

OHA EnviroNews

Environmental and Occupational Safety Issues

April 2, 2008

Ohio EPA chief expects tougher rules

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Director Chris Korleski stated his agency supports the idea of uniform, federal rules for cracking down on greenhouse gases to address climate change.

Korleski said he is one of several public officials who believe Congress will pass tougher and more comprehensive regulations shortly after the next administration takes over the White House, regardless of who wins the November presidential election.

Ohio's state regulatory agency prefers a consistent federal rule over a mishmash of regulations that various states might adopt as an alternative, according to Korleski. "The devil's in the details, of course," he said.

EPA issues emissions standards for hospital sterilizers

The Environmental Protection Agency recently implemented national emissions standards for ethylene oxide sterilizers, used by some hospitals to sterilize medical devices. The standards generally require hospital ethylene oxide sterilization facilities to sterilize full loads of items to reduce hazardous emissions. Exceptions include when central service staff, a hospital administrator or physician on duty determine that less than full load is medically necessary, or the sterilizer has an acceptable air pollution control device (AHA NewsNow)

Green building opens at The Ohio State University

The new Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center opened in January. The center was built to the specification of the national LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program and is the first "green" building on the campus of The Ohio State University. The center also is the first stand-alone 4-H center on a university campus.

The building's green features include a geothermal heating and cooling system underneath the center's parking lot. Officials estimate the center will save 30 percent on heating and cooling costs. The roofing material is a thick, highly-reflective white membrane. Sunlight bounces off the material, making it easier to cool the building in the summer. The building and its window are oriented to allow more natural light into the building. Nearly 90 percent of the center's occupied space will have natural sunlight. The walls have six inches of insulation, the windows of the south and west sides of the building are doubled paned with a stationary "mini-blind" between the panes. Many of the materials in the building's interior are recycled or otherwise environmentally-friendly. The center contains a bicycle storage area and a shower to encourage people to ride bikes to work. Approximately 89 percent of the construction was recycled.

Chemicals levels drop in Ohio fish

Some Ohio fish may be consumed more often because chemical levels have dropped. The statewide advisory of one meal per week for most fish remains in place due to mercury.

Improvements were seen for Lake Erie walleye 23 inches and larger, which used to be under a once-a-month limit and can now be eaten once a week; and Ohio River flathead catfish 20 inches and over and smallmouth buffalo 24 inches and over, which changed from one meal every two months to one meal per month.

There are still several species of fish from other water bodies that need a more stringent advisory. Those water bodies are Dow Lake, East Fork Lake, Lake Erie, Little Miami River, Mahoning River, Muskingum River, Ohio River and West Branch Reservoir. Mercury poses the greatest risk for women of child-bearing age, pregnant women, nursing mothers and children under 15. (Gongwer 3/3/08)

Global Links – suture recovery program saves lives overseas

Global Links is dedicated to reducing the amount of still-useful surplus that is needlessly thrown away in the U.S., while helping to provide hospitals in developing countries with the ability to better treat their patients and expand services.

To meet these goals, Global Links recovers unused medical supplies, surplus equipment and furnishings from U.S. hospitals for distribution to hospitals and clinics that serve the poorest segments of the population in developing countries.

Even more important than the volume of goods it ships is the care it takes to send recipients only items they can readily use. Volunteers and staff spend hours sorting and processing donated materials to meet recipients' needs. Hospital furnishings are cleaned and repaired, or refinished if necessary, to give these items a second life. This material is then made available to targeted recipient hospitals through three programs. To learn more visit www.ohanet.org/p2 and look under **Global Links - Suture Recovery Program Saves Lives Overseas.**

Cell phone recycling gets easier

The nation's leading cell-phone makers, service providers and retailers have teamed up with the U.S. EPA to answer America's call for easy cell phone recycling.

U.S. EPA initiated the campaign because many consumers still do not know where or how they can recycle their unwanted cell phones. Consequently, less than 20 percent of unwanted cell phones are recycled each year.

Recycling a cell phone offers an opportunity for everyone to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, saves energy and conserves natural resources. An estimated 100 to 130 million cell phones are no longer being used, and many sit in storage. If Americans recycled 100 million phones, we could save enough upstream energy to power more than 194,000 U.S. household for a year. If consumers were able to reuse those 100 million cell phones, the environmental savings would be even greater, saving enough energy to power more than 370,000 U.S. homes each year.

