STEAM

The monthly newsletter of the Green Lake Area **S**ustainability **Team***

For September and October, 2011

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**STEAM meets the first Tuesday of every month from 2-3pm in the training room of the County Government Center in Green Lake. The meeting is an open discussion of current projects, ideas for the future, and a sharing of advice and lessons learned.*

Next meeting is Tuesday, November 1st and is open to all. Please come and contribute!

An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, UWEX provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements. Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so as early as possible prior to the program or activity so that proper arrangements can be made. Requests are kept confidential.

TOP STORIES / RECOMMENDED SITES

Overpopulation: Why Big-Money Men Ignore World's Biggest Problem

A Letter from Senator Ron Johnson to a STEAM member. Thank you for contacting me regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rules and regulations regarding pollution.

In many respects, the EPA is a prime example of a Federal Agency that is out of control. A study commissioned by the Small Business Administration showed that it costs Americans $1.7 trillion to comply with Federal regulations every year. That is too much. Regulatory burdens must be reduced if America is to remain competitive in a global economy. I will support efforts designed to rein in the power of Federal Agencies that are legislating though regulation.

I believe it is important for the United States to develop and utilize our own domestic energy resources, thereby reducing our reliance on foreign sources. Affordable and abundant energy is necessary to power our economy and create jobs. We must ensure that we develop these resources safely and in an environmentally sustainable way.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your concerns. I have received over 300,000 pieces of correspondence from the good people of Wisconsin, and as your Senator I believe it is important to hear from the citizens I represent regarding issues important to the state and the country. Please feel free to contact me in the future if I can further assist you or your family. It is an honor to serve you and the people of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Ron Johnson
United States Senator

Top Ten Things You Might Not Know About Pollution

1) **Pollution is one of the biggest global killers**. Pollution affects over 100 million people. It is comparable in population and risk to human health to problems like malaria and HIV.

2) **Pollution is one global problem that can be solved in our lifetime**. Life-threatening pollution has already been eliminated in much of the developed world through initiatives like the U.S.'s Superfund. The technology and know-how to clean up toxic pollution already exists. All that's needed is resources and commitment.

3) **There is a finite number of polluted sites in the world**. While the number of polluted hotspots may increase, it is a finite figure. Currently, Blacksmith Institute's database of polluted sites lists over 2000 of the world's worst polluted places. Blacksmith is working to prioritize these sites for cleanup targeting the communities with the most at-risk populations first.

4) **Pollution solutions are relatively low-cost**. The cost to save a human life through the removal of hazardous pollution on Blacksmith projects can be as little as $42. $20,000 is enough to start a project that saves lives.

5) **Children are most susceptible to Pollution**. While children only make up 10% of the world's population, over 40% of the global burden of disease falls on them. More than three million children under age five die annually from environmental factors.

6) **Pollution is mainly caused by small-scale informal operations rather than by large multi-national companies.** However, demand for consumer goods from high-income countries still drive pollution activities in low-income countries.

7) **Pollution does not stop even when the source of the pollution is removed.** For example, when polluting factories are closed, legacy pollution remains. If it is not removed, legacy pollution continues to sicken and kill.

8) **Pollution can vastly lower life expectancy**. In some of the world's worst polluted places, life expectancy can be as low as 45 years because of lung, throat and thyroid cancers.

9) **Death is not the only end result.** Pollution causes chronic illness, neurological damage and a range of diseases that might not kill but might incapacitate a person or result in irreversible damage. For instance, the presence of lead in children lowers I.Q. by an estimated 4-7 points for each increase of 10 µg/dL.

10) **Pollution affects everyone.** While pollution affects the immediate population the most, its effects are felt far and wide because of this globalized economy. In addition, some pollutants like toxic mercury travels and drops into rivers and seas worldwide, poisoning the seafood supply.

Learn more at: http://www.blacksmithinstitute.org/, http://www.worstpolluted.org/

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"I will not create jobs or hold jobs that kill people, and that plant, that plant kills people." - Then-Gov. Mitt Romney, quoted in today's Wall Street Journal, speaking outside a Massachusetts coal-fired power plant in 2003.

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The Full Cost of Coal

A report from Harvard researchers in this month's Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences will reveal that coal use costs the U.S. between a third and over half a trillion dollars each year in health, economic, and environmental impacts.

Coal is the most popular electricity-generating fuel, with 40% of electricity worldwide generated by coal plants. It's a number that is only expected to grow; by 2030, electricity demand around the world will double. But while coal is cheap and abundant, it has plenty of hidden costs.

The report, written by Dr. Paul Epstein, associate director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, examines the life cycle of coal production to find "hidden costs," or costs that occur "when the activity of one agent affects the well-being of another agent outside of any type of market mechanism."
These costs include damages from climate change (like weather events and rising seas, public health damages from toxins released during electricity generation, deaths from rail accidents during coal transport, public health problems in coal-mining regions (in Appalachia, mountaintop removal contaminates surface and groundwater with

carcinogens and heavy metals), government subsidies, and lost value of abandoned mine areas.

In Appalachian communities alone, public health burdens from coal mining cost $74.6 billion each year. Air pollutant emissions cost $187.5 billion, mercury emission impacts reach $29.3 billion, and greenhouse gas emissions (and accompanying climate change effects) from coal-fired plants costs between between $61.7 and $205.8 billion. And then there are the smaller costs--between $2.2 and $10 billion in impacts from land disturbances, and impacts from toxic spills, declines in property values, tourism loss, and crop damage.

