

Environmental Roundtable News



Mid-Year Results of Warwick Air Monitoring Study Unveiled

Preliminary results from the first half of DEM's year-long air monitoring study at five sites around T.F. Green Airport show that airport operations increase levels of black carbon, an indicator of diesel and jet exhaust, in areas downwind of the airport.

The study, funded by a \$500,000 grant from EPA, is measuring levels of air pollutants in neighborhoods around T.F. Green Airport. Monitoring began in April 2005 and will continue through the summer of 2006 at 5 sites in Warwick: (1) Smith Street and Groveland Avenue, near the southwest end of the main runway; (2) behind Fire Station No. 8 on Post Road; (3) Field View Drive, adjacent to the main taxiway; (4) on Lydick Avenue, near the northeast end of the main runway; and, (5) on Draper Avenue, across from the Gorton Jr. High School. The first four sites are close to the airport and the Draper Avenue site is more distant.

The study had two objectives: to characterize the levels of air toxics near the airport and compare these with other neighborhoods, and to locate the sources of the toxics. RIDEM is collecting samples of volatile organic compounds and carbonyls and is monitoring for black carbon and fine particles. The carbonyl and fine particle data are still being quality assured and are not yet ready to be presented.

With regard to black carbon, levels at four sites near the Airport were higher when the sites were downwind of the Airport. Average black carbon levels were highest at the Fire Station site and lowest at Draper Avenue. The levels were highest at all sites under calm wind conditions and, on weekdays, between 6 and 9 AM. The average levels at the Warwick sites were similar to those at a site in a residential section of East Providence, but lower than those at a site in Providence. These results indicated that, although average black carbon measurements thus far at the Warwick sites are similar to those in East Providence, the levels are impacted by emissions from Airport operations.

The results of 41 VOC samples taken showed those concentrations were considerably lower than the unhealthy exposure levels established by the Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH) and similar to those seen in other suburban and urban areas of the State. Specific results may be found on DEM's website.

DEM will continue the monitoring study through the spring and summer and will produce a final report, which will include recommendations for further action, in the fall of 2006.



DEM air monitoring station in Warwick.

BLACKSTONE RIVER STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER OPENS

Governor Donald L. Carcieri joined state, federal, and local officials on January 9 to celebrate the opening of the new Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center on Route 295 North in Lincoln.

The new state park entrance is a major gateway to the Blackstone River Bikeway, which stretches from Pawtucket to Worcester, MA. The park provides easy access to the Blackstone Bikeway via a new half-mile bikeway connection and offers people a convenient location to park their vehicles, unload their bikes, and buy refreshments. It also provides access to several focal points in the Blackstone Valley, such as the Wilbur Kelly House Museum, the Blackstone Canal, and the Blackstone River. The bikeway connection, currently graveled, will be paved in the spring.

Located on the northbound side of Route 295, the complex features a 9,700 square foot colonial post and beam visitor center and houses many tourist, park, and bikeway amenities, a private food concession offering Dunkin Donuts and Baskin Robbins Ice Cream, a Rhode Island State Police satellite office, and a satellite office for DEM's Division of Parks and Recreation. Restrooms, visitor information, and other amenities, including the food concession and the State Police satellite office, are available on a 24-hour a day basis. The facility also provides long-haul truck parking, allowing truck drivers to pull off the highway safely to sleep. It also serves as a bus stop for the RI Public Transit Authority, which began providing commuter connections to Providence in mid-January.

The project is a cooperative effort among DEM, the RI Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. DEM is also working with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to coordinate and provide visitor information.

Federal highway funds provided 80 percent of the construction cost, with the remaining 20 percent coming from state bond funds. DEM's Division of Planning and Development and the DOT design section provided staff assistance and project management. The same design team is presently working on design of a Route 295 southbound visitor center directly across the road, which is anticipated to go into construction in the spring of 2007.



The Blackstone State Park Visitor Center

Rhode Island Egg to Be Displayed at White House

Each year DEM's Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing sponsors an egg-decorating event in Rhode Island to promote local farm fresh eggs. The winning egg represents Rhode Island at the annual display of decorated eggs from each state at the White House.

The winner of this year's egg-decorating event was Curtis Perry, M.D. of North Kingstown. Perry chose to depict the theme "Discover Rhode Island" to encourage people to explore the natural beauty and recreational resources that the Ocean State has to offer. Perry transformed a Grade A large brown chicken egg, donated by Little Rhody Egg Farms in Foster. The shell opens like the petals of a flower to create a setting for a sculpture of a little girl discovering a seashell at the water's edge. He enhanced the beach motif by shaping each of the eggshell "petals" surrounding the sculpture to suggest an ocean wave.



