



MEI News

Summer 2003

Inside the Minnesota Environmental Initiative

Whitman and Pawlenty Commit to Support Clean Air Minnesota

Smog season has arrived, but this year ozone will have a worthy opponent in Clean Air Minnesota. MEI staff presented an extremely successful program on June 3, featuring Governor Tim Pawlenty and EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman, who committed their support to Clean Air Minnesota's voluntary air quality partnership.

More than 200 individuals and representatives from community agencies, business and government attended the event. Extensive local media coverage raised overall awareness of Clean Air Minnesota and established the credibility of this relatively new public/private initiative.

In the wake of the event, Clean Air Minnesota continues to work on establishing clean air commitments from partner organizations, with sights set on 100 partners by year-end. The team also anticipates more tie-in events throughout the summer.



Whitman and Pawlenty show off their new Clean Air Minnesota tee shirts.

Meanwhile, Clean Air Minnesota's five project teams (mobile source, point source, area source, clean air landscaping and communications) are helping to carry the clean air message to communities and businesses. Project team members and staff will be heavily involved in developing criteria for evaluating Clean

Air Minnesota's success in achieving emissions reductions.

For more information on Clean Air Minnesota, contact Bill Droessler, program director, at 612-334-3388, ext. 103, or Colleen Coyne, outreach manager, at ext. 109. You can also visit www.cleanairminnesota.org.

– Colleen Coyne

R4R Looks for Emeralds in the Rough

MEI could have picked a better year to go to the legislature seeking funding. But in a relatively amazing turn of fate, lawmakers awarded \$150,000 from the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) to MEI for the Resources for Redevelopment of Brownfields to Greenspace project. The grant will extend the greenspace work R4R is doing in the western metro area with existing support from Hennepin County's Environmental Response Fund and the McKnight Foundation.

The initial stages of the two-year LCMR project will focus on identification of environmentally impaired properties around the state that could be redeveloped for greenspace reuse. More than 30 potential sites were identified before commencing the project; more will be named as part of the work program. Once particularly viable sites are known, R4R and its partners will meet with community members to assess interest in and resources available for greenspace redevelopment. Projects will only be pursued when community interest and resources are sufficient to drive redevelopment.

Environmental assessments will be completed at the most viable properties. Most of the LCMR funding will go toward such assessments, critical in the early stages of a redevelopment project to identify and potentially clear up concerns about the condition of the property, which will allow redevelopment to go forward. In addition, the project will create and implement a greenspace redesign for at least one such site. If staff can stretch and leverage resources effectively as R4R has done in the past, more site designs may be possible.

LCMR funding will be extended by in-kind donations of project support (e.g., environmental consulting), in-kind and cash contributions from participating communities and of



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course member support of the R4R program. Resources for Redevelopment and its project partners will have to raise money for any cleanup costs necessary for properties, as no LCMR funding can be spent on cleanup. Acquisition costs are expected to be paid by the municipality or other entity slated to end up owning the property.

Building on R4R's established nonprofit redevelopment model, the project will begin to realize the ambitions of the Brownfields to Greenspace coalition, a group of representatives from public and private entities that meets to brainstorm on how to redevelop brownfields for habitat, natural resources, recreation and other passive natural uses. In addition to the coalition, which is organized by the Metropolitan Council, R4R expects to collaborate on particular projects with greenspace-redevelopment experts from organizations such as Great River Greening, property-acquisition professionals at the Trust for Public Land, voluntary cleanup program staff at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, environmental consultants and local government officials.

Megan Dobratz is the LCMR project manager. MEI members and others who have or know of prime potential project sites should contact Megan at 612-334-3388, ext. 104, or mdobratz@mn-ei.org.

– Michael Welch

A 2-for-1 Deal

In January, Bill Droessler joined the MEI crew to make a total of five employees. By early summer the office was nearly at capacity with eight full-time staff members.

Megan Dobratz came on in February as the program and administrative assistant. Megan's role is already changing, as she will now be focused on Resources for Redevelopment as the LCMR project manager. With some undergraduate work at Gustavus Adolphus College dealing with brownfields redevelopment, this is an exciting step for both Megan and MEI.

In early April, Peter Frosch came to lead the Environmental Policy program. As a George Mitchell Scholar in Dublin, Ireland, Peter obtained a graduate degree in international environmental policy and worked with the Sustainable Energy Division of the Irish government. Prior to Ireland, he graduated from Northwestern University and enjoyed a variety of work experiences ranging from investment banking to community development.

With MEI's newest program, Clean Air Minnesota, ramping up

for the summer, a new outreach manager was needed. Colleen Coyne became the newest MEI employee in late April. Before coming to MEI, Colleen ran her own freelance communications/public relations business for the past 10 years. Prior to that, she was a public affairs associate with BP Amoco and a communications specialist for the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium.

With such significantly increased capacity, MEI is

poised for a tremendously productive year, working to build innovative partnerships to improve Minnesota's environment.



