

# OPEN CHANNEL NEWS

MCES Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention

Issue #31/ May 2009



## Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) is one of three divisions of the Metropolitan Council, a regional public agency working for the seven-county metropolitan area. The mission of MCES is to provide wastewater services that protect the public health and environment while supporting regional growth.

Services provided by MCES ensure that:

- (1) sufficient sewer capacity exists to serve planned development, and sufficient capital investments are made to preserve the region's water quality;
- (2) wastewater collection and treatment services are provided in a cost- and quality-competitive manner for 105 communities and nearly 800 industrial clients; and
- (3) local plans provide for adequate water supply and nonpoint source pollution prevention in the region.



Workers used high-pressure water hoses to clean off the fine-bubble air diffusers at the bottom of a large treatment tank at the Metro Plant.

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## MCES is Finalist for Prestigious State Environmental Award

An energy-reduction partnership between Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) and Xcel Energy was announced a finalist in the 2009 Minnesota Environment Initiative (MEI) Awards competition for Energy and Climate Protection.

The MEI awards program is an annual spring celebration that recognizes 15 innovative environmental partnerships from across Minnesota. Award winners are announced in five categories: Energy and Climate Protection, Environmental Education, Environmental Management, Green Building and Development, and Green Business. More than 70 partnerships were nominated.

The MCES and Xcel project, “Industrial Process Efficiency CIP Program,” was the first of its kind. Xcel is now modeling other partnerships after it.

The project is just one part of MCES general manager Bill Moore’s goal to reduce the agency's fossil fuel purchases by 15 percent by 2010. As of last Dec. 31, MCES was 66 percent of the way to its goal. “I am confident we will meet our energy reduction goal,” Moore said.

*Continued...*

### Important Dates:

June 18, 2009 – Industrial Waste Customer Forum at 8 a.m. at IWPP Section Office, 455 Etna St., Suite 32, St. Paul

July 15, 2009 – Liquid Waste Hauler reports due at MCES offices.

July 30, 2009 – All Regular and Special Discharge quarterly, and semi-annual reports due at MCES offices.

**Mail Reports to: MCES, IWPP Section, 390 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-1805.**

## **MCES is Finalist for Prestigious State Environmental Award**

*Continued...*

It is estimated that the conservation work already implemented throughout MCES will save its wastewater rate payers more than \$1.4 million per year.

The MCES and Xcel project greatly reduces the total energy use at wastewater treatment plants and decreases the amount of carbon dioxide emitted in the air, thereby reducing greenhouse gases.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that one kWh of electricity produces 1.26 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions. Between 2006 (when the energy reduction goal was initiated) and 2008, energy use reductions equivalent to almost 23 million kWh (14,500 tons of carbon dioxide) were achieved from this project alone.

Across MCES, more than 40 energy-saving measures were identified, including 16 that were implemented in 2008.

MCES energy specialist Brad Gehring said, "Our collaboration with Xcel Energy was an important first step in our energy management plan. It allowed us to leverage our resources and greatly expedited the identification of our energy savings opportunities."

Last year, MCES received more than \$225,000 in rebates and bonuses from Xcel for exceeding the goals of its energy management plan. The project is now being replicated in other parts of the Council and the country. "The work is ground-breaking and contributes to our ability to pursue other energy and climate work," said Jason Willett, MCES Energy Team chair.

## **Regional Wastewater Treatment Plants Earn Kudos**

When the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) hands out its annual awards for wastewater treatment plant performance, it always takes awhile to get through the utilities starting with the letter "M." That's due, in part, to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES), which can be called up to the stage as many as eight times – once for each plant in the running for the award.

Such was the case again this year. In March the MPCA awarded "Certificates of Commendation" to all of MCES's plants for achieving 100% compliance with their clean water discharge permit limitations, and for meeting additional operation, maintenance and management criteria.

The Blue Lake, Eagles Point, Empire, Hastings, Metro, Rosemount, St. Croix Valley and Seneca Plants received their awards at the MPCA's Annual Wastewater Operations Conference in Brooklyn Park. The awards recognized the plants for their performance from October 2007 through September 2008. This will be the last award for the Rosemount Plant, which closed in November 2008.

In addition to complete permit compliance, the plants also must:

- Be overseen by properly certified operators;
- Submit all required monthly and annual reports timely and completely; and
- Have no bypasses, enforcement actions or inspections identifying significant compliance concerns.

Presenting the awards was Rebecca Flood, the MPCA's assistant commissioner for water policy, who also worked for MCES from 1978 to 2008. "As environmental compliance manager at MCES before coming to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, I know first-hand how difficult a job it is to constantly keep your plants in compliance, and I commend you for your outstanding efforts," Flood said.

Along with earning the MPCA awards, the plants keep breaking their own MCES record for each month they continue in full compliance. Through April, all of the plants combined have gone 27 consecutive months without exceeding clean water discharge permit limits.

"Our ongoing record of compliance and earning state and national awards is a testament to our dedicated staff of treatment plant operators, maintenance and collection system personnel, and employees in a variety of support areas," said Leisa Thompson, MCES's deputy general manager in charge of the Treatment Services Department. "Their combined efforts make it possible for us to deliver exceptional service to our customers and to protect public health and the environment."