This is the first egg that Perry, a cosmetic surgeon and sculptor by profession, has decorated for the yearly White House display. The egg will be shipped to Chicago on January 30 to be reviewed by the American Egg Board. From there, the Rhode Island egg will be sent to Washington, DC for display at Eastertime at the White House visitors' center.

Greenhouse Gas Update

On January 5th, DEM Director Michael Sullivan kicked off Phase V of the Greenhouse Gas Stakeholder Process by thanking stakeholders for the important work they have done over the last few years.

The Group is credited with researching and promoting numerous strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Rhode Island, including: passage of a Renewable Portfolio Standard Law requiring electricity suppliers to purchase an increasing percentage of renewable energy every year, ultimately reaching 16% by 2020; passage of an Energy and Consumer Savings Law requiring that a number of common household electric appliances, as well as furnaces and boilers, sold in the state be more energy efficient; adoption of California low emissions standards for vehicles; and, adoption of Executive Orders to lead by example by making state buildings and state vehicles more energy efficient.

In this phase, Stakeholders will work on initiatives such as: establishing a program similar to the existing systems benefit charge (SBC) on electricity for all fuels to encourage efficiency and renewable energy; developing a program to transfer state lead by example efforts to cities and towns and schools; and, working with federal agencies and other states to establish a consistent system for evaluating, monitoring and tracking carbon savings as a result of implementing GHG reduction programs.

For more information about the Greenhouse Gas Stakeholder Process, visit <http://righg.raabassociates.org/>.

**New Fact Sheets:
Climate Change and
Rhode Island
Visit
www.dem.ri.gov/climate**

RIWINDS: Renewable Energy for Rhode Island

Governor Carcieri recently announced an initiative to produce fifteen percent of the state's energy needs through wind generation. Producing electricity through renewable energy sources such as wind will produce many benefits associated with diversifying our energy supply. These include energy benefits such as: stable energy prices, electric system reliability, and energy independence. Economic and environmental benefits include job creation, lower total energy costs for consumers, reduced emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases that pose risks to public health and the environment.

Carcieri appointed Andy Dzykewicz of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as chief energy advisor to oversee the initiative. EDC has issued a Request for Proposals to conduct a feasibility study to determine if it is possible to produce that much wind-generated electricity in Rhode Island and to identify specific sites that are suitable for wind turbines. Site suitability for wind power includes technical and financial feasibility as well as the site's potential to be permitted by the various state and local authorities.



Rhode Island hopes to spur wider use of renewable energy technologies. Above, a wind turbine on Block Island provides power to a home.

Potential sites for wind farms could be on-shore, off-shore and in more than one location. The turbines do not have to be in the same place. Wind turbines sited in several locations may make them more acceptable than placing them in one large wind farm.

Potential sites for wind farms could be on-shore, off-shore and in more than one location. The turbines do not have to be in the same place. Wind turbines sited in several locations may make them more acceptable than placing them in one large wind farm.

The State's current energy demand is approximately 1,000 megawatts per year. Wind generators are about 50% efficient so the project would have to produce 300 MW to deliver the goal of fifteen percent.

The deadline for proposals is February 24. Dzykewicz expects it may take three to five years to complete the feasibility study, obtain permits, and construct the facilities.

BUILDING ENERGY 2006 CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW BOSTON'S SEAPORT WORLD TRADE CENTER MARCH 7 – 9, 2006

The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) will hold its annual Building Energy '06 Conference, the Northeast's premier conference and trade show for renewable energy and green building professionals. The conference will feature over 150 speakers, including Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino and Bob Berkebile, a leading authority on green building and restorative design. It will also include 120 exhibitors, workshops, sessions, and a full trade show. Topics include: high performance buildings, sustainable communities, wind energy, large-scale and local clean energy production, solar applications, plus policy and business strategies ... and much more. For more information, visit <http://www.buildingenergy.nesea.org/>.

Regulatory Updates

Accelerated Permitting

The Department held public hearings on December 23, 2005 and January 13, 2006 on a proposal to implement a pilot program for accelerated wetland and septic system application processing. The accelerated application process would allow certain applications to be processed on an overtime basis, for an additional fee. The fee would pay for the staff costs of DEM employees to perform advanced reviews of select applications before or after normal working hours.

