

Small Business Enterprise

News from the Small Business
Environmental Assistance Program



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Fall 2008

Environmental assistance grants available

The MPCA is seeking preliminary applications for grants to be used in developing environmentally sustainable practices that prevent pollution and conserve resources. Both public and private organizations and partnerships are eligible. Approximately \$300,000 is available. Preliminary applications are due Oct. 27, 2008.

Applications must fall under one of the following focus areas:

- Addressing the challenges of global climate change through efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Encouraging Minnesota businesses to produce green products and provide green services by reducing or eliminating waste and the use of environmentally harmful substances.
- Creating sustainable behaviors and processes to encourage conservation of resources and a healthy environment.

The complete request for proposal, instructions, and forms are available on MPCA's website at www.pca.state.mn.us/grants/eagrants.html.

Deadline for applications

Preliminary applications must be submitted electronically by **3 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 27, 2008.**

For more information

Contact Mary Baker at 651-215-0194 or toll-free at 800-657-3864; e-mail at mary.baker@state.mn.us.

New Energy Smart program: Business resources for saving energy and money

In an effort to help businesses achieve cost savings through energy efficiency, Minnesota Waste Wise has taken on a new initiative called Energy Smart. Approved by the Minnesota Office of Energy Security as an Alternative Minnesota Electric Utility Conservation Improvement Program (CIP), Energy Smart will help connect businesses to existing energy efficiency programs offered by the state's energy utilities.

"Energy Smart is here to help businesses save money through energy efficiency," said Mark Blaiser, executive director of Minnesota Waste Wise, which operates this new initiative. "Saving energy is smart business."

A lighting upgrade alone can save a business 35 percent on lighting costs. Rebates, grants, and low-interest loans are available from utility programs if a business implements certain energy efficiency upgrades. These incentives can help recoup some of up-front investment costs to the business.

"Many large companies have staff looking closely at reducing energy consumption and are seeing significant cost savings through efficiency upgrades," Blaiser said. "That isn't the norm for most small and medium-size

businesses. That's where we come in. We can connect them with the appropriate resources."

Minnesota businesses have a high potential for energy savings—especially small and midsize companies. Energy Smart is here to make the process easier and to help businesses understand how energy efficiency translates into lower operating costs.

Contact Jill Curran at 651-292-4653 or jcurran@mnchamber.com. Information can be found on the Web at www.mnenergysmart.com.



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Low-interest loans available to semi-truck owners—save gas, emissions, and money

Do you use long-haul trucking in your business? Do you know an owner-operator?

Low-interest loans are available to Minnesota businesses to help purchase equipment that will reduce emissions and save on fuel costs.

Auxiliary power units, or APUs, are small generators that take the place of the truck's main engine when idling. Truck drivers often idle truck engines to provide heat, cooling, and electricity while they are waiting or resting. Instead of burning 1 to 1¼ gallons of diesel every hour while idling, smaller APUs burn only about 1 pint per hour. This can save up to 11 gallons of diesel fuel each night.

The cost of a typical APU can run from \$8,000 to \$10,000. While fuel savings alone can make this purchase worthwhile, having the money available

up-front to purchase an APU can be tough.

In October, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will receive \$122,000 from the U.S. EPA to support a low-interest loan program to help small businesses purchase APUs. These funds, distributed through the National Clean Diesel Campaign, are awarded to help build diesel emission reduction programs.

In addition to the APU loan program, the MPCA will also receive funding for other diesel emission reduction efforts, such as Project Green Fleet, which retrofits school buses in our state with diesel oxidation catalysts and crankcase ventilation filters.

For more information about this loan program, contact Mike Nelson, Small Business Ombudsman, at 800-657-3938 or 651-297-8615.

Resources



Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

800-657-3938 or 651-282-6143
www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap

Full-service, non-regulatory support for small businesses, providing information and advice on rules and regulations on a variety of environmental topics. Free site visits, grants, and recordkeeping resources.

Small Business Ombudsman

800-985-4247 or 651-297-8615
www.pca.state.mn.us/sbol

An independent entity responsible for reviewing environmental regulatory activities to ensure that they are fair, reasonable, and appropriate for small businesses—accomplished by receiving and investigating complaints, mediating disputes, and by representing small business interests during rulemaking.

Minnesota encourages recycling of used antifreeze

Many businesses that work with automobiles generate used antifreeze as a waste. These businesses are encouraged to recycle used antifreeze rather than disposing of it. Recycling antifreeze conserves resources and can save money.

Antifreeze should be recycled if it is not hazardous or contaminated; most used antifreeze is not contaminated when drained from an engine. Used antifreeze is generally hazardous only if it contains metal particles or fuel.

Businesses may assume used antifreeze to be a nonhazardous, recyclable material if they implement these simple practices:

- Segregate used antifreeze that is contaminated or very dirty and manage it separately as hazardous waste. Assume it to be hazardous without testing.
- Store recyclable antifreeze in an appropriate, closed container, such as a

metal or plastic drum or tank.

- Label the container "Antifreeze for Recycling" to ensure that other wastes are not mixed with it.
- Inspect containers for leaks regularly.
- If storing containers outdoors, provide an impermeable surface, secondary containment, and weather protection.
- Maintain documentation of proper shipping and recycling or disposal.