## **Rosemount Wastewater Treatment Plant Closes**

The Rosemount Wastewater Treatment Plant was shut down in November after 35 years of service. The site continues



Rosemount Pumping Facility

to collect Rosemount area wastewater, but now pumps it about 10 miles southwest to MCES's Empire Plant where it is treated and then discharged to the Mississippi River. This change has allowed MCES to streamline its operations and provide a more cost-effective way to treat wastewater in Dakota County. The Rosemount Plant was the smallest of the MCES's eight wastewater plants.

## **MCES Access Rights**

We would like to remind permittees that MCES staff have the authority to enter the premises of any industrial user for the purpose of determining compliance with the Waste Discharge Rules and any permit issued under these rules. This authority is required by federal rules and stated under Waste Discharge Rule 214.

In addition, we want to clarify that MCES staff will not sign waivers or liability release forms that an industry may require for visitor or contractor entry, and denial of entry is a violation of the Waste Discharge Rules and your permit.

We ask that the primary industry contact and one or two other industry personnel understand these requirements and allow MCES staff access for both scheduled and unscheduled visits.

## **What to Expect When MCES Visits**

MCES staff visit permitted industries on a routine basis to inspect and monitor processes and wastewater to determine compliance with MCES permits and rules.

Inspections are scheduled in advance and designed to establish and maintain communications with MCES and industry representatives. During an inspection, MCES engineering staff will explain the requirements necessary to comply with regulations. They will tour the facility to verify processes and sampling locations, and confirm that adequate spill prevention measures exist and spill notification requirements are posted. The engineer may also review process flow data and self-monitoring records and will answer any questions you may have regarding your permit.

Unlike inspections, monitoring visits are not scheduled in advance. MCES technicians will arrive unannounced at a facility prepared to monitor the wastewater discharge at the facility's permitted sampling locations. If the primary industry representative is not available, an alternate will need to assist. The technicians may set up equipment to measure flow, collect samples and record pH of discharges, or may ask that industry personnel provide flow data from water meter readings or calculated discharge volumes, and in some circumstances, collect samples of batch discharges. A typical monitoring project will run for two to three days. The purpose of unannounced monitoring is to verify the accuracy of self-monitoring reports, and to ensure there are no bypasses of pretreatment and sampling locations or violations of the permit limits. The technicians also will confirm the ability to collect representative samples and flow data at the permitted sample locations.

Routine inspections and monitoring of permitted industries are a requirement of the federal pretreatment program rules and we appreciate your cooperation in these matters.

## **Pollution Prevention Efforts are Awarded**

*Information provided by MPCA*

The Governor's Awards for Pollution Prevention annually recognize public and private organizations that demonstrate innovative ways to prevent pollution and waste, improve resource efficiency, and lead to sustainability. Below are two awards given in the Business/Nonprofit category.

### **Children's Dental Services**

Children's Dental Services (CDS) is a private, nonprofit corporation that provides dental care to low-income children. CDS used an expansion project as an opportunity to reduce their environmental impact. They installed Energy Star appliances, high-efficiency heating and air conditioning, high-efficiency lighting, natural light, photovoltaic solar panels, hot water solar panels, recycled materials and rain gardens. Additionally, CDS purchases nontoxic cleaners and disinfectants and uses amalgam separators that remove mercury from the wastewater, as well as silver recovery units. Total annual savings include 1,000 gallons of water, 1,200 kWh of energy, 25 pounds of hazardous waste, and 1,000 pounds of solid waste, giving a total savings of about \$7,000 per year. Project payback is about six years.



Lubrication Technologies receiving the Governor's Award.

### **Lubrication Technologies, Inc.**

Lubrication Technologies of Golden Valley supplies name brand and custom blended lubricants, maintenance fluids, metalworking compounds, industrial cleaners and chemicals to industrial customers. They also provide services such as product development and testing. When Ford Motor Company asked for a product that would reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from cleaning paint booths, Lubrication Technologies delivered. They came up with a custom solution that far exceeded Ford's original objective. The product, Ford Sludge Remover (FSR), can reduce VOC emissions by 87 percent and costs by 80 percent. Total annual savings include 72,000 pounds of hazardous waste and 173,000 pounds of VOC emissions, with a total cost savings of about \$200,000.

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## Industrial Waste Customer Forum – June 18, 2009

All customers holding MCES discharge permits are invited to attend the annual Industrial Waste Customer Forum on June 18. The focus of the forum will be 2010 preliminary budget and rates. In addition, topics specifically related to industrial users including Liquid Waste Receiving updates and emerging pollutants of concern, such as, perfluorochemicals (PFC's), will be covered. An open forum will follow to answer questions and receive feedback on the issues discussed and other customer concerns.

The customer forum is an opportunity for MCES to directly communicate with industrial users and receive your input on important program issues. We hope to see many of you there.

The forum will be held at 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 18 at the MCES meeting room located at Metro 94 Business Center, 455 Etna St., Suite 32, St. Paul. Please **RSVP by June 12** by calling 651-602-4711 or sending an email to [jane.trosdahl@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:jane.trosdahl@metc.state.mn.us)

## Receive OCN by E-mail

Many of our permittees and customers are now receiving the Open Channel News bulletin by e-mail. If you are receiving a paper copy, we do not have an e-mail address for you. To receive your next issue by e-mail please contact the MCES engineer assigned to your facility, or Maggie Lundell at 651-602-4769, [maggie.lundell@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:maggie.lundell@metc.state.mn.us).