring all options.''

But environmental officials have decried the efforts to end the moratorium, arguing that new incinerators, however improved technologically, would contribute more pollution

and hamper more environmentally sound plans to reduce the state's waste. They say allowing new plants would encourage more incineration of waste and stifle incentives to recycle.

They also note that the state already incinerates about one-quarter of the 12 million tons of waste it produces a year - significantly above the average 7 percent of trash burned nationwide.

``Once you get an incinerator, it's a self-perpetuating thing,'' said Lynne Pledger, a spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Sierra Club. ``It needs a tremendous amount of trash to stay operating and to be economical for the operator. Incinerators lock communities into trash contracts, and much of what could be recycled gets burned.''

Pledger and other environmentalists recently started Don't Waste Massachusetts, an organization that supports the moratorium. Instead of burning more trash, they argue, the state should focus on reducing waste and boosting recycling. They say recycling produces three to five times more energy than incinerating trash.

The state's overall recycling rate for municipal waste stands at about 37 percent, up just 3 percent since 2000, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection.

``Reducing waste and recycling are clear winners over incineration in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating jobs, and protecting public health and the environment,'' said Shanna Cleveland, a staff attorney at the Conservation Law Foundation in Boston. ``The incinerator moratorium was imposed to protect Massachusetts residents from hazardous air pollutants emitted from incinerators. Until there is compelling evidence that new waste-to-energy technologies have solved the problem of toxic emissions, it makes no sense to lift the existing ban.''

State officials said that they're reviewing the new technologies, some of which are used in Europe, and that they will decide over the next few weeks whether ending the moratorium will be a part of the solid-waste master plan they expect to propose this summer.

They said Massachusetts already strictly controls incinerator emissions and, in some cases, has more stringent regulations than the federal government. The state, for example, permits less than half of what the US **Environmental Protection Agency** allows for mercury emissions.

They also noted that the moratorium allows Wheelabrator Technologies and Covanta Energy, which owns the state's other four incinerators, to have a monopoly on trash-burning plants and inhibits them or others from innovating.

``I feel obligated to reexamine this issue,'' said Laurie Burt, commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. ``But I'm not prepared to tell you where we're coming out.''

She added: ``We're looking at how to increase recycling, but what do we do with what's left?''

Some communities exploring the same question have sought the state's approval to bypass the ban by reclassifying some of the new technologies, so they're not considered incinerators.

In Taunton, where the local landfill will be capped in 2013, city officials are seeking the state's blessing to build a $100 million solid-waste plant that would use ``thermal conversion'' technology they say doesn't technically burn the trash and produces 90 percent fewer emissions than existing incinerators.

They say they will continue to encourage recycling, but they argue that the state can't recycle all its waste and that too much of what is recycled ends up in landfills.

``The recycling utopia will never exist,'' said Steve Torres, city solicitor of Taunton. ``When the recycling market is stagnant, a lot of the papers and plastics and cardboards are landfilled, and you get nothing for them. Landfills end the beneficial life of a useful product, and we think it's better they are used for their energy value than become buried.''

But opponents of lifting the ban argue that there's little evidence that the new technology reduces emissions as much as supporters say and that it promotes the wrong public policy. They also argue that the companies running incinerators might start trucking in trash from outside the state to keep their facilities running at full pace.

``Allowing the new incineration technology is absolutely the wrong direction,'' said Eugene B. Benson, legal counsel for Alternatives for Community & Environment in Roxbury. ``It really looks at the problem backwards. The state needs a much more robust program for recycling and to create markets for recycling products. We don't want a competition between burning or recycling materials. But if you build these new incinerators, you'll have more of a market for burning, and it will make it more difficult to create a recycling market.''

In Saugus, which has the state's oldest incinerator, John O'Rourke explained how the plant's 57 workers funnel the trash from rat-infested heaps to the giant incinerators and how the heat produces steam and turns a turbine that connects to the grid.

As one of the 34-year-old plant's 80-foot cranes moved overhead, a steel claw grappled four tons of trash at a time, audibly crushing glass, bending metal, and releasing a rain of cardboard, plastic, wood, everything from tires to mangled furniture.