Plug-In To eCycling is a voluntary partnership between the U.S. EPA and electronics manufactures retailers and service providers to offer consumers more opportunities to donate or recycle their used electronics. In 2007, retailers and electronics manufacturers voluntarily recycled more than 47 million pounds of electronics, mostly computers and televisions. For more information about the Plug-in to eCycling program and cell phone recycling campaign visit www.epa.gov/plug-in/

E-scrap legislation from around the nation

Electronics recycling measures continue to be hot topic of conversation for many state legislatures.

The California Assembly approved Assembly Bill 1391, which requires that retailers provide customers with information, at the point of sale, about where and how to return, recycle and dispose of used or obsolete electronic devices with information from the California Integrated Waste Management Board's (Sacramento) Web site. Retailers must provide the above information in the form of a sign, as written material or on a sales receipt. The measure is currently residing within a Senate Committee on Environmental Quality.

Also in California, AB 218 amends the state's SB 20 system by redefining "covered electronic devices (CEDs)" to include virtually all consumer electronics. The measure also prohibits electronics manufacturers from producing consumer products, intended for in-state purchase, which contain hazardous materials recognized by the European Union's Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) Directive. The effective date of the phase out would be Jan. 1, 2010.

Connecticut lawmakers are proposing several amendments relevant to last year's passing of House Bill 7249. Senate Bill 582 excludes manufacturers, which own a trademark or license for CEDs but do not manufacture such devices, from recycling requirements established by last year's act. In addition to redefining "market share" and limiting orphan waste to desktop and personal computers, computer monitors and portable computers, the measure also requires that every CED sold in Connecticut be labeled with the manufacturer's name and address.

In Illinois, SB 2313 targets the recovery of desktop, personal and laptop computers, computer monitors, televisions, plus other display devices. Under the program, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), processors and refurbishers all would be required to register on an annual basis. A provision not typically included with other state bills, SB 2313 requires the state, as of 2012, to convene and host an electronic products recycling conference either independently or jointly with other public entities or organizations associated with electronics recycling. Furthermore, the measure requires that all electronic devices purchased for state use meet at least a bronze EPEAT performance level. SB 2313 also establishes a landfill disposal and incinerator ban that would take effect Jan. 1, 2012. Another Illinois bill, HB 4957, looks to establish a similar program.

SB 746 passed both chambers of the West Virginia Legislature and now will be distributed to Governor Joe Manchin III for enactment. Targeting the recovery of desktop, personal and laptop computers, as well as computer monitors, televisions and other display devices, the measure requires OEMs to register with the state and pay an initial registration fee of \$3,000 to \$10,000, which varies depending on whether or not the producer had an established take-back program already in place. The measure implements a landfill ban on all covered devices, as well. If approved, the act will take effect July 1, 2009 (E-ScrapNews)

ASHE names Vista Award winners

The American Society for Healthcare Engineering announced the recipients of its 2008 Vista Awards for health care building and design. The award is presented in three categories: new construction, renovation and infrastructure. Fairbanks Imaging Center, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital/Denali Center and Banner Health in Fairbanks, AK, received the new construction award. The Center for Advanced Care, Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, IL, received the renovation award. Luther Midelfort Central Energy Plant, Luther Midelfort Mayo Health Systems in Eau Claire, WI, received the infrastructure award. ASHE President Leo Gehring commended all the award applicants, adding "Each entry represents a win for the communities and patients served by these outstanding facilities." (AHA NewsNow March 10, 08)

Recycling 3000 pounds of Christmas lights

HolidayLEDs.com, an online retailer of energy-efficient Christmas lights and decorative lighting, reported that its 1st annual recycling program received more than 3,000 pounds of Christmas lights. The company estimates that more than 5,000 people participated in the program.

The company decided to keep the program open year-round, but submissions are slowing down now, which has allowed them to get caught up on processing the lights. The company received and processed more than 3,000 pounds of old Christmas lights for recycling in a period of approximately three months. Please visit www.holidayleds.com for more information about LED Christmas lights or the HolidayLEDs.com recycling program.

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Editors: Rick Sites, OHA (ricks@ohanet.org); Susan Zabo, OHA (susanz@ohanet.org)

For additional information or copies of any reported sited, contact Susan Zabo or Rick Sites at 614.221.7614 or by e-mail