MEI Staff: Bottom Row, Left to Right: Tracy Nordquist, Colleen Coyne. Second Row: Megan Dobratz, Michael Welch, Erik Pratt. Third Row: Mike Harley, Peter Frosch, Bill Droessler

Policy Program Continues to Tackle Emerging Issues

MEI's 2003 Policy Forum Series and the Environmental Management Summit will continue to advance emerging environmental issues throughout the year and provide a context for meaningful dialogue among key decision-makers in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The year's first Environmental Management Summit, held at Imation in April, highlighted the issue of socially responsible/green investing. On April 16, a large crowd turned out at the Science Museum in St. Paul for the first installment of the 2003 Policy Forum Series: Minnesota's Commissioners Set Priorities in a Time of Scarce Resources.

The second Policy Forum, Minnesota's Waters and the TMDL Challenge, in St. Cloud on June 24, is bringing many new faces and potential partners. MEI is working closely on the issue of improving the state's impaired waters with the Minnesota



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Pollution Control Agency and other partners in local government, business, agriculture and the environmental community. MEI has an exciting opportunity to move beyond the forum dialogue and play a role in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's stakeholder process regarding TMDL.

MEI's Environmental Policy program is building on its solid reputation for convening productive dialogues by moving affirmatively into the process of building and sustaining partnerships to improve the environment. The program is looking into a possible fall 2003 forum on the topic of transportation and land use in the Twin Cities.

Please contact Peter Frosch with questions or comments regarding the Environmental Policy program at 612-334-3388, ext. 108, or pfrosch@mn-ei.org.

- Peter Frosch

And the Winner Is . . .

MEI's 2003 Environmental Initiative Awards took place the evening of May 7 at the McNamara Alumni Center located on the campus of the University of Minnesota. The event annually recognizes innovative projects that exemplify the Minnesota Environmental Initiative's focus on collaborative approaches to environmental improvement. More than 230 of Minnesota's environmental leaders were on hand to see awards presented in the categories of Environmental Education, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Environmental Management Excellence - Private Sector, Environmental Management Excellence - Public Sector, and Land Use. For the first time, MEI also gave away a Partnership of the Year award, given to the finalist project that most closely emulated MEI's mission of building and sustaining partnerships to improve the environment. With a number of very good nominations this year, the field was more competitive than ever. The panel of independent judges chose three finalist projects in each category, one of which was revealed as the winner on May 7. More information about the winning projects can be found on MEI's web site at www.mn-ei.org.

- Tracy Nordquist

Environmental Education

Winner: Eco Education's Model Schools in Urban Environmental Education.

Finalists: District 196 Solid Waste Composting Project, Living Green Expo

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Winner: General Mills' Mechanical Treatment of Cooling Tower Water

Finalists: One-Stop Efficiency Shop Lighting Retrofit Program, Breck School Activity Center Addition

Environmental Management Excellence - Private Sector

Winner: Restore Refill Station

Finalists: Baltix Sustainable Furniture, Constructed Wetlands by North American Wetland Engineering

Environmental Management Excellence - Public Sector

Winner: Pelican River Watershed District

Finalists: Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission, Ramsey County TCAAP #576 Deconstruction

Land Use

Winner: Glacial Ridge Conservancy Project

Finalists: Metro Greenways, Pierre Bottineau Library Capital Project

Partnership of the Year

Metro Greenways

Member of the Year

Mike Hansel

Board Members of the Year

Lee Paddock and Mike Robertson



Molly McGregor accepts the Environmental Management Excellence - Public Sector award on behalf of Pelican River Watershed District. Pictured with MEI board member Steve Morse.

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Right Time, Right Place

The timing is right for Energy Alley's latest project: convening and managing a diverse group of energy industry stakeholders to address crucial issues in the delivery of utility conservation improvement programs (CIP), which are state-mandated and designed to encourage consumers to use energy wisely and efficiently.



Representatives from utilities, state government, nonprofits and contractors are participating in Energy Alley's new

CIP workgroup. The three-year project will design and implement consensus-based improvements in CIP programs. The workgroup's first task will be to prioritize the issues facing conservation programs. Among the topics likely to be addressed are:

- The expansion of the CIP requirement in 2001 to include municipal utilities and electric cooperatives.
- The need to deliver effective low income programs.
- Keeping up with new technologies.

Energy Alley is the right place for such collaborative work. Like other MEI projects, it builds upon the organization's relationships with diverse groups, building innovative partnerships to improve the environment.

For more information on the CIP Workgroup, please contact Erik Pratt, manager of Energy Alley, at 612-334-3388, ext. 102, or epratt@mn-ei.org.

– Erik Pratt

Center for Energy & Environment
 Dakota Electric Association
 EnecoTech Midwest
 Environmental Quality Board
 Sara Ethier
 Ken Finch
 Geomatrix Consultants Inc.
 Gopher Resource Corporation
 Great River Energy
 Mike Hansel
 Ross Hammond
 HDR Engineering Inc.
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 Mike Robertson
 Rock-Tenn Company
 SRF Consulting Group Inc.
 J.L. Strand
 Target Corporation
 Tower Asphalt
 UPM – Blandin Paper Company
 URS Corporation
 Jean B. Welch
 Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
 Susan Young

Thanks, Members

Thanks to the people and organizations listed below for their recent membership contributions to MEI. New and upgraded members are listed in italics. For information on membership, contact Tracy Nordquist at 612-334-3388, ext. 101, or tnordquist@mn-ei.org.

Andersen Corporation
 Jon A. Carlson
 Kim E. Carlson

