

# OPEN CHANNEL NEWS

News bulletin from Metropolitan Council Environmental Services



## November 2021 - Issue #58

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) is one of five 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 and integrated planning to ensure sustainable water quality and water supply for the region.

The Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section of MCES regulates and monitors more than 900 industrial customers discharging to the sanitary sewer systems. Our goal is to ensure compliance with local and federal regulations and reduce the amount of pollution entering the wastewater collection system. The IWPP Section also responds to sewer-related spills and community sewer problems. These functions protect MCES and the community wastewater collection and treatment facilities, process efficiency, operating personnel, and the environment.

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## Tina Nelson is the new Industrial Waste manager

Martina (Tina) Nelson has been named manager for the MCES Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section. She succeeds Robert Nordquist, who held the position since 2014 and retired May 14, 2021.

Tina has been an assistant manager in IWPP since 2014, in charge of data management and revenue, and most recently acting manager. Prior to that, she spent 15 years as a permit engineer in the section. As assistant manager, Tina was instrumental in implementing the first U.S. EPA-compliant online reporting system for a pretreatment program in the country.

Tina holds bachelor's degrees in environmental engineering from Michigan Technological University and management of information systems from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management.

About her new role, Tina says: "I am excited for my new role as Industrial Waste manager. It is an honor to be able to lead and support the incredibly dedicated and talented group of environmental professionals who work in the Industrial Waste Section. I am looking forward to strengthening our relationships with our permitted customers and ensuring that we are working together collaboratively to protect our regional environment."

## Meet Jami Haider, our new administrative specialist



Jami Haider joined us on Sept. 20 as principal administrative specialist. She is supporting Tina Nelson and the Industrial Waste Section as well as Finance. Jami fills the open position of Brittney McDonough, who left MCES in January.

Jami attended Minneapolis Business College and has held many administrative support roles over the years, most notably at EMA Inc., where MCES was a client during her tenure. She enjoys playing cards with family and friends, reading, and watching movies. Her motto is to work hard, remain positive, and take time to enjoy life. Jami says, "I'm excited to learn more about the industry. So far, I'm enjoying the variety of work, and the people I'm working with have been wonderful."

## Important Dates:

- Jan. 15, 2022 – All Liquid Waste Hauler quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports due online.
- Jan. 31, 2022 – All Standard, Special, and General, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports due online.

**COVID-19 NOTE** - Due dates for upcoming self-monitoring reports and permit renewal applications will remain the same during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Please continue to use IORS to fulfill any upcoming requirements. If you are required to conduct sampling and are unable to collect representative sample data, please contact the [MCES staff](#) assigned to your permit.

## IORS 5-year anniversary

June 30, 2021, marked the 5-year anniversary of the Industrial Online Reporting System (IORS) going live. In 2016, it was the first U.S. EPA-compliant online reporting system for pretreatment programs in the nation. In these five years, our IORS support team has listened to and worked closely with you to troubleshoot and refine the system to what it is today. We are very appreciative of all our customers who provided feedback on the system. We are also grateful for the early adopters, who learned the system with us and helped improve our training tools for all customers. Currently, we have 929 permittees and 854 dental clinics that are required to submit reports or renewal applications using the IORS.

Our IORS support team continues to assist customers when using the system and updates [training tools](#) (available on our IORS webpage) as needed. Below are some simple tips to the most common stumbling points.

### IORS Tips and Tricks

- Only have one session of the IORS open at a time.
- Use the “flow” tab to add daily discharge volumes for the monitoring days when submitting your Sampling Results SMR Form.
- Hit the “X” to remove any blank rows in a table in the Liquid Waste Hauler Discharge Report or any Permit Renewal Application Form.

If you have questions about IORS or issues with your submittals, please contact the IORS Support Team. They can be reached by email at [MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us) or by phone at 651-602-4789. Support is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Met Council’s internship program is a great success for IWPP and interns

The Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section has participated in the Met Council’s internship program for several years. This program gives our section the unique opportunity to have a college or university student focus on an important project and move it forward at an accelerated pace.