You can recycle antifreeze by sending the antifreeze off-site, purchasing on-site recycling equipment, or having a mobile recycler come to your business.

Outside the Metro area, recycled antifreeze does not need to be reported on a hazardous waste license application, and is not included when calculating the annual fee and generator size. Some Metro area counties require that recycled antifreeze be reported and may have additional management requirements. If your business is in the Metro

area, check with the county hazardous waste program.

For more information

For details and further guidance, see MPCA fact sheets **Managing Waste Antifreeze** (www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hw4-02.pdf) and **Antifreeze Audit Checklist** (www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/ea-s1-10.pdf), or **Antifreeze Recycling** (www.wrppn.org/factsheets/antifrezer recycling.pdf), published by the Western Region Pollution Prevention Network.

SAVE MONEY RECYCLING YOUR ANTIFREEZE.

- GENERALLY, HAULERS CHARGE MORE TO HANDLE HAZARDOUS WASTES.
- LOWER REGULATORY ANNUAL FEES.
- RECYCLING ANTIFREEZE ON-SITE OR HIRING IT OUT MEANS YOU NEED TO BUY LESS.

2008 MnTAP intern projects help companies realize cost and environmental savings

Each summer, the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) provides interns to work with Minnesota businesses to implement pollution prevention or energy efficiency projects. Interns use their knowledge and education to tackle waste-reduction projects sooner and faster than would normally occur. Because interns are not entrenched in the company, they can provide a new set of eyes, which often leads to suggestions that improve efficiency, save money, reduce waste, or decrease the regulatory compliance burden.

MnTAP helps companies develop projects for the interns and then recruits, hires, and trains them. Each intern works in the facility full-time and corresponds with a MnTAP specialist during the summer. While MnTAP pays students' salaries, businesses are required to provide cost-share that is passed on as an educational stipend for the student upon the successful completion of the project.

In 2008, MnTAP sponsored eight students at seven facilities in Minnesota. If these companies implement every intern recommendation, they will realize annual reductions totaling 200,000 pounds of solid waste, 310,000 tons of air emissions, 12 million kWh in electricity, 7.8 million gallons of water, 10,000 pounds of hazardous waste, and 47,000 therms in natural gas. These reductions could total more than \$1.3 million annually in cost savings.

If you have a project or an idea for waste reduction or energy efficiency, consider applying for a summer intern.

Deadline for applications

Applications are due February 1, 2009.

For more information

Visit the MnTAP Web site at <http://mntap.umn.edu/intern/business.htm> or contact Krysta Larson at 612-624-4697 or 800-247-0015.



MnTAP student interns work with businesses to identify potential pollution prevention and waste reduction opportunities.

Minnesota Technical Assistance Program's 2008 intern projects

Learn more about pollution prevention and energy efficiency solutions from the student interns who participated in the 2008 MnTAP intern program. Their intern presentations (PowerPoint and audio) are available on the MnTAP website at <http://mntap.umn.edu/index.htm>.

- Atritech, Inc. (medical device manufacturer): developed new packaging to reduce packaging waste.
- Granite Falls Energy, LLC (ethanol plant): conducted energy-efficiency analysis of various parts of the plant.
- Hitchcock Industries (metal casting facility): determined feasibility of using a fluidized bed system and replacing sulfur hexafluoride.
- Minnesota Energy (ethanol plant): evaluated water-saving opportunities for ethanol production.
- Twin City Die Casting (metal casting facility): reduced energy use in facility.
- St. Luke's Hospital (health care facility): minimized hazardous materials by incorporating environmentally preferable purchasing protocols.
- Metropolitan Council (wastewater treatment facility): determined the efficiency of the current blower operation and how that operation could be improved with different controls or strategies.



Rule Watch

Does this affect your business?

Construction projects require stormwater permit

Businesses planning construction projects need to become familiar with Minnesota’s recently reissued Construction Stormwater General Permit. The permit is required for any construction activities disturbing one or more acres of soil. The MPCA revised and reissued the permit on August 1, 2008.

Facilities with construction projects covered under the old permit may continue to operate under the old permit until February 1, 2010. After that date, the SWPPP must be updated to reflect stormwater management practices that comply with the new permit requirements.

Changes in the new stormwater permit include:

- special requirements and BMPs for projects within one mile of special and impaired waters.
- new training requirements for individuals responsible for permit oversight, including preparation, installation, and oversight of the SWPPP.
- new requirements affecting washing of concrete trucks on construction sites.
- revised requirements for ditch stabilization.

There are also changes to BMPs—both during construction and post-construction—which state that all exposed soils must be stabilized no later than 7 days after the construction activity in that portion of the site has temporarily or permanently ceased.

Refer to the MPCA’s Stormwater Program Web page at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/stormwater-c.html to learn more about the new permit.



Thanks to the following for contributing to this newsletter:

- Jill Curran, Minnesota Waste Wise
- Krysta Larson, MnTAP
- Sara Brown, MPCA
- Tom Jablonski, MPCA
- Aneka Swanson, MPCA
- Mike Nelson, MPCA

This newsletter is published quarterly by the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program.

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