At the hearing, proponents of the proposal said they believe it offers benefits for all applicants. The process could reduce application processing times for applicants who want to pay for an overtime review. Other applicants might also experience quicker service, since there would be fewer overall applications that need to be reviewed during normal working hours.

Opponents expressed concern that the pilot regulations provide better government services on the basis of who pays more and that those who decline to pay more may get even slower service. Some also expressed concern that developers would pass the cost on to their clients making the permitting process more expensive. The Department is evaluating the comments from the public hearing.

Used Oil Regulations

Amendments to the state's hazardous waste regulations for management of used oil are expected to be in place in early March. The amendments will provide protective oversight while being less costly for businesses to implement and should facilitate the recycling of used oil.

Under current regulations, used oil generators may be classified as hazardous waste generators depending on the characteristics of their used oil. Under the revised regulations, a new category will exist for used oil generators that recycle or reclaim their used oil. Such generators would not need to register with DEM as hazardous waste generators. In addition, used oil generators will be able to store up to two dozen 55-gallon drums of used oil without a time limit, and they would have up to 180 days after exceeding the 24 drum accumulation limit to ship excess drums off-site. Generators will also be able to self-transport up to 55 gallons of used oil per shipment to a used oil burning or processing facility, and can burn used oil onsite as an alternative fuel in specific burners. Generators of used oil only will not be required to develop a hazardous waste contingency plan or provide hazardous waste management training to employees.



Among businesses that would benefit are auto service centers, trucking companies, and companies that use oil in their manufacturing processes. DEM worked with members of industry and local environmental groups to draft and refine the amendments, which have subsequently been reviewed and approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency. The revised regulations are available on DEM's website or by calling DEM's Office of Customer & Technical Assistance at 222-6800.

Vehicle Emissions

On January 11, Rhode Island became the 8th state to adopt California Vehicle Emissions Standards. The new standards will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% and save consumers money over the lifetime of new vehicles.

EARTH DAY ESSAY CONTEST: TREES HELP MY TOWN

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island invites students to research the importance of trees and write a speech for an imaginary candidate running for mayor of their town. Students can either write a one-page essay/speech with a drawing or create a web page. Students should detail benefits of trees, recommend where to plant what species of trees, and suggest how planting trees can bring together neighbors in community spirit.

The deadline for submissions is March 21, 2006. Essays should be sent to: ASRI Earth Day Contest, 12 Sanderson Rd., Smithfield, RI 02917. Prizes will be awarded by age groups 6-8, 9-11, 12-14 at the Audubon's Earth Day event to be held at the Environmental Education Center in Bristol. For more information, call ASRI at 949-5454.

The standards will be phased in over the 2009 through 2016 model year period. Auto manufacturers can meet the new requirements with existing technology, some of which is already being used on vehicles today, the Governor said. The amendments will apply to new vehicles sold in Rhode Island beginning with model year 2009.

While the cost of new vehicles meeting the greenhouse gas standards is expected to increase approximately \$1,000 by 2016, that increase will be offset by increased fuel efficiencies with these vehicles. With gasoline at \$2.20 per gallon, a vehicle owner can expect to save \$170 per year during a five-year loan period.



The Toyota Highlander is one of four new hybrid vehicles available in 2006 that readily meet the California Vehicle Emissions Standards.

Narragansett Bay And Watershed Restoration Bond Fund

DEM is finalizing regulations to create the Narragansett Bay and Watershed Restoration Bond Fund. The Fund will receive, hold and administer the use of the \$8,500,000 portion of the RI Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond allotted for "anti-pollution projects and restoration activities benefiting Narragansett Bay and state watersheds."

The Fund will provide up to 50 percent matching grants for nonpoint source water pollution abatement or riparian buffer restoration projects. A total of \$7.1 million is earmarked for governmental projects to mitigate, control, or eliminate the effects of nonpoint source pollution. An additional \$700,000 is earmarked for similar projects undertaken by non-governmental entities. The remaining \$700,000 is for governmental and non-governmental agencies or individuals to restore riparian habitats or enhance the overall quality of riparian buffers for water quality improvement or protection.

The regulations are expected to become final in February and the grant application process will commence soon after. A statewide announcement will be issued prior to the start of the application period. The regulations are available at DEM's Office of Water Resources, 222-3961 or on the DEM website.

Efforts Underway to Reinvigorate P2

Submitted by James Calenza, RICOSH

RI's economic future increasingly depends on firms and technologies that make medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and electronic products - industries that characteristically use substantial quantities of hazardous materials. Pollution prevention (P2) can be an asset to these industries by limiting and reducing toxic materials and byproducts in the design and production of goods and services, thereby minimizing disposal costs and diminishing threats to the environment and public health. It is an approach that combines economic viability, toxicology, health, engineering and practicality.