This year’s intern, Amber Orr, a senior environmental science major at Nova University in Davie, Florida, developed resources to aid microbreweries in submitting their self-monitoring reports and jumpstarted a project to update our septage management manual. Our 2019 intern helped to develop a dental clinic inspection checklist and then conducted dental office inspections.

Past interns have been instrumental in developing several of our general permits including Water Treatment, Microbreweries and Brewpubs, and Zero Discharge Categorical permits. Other interns have assisted us in addressing problems in our system such as helping to locate the source of phosphorus that was resulting in passthrough at a treatment plant. The interns have used their valuable internship experience to gain employment in their desired field, many within MCES.

If you know of someone who may be interested in applying for a 2022 internship with the Council, please direct them to:

<https://metro council.org/Employment/Internships.aspx>



## Drought puts aquatic life at risk

### Calling MCES into action

Low river flows can reduce dissolved oxygen to nearly lethal levels for most fish and many invertebrates – the base of the food supply for animals like bald eagles and otters. This summer the Mississippi River was well below the level that causes concern, calling MCES into action.

Operators at the Metro Plant in Saint Paul aerated treated wastewater before discharging it to the Mississippi River to boost oxygen levels. Staff in our Water Resources and Laboratory Services groups spent extra time monitoring and testing dissolved oxygen levels in the river and in the Metro Plant’s discharge channel.

Cleaned water from our treatment plants contains small amounts of organic material. This organic material consumes oxygen as it breaks down. During normal flows, the river has no problem mixing in a plant’s treated water. When drought conditions reduced dissolved oxygen levels close to the regulatory standard of 5 mg/l for 18 days this summer, operators aerated the treated water to at least 7 mg/l to maintain healthy water quality.

This is only the fifth year in two decades that we’ve had to aerate the Metro Plant’s discharge. Powering the effluent aeration pumps for 18 days at the plant consumes a lot of energy and is estimated to cost more than \$20,000 during this drought. The energy use also is a source of carbon emissions, which contribute to climate change.

Minnesota is expected to experience an increase in both drought severity and duration, as well as an increase in extreme rainfalls and flash flooding. A cross-divisional team is developing new goals and strategies as part of the Council’s Climate Action Plan, including how to adapt to these extreme weather events.

## Meet our newest technicians

James Phi Pham and Brett Frydenlund

James Phi Pham and Brett Frydenlund joined us on Oct. 4 as industrial waste technicians. Their main duties will be to conduct wastewater compliance monitoring at permitted industries and from permitted liquid waste haulers, as well as respond to spills to the MCES collection system. They fill the open positions of retiree Kevin Rogers and Porter Sartor, who left MCES in June.



James Phi Pham graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in environmental science and has prior work experience at the Saint Anthony Falls Laboratory and at Saint Paul Regional Water Services. He has an Australian shepherd named Luna and in his free time enjoys traveling, backpacking, kayaking, cycling, and reading. His favorite quote is “when we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect” – Aldo Leopold. “I’m looking forward to working for such a large agency that has the ability to influence public policy and regulations for a majority of Minnesota residents and that shares my same values for equity, resilience, and environmental sustainability,” Phi said.



Brett Frydenlund is a professional geologist in Minnesota and holds bachelor’s degrees in geography and earth science. He has 10 years of work experience in environmental science. Brett has a wife, 3-year-old daughter, and a large, lazy cat named Cricket. He loves snowboarding, mountain biking, hockey, golf, woodworking, and yard work if it involves fires. His favorite quote is, “the more I know, the more I realize I know nothing” – Socrates. “I’m looking forward to being an instrumental part of conserving the health of our environment and community,” he said.

## Kevin Rogers retires after 41 years



Kevin Rogers retired in September as a principal industrial waste technician after working for MCES for 41 years. Kevin started his career as a sampler at the Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant. He later transferred to the Water Quality Section, where he monitored the rivers up and downstream of the treatment plant discharges, before landing in the Industrial Waste Section as a technician, where he worked for 36 of his 41 years. Assistant manager Bob Golden says, “Kevin was a great team worker and always eager to help where needed. No matter how difficult or unpleasant a job was that I’d ask him to do, he’d just smile and say no problem. He had great customer service skills, being good at explaining who we are and our purpose for monitoring at industries. We will miss his work ethic and ever-smiling presence.”