``There's a lot of electricity that will be created,'' he said.

But he added: ``There's also a lot in there you probably could recycle.''

David Abel can be reached at dabel@globe.com

New certification program helps auto salvage yards protect Hoosiers and the environment (*Muncie Free Press*)

Submitted by kpaul.mallasch on Mon, 05/11/2009 - 4:54am.
INDIANAPOLIS, IN - While the world gears up for the Indianapolis 500, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is helping auto salvage yards tune-up to protect the environment. IDEM's Auto Salvage Recyclers Certificate Program is ready to drop the green flag for summer workshops beginning in May.

IDEM is working with the Auto Salvage Recyclers of Indiana to host a series of workshops focused on helping auto salvage yards improve their environmental stewardship through a new program that will feature workshops, a workbook and instructional DVD. The goal is for auto salvage businesses to achieve gold level certification by voluntarily participating in the new Indiana Clean Yard program.

Below is a list of workshop dates and locations:

- May 27, 2009 IVY Tech, Valparaiso, Ind. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- May 29, 2009 IVY Tech, Indianapolis, Ind. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- June 2, 2009 IU Southeast, New Albany, Ind. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The workshops will incorporate a 105-page workbook with an instructional DVD. Workshops will teach auto salvage yard personnel the benefits of becoming an Indiana Clean Yard, and how to go through the steps to achieve certification.

"This is a great example of how we can work with a particular business sector and help them find ways to improve their process and protect Hoosiers and our environment," said Thomas Easterly, IDEM commissioner. "Auto salvage yards are an important part of Indiana's economy. Working with them to assure they are properly managing the waste fluids, gases, tires and mercury switches generated by their salvage operations is our main objective."

To achieve Indiana Clean Yard certification, auto salvage yards will start with an environmental self-evaluation. After correcting any problems found on the checklist, they will be eligible to be certified by IDEM as an Indiana Clean Yard. If the facility

meets additional requirements, they can achieve the Indiana Clean Yard - Gold Level status. This signifies to all Hoosiers that the auto salvage facility has gone beyond environmental regulations to show that they care about the community and want to protect the environment.

IDEM launched its current initiative for auto salvage facilities in 2007 with a $200,000 State Innovative Grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). IDEM staff members have since conducted numerous inspections around the state to help steer Indiana's 650-plus auto salvage recyclers toward better environmental stewardship and ensure their compliance.

To register or receive more information about the seminars call (800) 451-6027, extension 4-6960.

Auto salvage recyclers can obtain free, confidential compliance assistance and request confidential site visits by contacting IDEM's Office of Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance toll free at (800) 988-7901. For more information, visit the IDEM Web site at www.idem.IN.gov/4993.htm.

TOXICS

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Tuna will get even more toxic, scientists say (*Daily Times*)

The US Geological Survey (USGS) has released a landmark study explaining the link between global mercury emissions and the contamination of tuna and other marine life in the North Pacific Ocean.

According to the study published in the Global Biochemical Cycles, the rate of mercury contamination in tuna and other Pacific fish has increased 30 percent since 1990 and is expected to increase another 50 percent by 2050, particularly if China continues to build more coal-fired power plants.

The study documented the formation of methylmercury, a highly toxic form of mercury that accumulates in the aquatic food chain and shows up in predators like tuna that get it from the fish they consume.

Methylmercury is produced in mid depth ocean waters by a process called ocean rain, where algae that thrive in the sunlit surface waters die quickly, drift downward and settle

at greater depths. The algae are then decomposed by bacteria and the interaction with mercury results in methylmercury.

Mercury poisoning early in life has been linked to developmental defects as well as other serious health problems, prompting the Environmental Protection Agency to advise pregnant and nursing women along with young children against eating many fish. US officials say that 75 percent of all human exposure to mercury comes from eating tainted fish.