Many years ago RICOSH, in partnership with DEM, inaugurated a solvent substitution project in the metal plating industry to explore using less toxic metal cleaning alternatives to chlorinated solvents. The project was extremely successful and eventually led to the establishment of the URI Center for Pollution Prevention and Environmental Health. The Center, in close coordination with DEM, has pilot tested pollution prevention technologies and provided assistance to many facilities in metal finishing, metal working, textile, fish/food processing and chemical manufacturing, and autobody industry. Although the Center has garnered more than \$2,000,000 in grants in the last five years from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Science Foundation, resource constraints have severely limited the Center's capacity to assist additional industries and more companies.

In an effort to reinvigorate pollution prevention efforts, RICOSH and the URI Center have begun a **Pollution Prevention Working Group**. In addition to expanding the capacity of the Center, the group hopes to advance pollution prevention by incorporating pollution prevention resources within the framework of economic development and to seed a technical resource center that can assist in the planning and development stage of new products and projects.

To learn more or join in this endeavor please call RICOSH at 751-2015 or email them at jobhealth@juno.com.

DEM's Environmental Watch Dog Program

DEM has a new education program that teaches students about different types of pollution and how it affects us, makes them aware of the importance of protecting the environment, and encourages them to become environmental stewards.

Detective Lieutenant David Thatcher, a 15-year veteran of DEM's Office of Criminal Investigation, visits classrooms with his assistant, a stuffed German Shepard dog. During his presentation, Thatcher speaks about the traits of an environmental watch dog - vigilance, keenness, patience, and faithfulness - and enlists the students' help in protecting the environment by pledging to take conservation measures and to respect nature. The students receive environmental watch dog badges and bookmarks.

Teachers and school officials interested in hosting the Environmental Watch Dog program may contact Detective Lieutenant David Thatcher in DEM's Office of Criminal Investigation at 222-4700 ext. 2206.



DEM's Environmental Watchdog visited kindergarten and first grade students at St. Mary School in Cranston on January 24, 2006.

Join 2006 Earth Day Festivities

The 36th anniversary of Earth Day is April 22, 2006. Earth Day RI and DEM have teamed up with a number of organizations to once again celebrate with activities throughout the month of April. Here are some of our activities and how you can help.

Earth Day Family Festival & Conservation Week - *Show off the work of your organization!*

Conservation Week – April 17 through 21 – 11 AM to 3 PM each day. Come and explore the Zoo's major conservation efforts with the Red Wolf, the Burying Beetle and others.

Earth Day Festival – Saturday, April 22 – 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Opportunity to promote your organization's programs through displays and hands-on exhibits. RIPTA will provide free buses from Kennedy Plaza to the Mall.

Community Cleanups - *Take action – Organize a clean up or encourage your members to participate!*
More than 100 clean ups will take place throughout the State during the month of April. DEM provides supplies, assistance and grant funding.

Environmental Education - *Get the word out!*

Mark Gould Memorial Scholarship Fund - A \$1,500.00 scholarship will be awarded in honor of Professor Mark Gould to a student from Rhode Island pursuing environmental studies and/or environmental science at an institution of higher learning.

Science and Engineering Fair (RISEF) Award - Two awards of \$250 will be presented at the Annual Science and Engineering Fair (RISEF) to high school students whose projects have a theme of environmental conservation, education and awareness and supports the mission of Earth Day Rhode Island.

Earth Day Environmentalist of the Year - *Nominate someone!*

The Rhode Island Earth Day Committee is seeking nominations to recognize individuals, groups and corporations for significant contributions to Earth Day in Rhode Island. Please email nominations to terri.bisson@dem.ri.gov by March 1, 2006.



Earth Day Calendar of Events - *Submit your Earth Day events and activities!*

EDRI will post a calendar on its website. If you have a listing, please submit it. Earth Day activities and the website will be promoted in a media campaign.

For more information, call Melinda Hopkins at 222-3434, ext. 4426 or visit www.earth-dayri.org

Signing up to be an Environmental Watchdog at the DEM booth during Earth Day 2005

TIP Events Aim to Reduce Toxics

The Toxics Information Project (TIP) is sponsoring three events this spring aimed at reducing toxics in the environment.