## Missed the 2021 customer workshop?

Recordings are available

Our annual customer workshops were held virtually this year so that we can continue to communicate with you while staying safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We shared the MCES budget and rate-setting process, the 2022 preliminary rates, how local limits are derived and shared our research on COVID-19 in the wastewater. We also had guest speakers from the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) and the University of Minnesota, who shared research presentations on resource recovery systems for brewery wastewater.

Recordings of the workshops are available by request to Jami Haider at [jami.haider@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:jami.haider@metc.state.mn.us)



## We want your input for the 2022 customer workshops

We look forward to connecting again with you next year and are interested in your input on the workshops. Would you like them to be virtual or in-person at an off-site location? What topics other than the MCES budget and rates do you want to discuss? Please provide your input by contacting Jami Haider at 651-602-4703 or [jami.haider@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:jami.haider@metc.state.mn.us)

## OPEN CHANNEL NEWS

is published by MCES,  
Industrial Waste &  
Pollution Prevention Section  
390 North Robert Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Industrial Waste & Pollution  
Prevention Section Manager  
Tina Nelson / 651-602-4728

For general information on  
the Industrial Waste & Pollution  
Prevention Section contact:  
Jami Haider / 651-602-4703

For information about industrial user  
rates, fees, and ICC/SAC, contact  
Nanette Ewald / 651-602-4767

For further information on Open  
Channel News contact:  
Maggie Lundell / 651-602-4769



## 2022 Industrial User rates and fees

The following 2022 Industrial User rates and fees were approved by the Environment Committee in July and will be presented to the full Council in December.



Strength Charge rates for wastewater discharged on site will increase to:

- \$0.2740 per excess pound of total suspended solids (TSS)
- \$0.1370 per excess pound of chemical oxygen demand (COD)

Full-cost recovery rates for treatment of industrial wastewater hauled to MCES disposal sites will remain at:

- \$0.4130 per excess pound of TSS
- \$0.2065 per excess pound of COD

Production-based strength charge for microbrewery and brewpub facilities on General Permit will increase to:

- \$0.859 per beer barrel

Liquid Waste Hauler Load Charges:

- \$60.24 per 1,000 gallons for Domestic Septage and Commercial wastes
- \$11.40 per 1,000 gallons for Holding Tank wastes
- \$77.46 per 1,000 gallons for Portable Toilet wastes
- \$75.24 per 1,000 gallons for Out-of-Service Area Domestic wastes

Service fee for Out-of-Service Area loads to remain at \$15.00 per 1,000 gallons.

Industrial Capacity Charge (ICC) will increase to:

- \$2.21 per 1,000 gallons

Sewer Availability Charge (SAC) will remain at:

- \$2,485 per SAC unit (1 SAC unit = 274 gallons per day). SAC is paid to the local community for use of the Metropolitan Disposal System (MDS) capacity.



The Temporary Capacity Charge (TCC) will remain at:

- \$1.25 per 1,000 gallons (SAC paid directly to MCES for temporary use of the MDS capacity)

Permit Fees (paid annually):

- \$1,125 to \$10,975 depending on permit status for Industrial, Special and Liquid Waste Hauler permits
- \$425 for Sewer Cleaning Waste Hauler General permits
- \$475 for all other General permits

## 2021 Industrial User rates and fees

To get the current **2021 Industrial User rates and fees** and for more information about them, visit [MCES Industrial User Rates and Fees site](#)

## Let's stay connected!

To make sure you receive important information regarding your MCES permit, add the following emails to your address book:

[MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:MCESIndustrialOnlineReporting@metc.state.mn.us) and [METC@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:METC@public.govdelivery.com).  
(GovDelivery is a news delivery system. This is not an active email account.)



If you need to update your contact information, please contact the [MCES staff](#) assigned to your permit or email us at [iwpp@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:iwpp@metc.state.mn.us).