Mercury researchers typically look to the atmosphere for mercury pollution, which is associated with emissions from land based combustion facilities, but this study underlines the significance of long-range transport of mercury within the ocean that originates in the western Pacific, according to USGS scientist and co-writer David Krabbenhoft. afp

WATER

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Absorbing a Setback (*Time*)

May 11, 2009
U.S. Edition
GLOBAL BUSINESS; Thinking Big; Pg. GB8 Vol. 173 No. 18
Absorbing a Setback.
By Coeli Carr
AbTech's founder couldn't sell his pollution solution to Big Oil. Turns out that big cities need it more

In 1994, Glenn Rink figured out a way to turn oil slicks into solid sheets that could be easily plucked out of the water. "This is going to save the world," he remembers thinking shortly after creating AbTech Industries in 1996. The oil companies he pegged as must-have buyers didn't share his vision. But Rink was convinced that his technology--which makes pollutants permanently adhere to the inner core of an absorbent material--had to have a profitable application somewhere. Today, AbTech, in Scottsdale, Ariz., is a leader in the design and manufacture of products that, under the Smart Sponge brand, trap toxins found in storm-water runoff before they spill into coastal and other bodies of water.

Storm-water runoff--also called urban runoff or runoff pollution--is rainwater plus everything else it sucks up after hitting the ground: oil and grease from autos, emissions, brake dust, road salts and pathogens from animal waste. "In many U.S. cities, urban runoff far exceeds industrial waste as the main pollutant in local waterways," says Steve Fleischli, president of the environmental watchdog Waterkeeper

Alliance. The growth of AbTech's revenues--projected to crack $10 million in 2010--speaks to the growing number of cities eager to address the problem.

They have to. A municipal management plan for storm-water runoff is mandated by the **Clean Water Act.** Early this year, Urban Stormwater Management in the United States, a report commissioned by the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, recommended a number of ways to manage runoff, including using structural devices, like the kind AbTech produces. "Fixing storm-water runoff is money well spent, but the **EPA's** storm-water program is vastly underfunded," says Claire Welty, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and the chair of the committee that wrote the report. Rink is hoping that his merchandise appeals to budget-strapped municipalities. "Compared with building new storm-water treatment plants or upgrading already existing facilities to handle runoff pollution, which would cost in the millions of dollars, our products are very affordable," he says. The federal stimulus bill could make them even more so.

AbTech's Ultra-Urban filters--filters installed in catch basins, located internally at drain intakes--are sold in a dozen sizes and cost between a few hundred and a thousand dollars apiece, including the suspension hardware. Comprising about 70% of Rink's business, AbTech's Smart Paks--filters that are inserted near the end of the pipes that empty into receiving waters--cost between $100 and $300 each. All Smart Sponge product lines use the same polymer technology. And Rink's original oil-spill product, now called the Passive Skimmer, is still available.

AbTech's clients have included more than 100 U.S. cities, such as Los Angeles, Miami, Seattle and Portland, Ore. As part of a $1 million government-funded pilot project, the city of Long Beach, Calif., bought 1,900 filters for more than 500 catch basins. An analysis showed that the filters' boxes had captured 92,000 lb. (42,000 kg) of contaminants, including debris, sediment, oil, grease and heavy metals, and an additional 25,000 lb. (11,000 kg) of hydrocarbons and oil derivatives, says Tom Leary, the city's storm-water environmental-compliance officer. Once he gets more funding, Leary plans to buy 10,000 more. "I want them in all 4,000 of the city's catch basins," he says.

U.S. cities are not the only municipalities seeking runoff solutions. Rink has shipped products to cities in France, Italy, Switzerland, England and Canada, and he launched a pilot program in Moscow. But he was surprised to receive a call in late 2008 from the Chinese government requesting samples. "Early this year, they inquired about our 40-ft.-container pricing, which can run as much as $800,000," says Rink. "Two weeks later they asked us for a better price. They said they wanted to do all of Shanghai." It's a big, dirty world out there. Someone is going to have to clean it up.

Learn More
Listen to a podcast and see more pictures at time.com/thinkingbig

BOX STORY:

HOW IT WORKS
Smart Sponges are made of two polymers: SBS, an absorbent, and EPDM, which adds structure and elasticity. As storm water passes through, the polymers trap and solidify pollutants.