The first, a workshop for land care professionals, municipal, institutional & commercial grounds maintenance personnel, *The Why & How of Organic Turf Management*, will be held Thursday, March 9, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Aspray Boat House, 2 East View Street Warwick, RI. The course, the first Rhode Island class in organic turf maintenance, will be taught by Chip Osborne of the Living Lawn Project in Marblehead, MA and will address the state-of-the-art for turf and playing fields management. The fee for the workshop is only \$30.00 per person, including lunch. Pre-registration is requested, and may be done online at: <http://www.toxicsinfo.org/register.htm>.



The second event, *Cleaning for Health: Products and Practices for a Safer Indoor Environment*, will be held Friday, April 7, 12 to 3 p.m. at Rochambeau Library, 708 Hope St., Providence, RI. This workshop is for administrators & maintenance directors of health care, school, commercial or public facilities. Carol Westinghouse of Inform, Inc., a non-profit research and education group, will talk about healthier “green” cleaning products and methods, many of which are cost-competitive and meet cleaning performance expectations. The event is FREE!

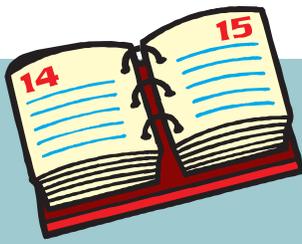
The third event, *Protecting Children From Toxics at School & Play: A Parent/Expert Forum*, takes place on Friday, May 5 from 7 to 9 PM in the State Room of the RI State House. The workshop will address the health effects from chemicals in such commonly used products as cleaning materials, pesticides and other toxics, to which kids may be exposed in the classroom or on the playing fields. Speakers include: Lynn Tondat Ruggeri, Ph.D, Professor Emerita, UMASS Dartmouth, a Physiological Psychologist with expertise in the effects of chemicals on immune, endocrine and nervous system functioning including learning and behavioral disorders; Susan S. Addiss, MPH, MEd, Director of Health Education, Environment & Human Health, Inc. – who will focus on how to make schools healthier; and, parents whose children became ill as a result of toxins in schools. Admission is FREE!

For more information, please contact Liberty Goodwin, TIP Director, at 401-351-9193 or by e-mail at <mailto:liberty@toxicsinfo.org>. Also, please visit the TIP website: <http://www.toxicsinfo.org/>

Summer Jobs Available at DEM

The Department of Environmental Management is continuing to recruit applicants now for both its 2006 seasonal employment program and its minority internship program.

Information about DEM and all summer positions, as well as a downloadable application form is available on DEM's website. Applicants can also visit or call DEM's Office of Human Resources at 235 Promenade Street, Room 350, Providence, weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., or call 222-2775, ext. 4609. The number for DEM's telecommunication device for speech and hearing impaired callers is 222-4462.



Upcoming Events/Meetings

February 16

Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Stakeholder Meeting, 9 AM, DEM Headquarters, 235 Promenade Street, Providence. Room 300.

February 16

Environmental Roundtable Meeting, DEM, Room 300, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, 3-5 PM.

March 1

Environment Council of Rhode Island Monthly Meeting, 7 PM, Audubon Society of RI Headquarters 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield.

March 9

TIP Forum: The Why & How of Organic Turf Management, 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM, Aspray Boat House, 2 East View Street Warwick, RI. See article above for details.

April

Earth Month, Check www.earthdayri.org for a complete listing of cleanups and events to celebrate Earth Day 2006

April 5

Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Stakeholder Meeting, 9:00 AM, DEM Headquarters, 235 Promenade Street, Providence. Room 300.

April 7 & 8

Forestry and Wood Expo, Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick. Campus. Kick off event for the 100 year anniversary of RI's state forestry agency. Includes seminars, business luncheons with panel discussions, and workshops. For more information, call/email: Cathy Sparks, 647-4389 or csparks@dem.state.ri.us; or, Marc Tremblay, 568.3421 or info@rifco.org.

April 7

TIP Forum: Cleaning for Health: Products and Practices for a Safer Indoor Environment, 12 to 3 PM, Rochambeau Library, 708 Hope St., Providence, RI. See article above for details.

April 17-21

Conservation Week, Roger Williams Park Zoo, Providence, RI 11 AM to 3 PM each day.

April 22 - EARTH DAY

Earth Day Festival, Warwick Mall, Warwick. 10 AM - 5 PM

May 5

TIP Forum: Protecting Children From Toxics at School & Play: A Parent/Expert Forum, 7 to 9 PM, State Room, RI State House, Providence. See article above for details.

May 17

Rhode Island Agricultural Day - State House, Providence. Details to be determined.