So what can be done? The world must phase out coal use--or face ever-increasing health and environmental costs. Alternative energy sources may be more expensive when the monthly energy bill arrives, but that is clearly only part of the story.

EDUCATION/ HOW TO / TRAINING

Yes Magazine: 10 Tips for a Zero Waste Household

Yes Magazine: Less Work, More Living

ENERGY STAR offers free online training to help you improve the energy performance of your organization. To register for any of these trainings or to see other upcoming ENERGY STAR trainings, visit: https://energystar.webex.com.

State and local officials interested in additional information about developing and implementing cost-effective climate and energy strategies that help further environmental goals and achieve public health and economic benefits may visit: http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate.

http://www.thenaturalstep.org/en/canada/embedding-sustainability-culture-municipal-government-free-webinar. Embedding sustainability culture in municipal government. Free webinar by TNS Canada on Nov 4.

BUILDINGS

All New Kohl's Department Stores Will Be Certified LEED-Gold

Largest Zero Energy Community Opens in U.S.

Working with Students to Save Energy. Our schools spend more on energy than any other expense except personnel. By making smart energy choices and involving their students, schools benefit from lower operating costs; comfortable, high-performing facilities; and energy-smart scholars. Several EPA Climate Showcase Communities are working with their students to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

BUSINESS and EMPLOYMENT

State Urged to Beef Up Clean Energy Policies in Order to Create Jobs

The Military Boosts Clean Energy with Start Up Help

UWM wins $1.5 million to help factories cut energy waste, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Sept. 13.

Madison Business Expo Business Sustainability Awards 2011

H20ptions: Project to receive $500,000 NSF grant, WisBusiness, Sept. 19.

Editorial: Another great team, Editorial, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Oct. 4.

The Environmental Professional's Guide to Lean and Six Sigma, and "Life" is Our Ultimate Customer: From Lean to Sustainability. Environmentally sustainable practices are a natural extension of lean operational philosophy and techniques. Sustainability can pay off in the short term, not just the long term. In spite of our best efforts, the U.S. economy as a whole is massively inefficient. Only six percent of materials actually end up in products. Total wastes in the United States, excluding wastewater, now exceed 50 trillion pounds per year.

Madison firm places third in clean-tech competition, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Sept. 15.

ENERGY

Tensions between water, power needs explored, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Sept. 19.

UW research team creates device that could generate electricity from nose, Capital Times, Oct. 6.

Homeowners and Businesses Embracing Small Wind Turbines, New York Times, Oct 2, 2011.

Helping Wisconsin Residents Save Money Through Water Efficiency

Rocky Mountain Institute on Energy, getting off of coal and oil by 2050. http://www.good.is/post/reinventing-fire-or-how-to-get-america-off-oil-and-coal-by-2050/.

From waste to windfall: UWO biodigester a one-of-a-kind power plant. Oshkosh Northwestern, Oct. 27.

ENVIRONMENT

YES Magazine-Can Households Help Create a Carbon Neutral City?

Native American activist takes fresh look at environmental problems

DNR to reconsider water permit for proposed Richfield Dairy

With warming predicted, new center at UMass to study climate change

FOOD

'Got milk' -- Demand for goat cheese and milk is soaring, speaker says. Dubuque Telegraph-Herald, Oct. 22.

WI sustainable ag: New partnerships, new excitement, Public News Service, Sept. 26.

EPA Urban Farm Business Plan Handbook

Cleveland Could Become 100% Self Sufficient in Food Production

YES Magazine, Reflections on Changing the Food System

Milwaukee recognized for urban farms, aquaponics, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Sept. 19.

Up From the Ashes: Underground Food Collective keeps moving after Mifflin Street fire

HEALTH

Airing it out: Madison's Aerovex Systems helps salon patrons breathe easy

RECYCLING

Waste Management Announces Strategic Investment in Recycle Rewards

Wisconsin Business Material Exchange - The recently launched Wisconsin Business Material Exchange (BME) will provide a venue for those with unwanted items or materials to connect with other organizations that would be able to benefit from its use. Any material or surplus item can be listed in one of the many categories of the directory. Visitors to the BME can then search the listings and connect with those offering the materials for reuse. www.wisconsinbme.com

Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC) Website Highlights and Tools

- Wisconsin Recycling Markets Directory
  www.wisconsinrecyclingdirectory.com
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Programs
  http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/hhw/index.cfm
- Medicine Collection Event Listing
  http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/collections/viewCollections.cfm
- Zero Net Energy Policy and Projects
  http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/zeronetenergy/index.cfm
- Statewide Compost Facilities Listing
  http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/compostFacilities/compost.cfm

SHWEC Publications and Factsheets – Our website also has numerous publications related to solid waste, pollution prevention, recycling, composting and green building that can be found in the publications section of our website: http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/publications/publications.cfm.

SUSTAINABILITY

How Germany Became Europe's Green Leader: A Look at Four Decades of Sustainable Policymaking

Survey: Academics, 'green' campus help draw students to UWSP

TRANSPORTATION

Editorial: The car - and economy - of the future, Editorial, WISC-TV, Oct. 5.