Muddy Water Watch class to train volunteers on sediment and erosion control (*Lexington Dispatch*)

Published: Monday, May 11, 2009 at 5:00 a.m.
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WINSTON-SALEM | The Yadkin Riverkeeper will hold two classes aimed at stemming flood of sediment impacting rivers, streams and drinking water supplies.
The two-day Muddy Water Watch training class will help participants enforce the erosion and sedimentation laws in North Carolina.
Sediment and erosion, releasing dirt and contaminates into storm drains and creeks is the leading cause of water pollution in the Yadkin River Basin, according to a press release from the Yadkin Riverkeeper. According to EPA Region IV and N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, they receive more public complaints about sediment than any other environmental concern.

The purpose of the Muddy Water Watch program is to train volunteers in identifying sediment and erosion control problems at active construction sites and procedures for working with regulatory officials to correct sediment and erosion problems. Yadkin Riverkeeper is looking for MWW volunteers to: monitor construction sites and take pictures of potential violations; document and report off-site sedimentation and waterways that are polluted with excessive sediment; learn how to use several data storage Web sites; take aerial photographs after heavy rainfalls; and much more. No previous knowledge of erosion and sediment control is needed, just a motivation to learn and protect water resources.

Muddy Water Watch workshops begin on Saturday, May 16 at the Southside Public Library, 3185 Buchanan St. in Winston-Salem, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. and continue on May 23, for a total of two sessions. Additionally, participants will make at least one visit to an active construction site. The workshop includes volunteer guidance and training, understanding existing laws and regulations to control sediment runoff, instructions on the use of training materials, construction site visits and guest speakers from the City of Winston Salem. Classes are open to the public, and no registration fee is required.

For additional information or to register for the classes, visit www.yadkinriverkeeper.org or call 293-8105.

Niles looks at sewer upgrade (*Warren Tribune Chronicle*)

By AMANDA SMITH-TEUTSCH Tribune Chronicle
POSTED: May 11, 2009 NILES - The city's aging sewage treatment plant must be replaced within the next few years, engineers say.
"The EPA considers the technology in place in Niles to be failed technology," Robert R. Hrusovsky, with the city's engineering firm, MWH of Cleveland, said. "It does not perform as well as it should."
He presented proposals for the plant's replacement to City Council's utilities committee earlier this month. The price tag could be as high as $24 million.
The sewage plant is 30 years old, city water and wastewater Superintendent Randy Fabrizio said. It doesn't have the capacity to keep up with rainwater flowing into the sewer system, and the system often must use a less-complete purification system called "bypassing" to keep the system from flooding.

Water still is treated for bacteria during this method, but the process is not as complete as it may be, he said.

"The Environmental Protection Agency has tolerated this up to a point, but eventually this will lead to fines and fees and violations and a lot of bad things are going to happen," Fabrizio said.

To correct the problems at the plant, city engineering consultants are recommending a complete overhaul of the treatment plant, removing the technology that doesn't work and replacing it with modern equipment. The project could cost as much as $24 million, officials said.

The city has several options to look at while upgrading the plant, including new technologies that use UV radiation instead of chemicals to treat water that's being discharged into the Mahoning River, Hrusovsky said. The system currently uses chlorine to disinfect the wastewater and then adds dechlorination chemicals to remove the disinfectant before it's discharged.

Councilmen Ed McCormick and Stephen Papalas asked about the possibility of reusing sludge, a byproduct from the treatment process.

"I've heard some cities are burning their sludge to run their plants," Papalas said. The energy created by the burning of the material could be used to offset power usage at the facility, he said.

The consultant said the process could be added at a reduced cost. Some cities also sell their sludge to other companies to burn for energy, he said.

Also as part of the sewer upgrades, a large stormwater retention facility is being built on Fairlawn Avenue to replace a facility that has been deemed inadequate.

"This new facility will have 500,000 gallons of storage," Fabrizio said.

It will stop stormwater from flowing directly into the Mosquito Creek. The existing facility has about a tenth of that capacity, he said.

At council's meeting last week, Fabrizio said the plans for the facility were well-received by the EPA. The city is in line to receive a $2 million grant through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act to build the stormwater facility.

Council approved sewer rate increases last summer to pay for the needed sewer projects. Rates for treatment increased by 20 cents per unit; the city has estimated the average user will see an increase of $2 per month.

An additional service fee will increase by $1 in 2010. Rates will continue to increase the beginning of each year until Jan. 1, 2011, when the service fee will be $4.97 and the treatment fee will be $2.71 per unit. The average monthly bill at that point will be $32.07, the city estimates, a $7 monthly increase over the three-year time period.

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New Ky. Parking Lot Absorbs Storm Water (*Associated Press*)

Story also appeared: *WCPO News*

Last Update: 5:46 am

GEORGETOWN, Ky. (AP) - All parking lots are not created equal.

In an effort to protect the state's waterways from pollutants that wash off parking lots when it rains, the city of Georgetown used a federal grant to build a lot that absorbs storm water and filters it naturally.

"It's more than a parking lot," Eric W. Larson, Georgetown's city engineer, told the Lexington Herald-Leader. "It's a water quality education center."

The 11-space lot sits on one-third of an acre beside Georgetown's Fire Station No. 3 and could be a partial solution to storm water runoff problems faced by Kentucky cities.

Normally, when rain hits a parking lot, oil and other pollutants quickly run off into the nearest waterway.

But this lot, built with a $456,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is a first-in-Kentucky display of new technologies designed to give storm water a natural treatment where it falls, preventing those pollutants from running off.

The lot is paved with what is called pervious concrete, and portions of it are also paved with porous asphalt and concrete paving bricks that allow rain to soak through.

Beneath the lot are two types of storage containers that, combined, hold more than 70,000 gallons.

Water runs through the various paving materials into the containers, then soaks through a layer of crushed rock that the containers sit on.

There also are small rain gardens filled with native plants in the parking lot, and a rain garden and rain barrel next to the fire station.

All together, the lot is designed to contain a 100-year storm, or 6.7 inches of rain in 24 hours.

Sharing how the parking lot was constructed and how it works are both part of the grant requirements.

CDP Engineers, the Lexington firm that did the design, held seven field days as the work progressed.

At one of the field days, a fire hose was turned on the parking lot. The water soaked in immediately.

Larson, the city engineer, said that signs will be put up in the lot explaining how the various technologies work.

The city also has a camera it can lower into the storage tanks to make sure they are working properly. The University of Kentucky will measure water quantity and quality.

Larson plans to conduct tours for school kids and others. The idea, he said, is for this type of construction to become more common.

"This is a step in the right direction to encourage developers and businesses to build this into their sites," he said.

Birmingham, Montevallo, Alabama water projects set for stimulus funds (*Birmingham News*)

Monday, May 11, 2009
MALCOMB DANIELS
News staff writer
Birmingham and Montevallo are among a list of cities and communities set to receive a portion of $60 million in federal stimulus money for water and sewer projects.

The Birmingham Water Works will use its money to make improvements at its Shades Mountain Filter Plant on U.S. 280.

The Montevallo Water and Sewer Department plans to use its share to replace its "outdated" sewer plant, said Jimmy Wilson, the department's manager.

The existing plant is 30 to 40 years old, Wilson said. "It's done lived its life," he said.

The two made a revised list of cities and communities set to receive funds. The list was released by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, which is in charge of distributing stimulus funds for water and sewer projects.

"It was a surprise to us," Wilson said.

Montevallo is set to receive $8 million to build its new plant. Birmingham will get $10 million to improve its Shades Mountain water filtration plant.

The Birmingham and Montevallo projects were not on the first list of projects ADEM released on March 9.

ADEM is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to get final approval for the projects. Then the money would go to cities and communities on the list, said ADEM spokesman Scott Hughes.

Hughes said he doesn't expect the list to change, based on input from EPA.

ADEM is distributing stimulus funds through its low-interest loan program for water and sewer projects, but part of the money going to cities and communities will not have to be paid back.

Montevallo will not have to pay back $2.7 million of its $8 million loan. Birmingham will not have to repay $3.5 million.

In all, ADEM is proposing $92 million for sewer and water projects. Montevallo was preparing to take steps to fund its project through bonds before it got the word from ADEM that it would receive some of the money, Wilson said.

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