

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Since its inception in 2008, the Solid Waste Environmental Management System (EMS) program continues to grow and improve along with the participants. The EMS program is a voluntary alternative to Comprehensive Planning for Solid Waste Planning Areas which is required by Iowa Administrative Code 567, Chapter 101. Presently there are nine EMS program participants.

Tier 1 participants were designated as EMSs in late 2011 and early 2012. They were recommended to the Environmental Protection Commission for EMS designation by the Solid Waste Alternatives (EMS) Council, an advisory board working with DNR on this program.

These participants are currently receiving specialized training on the ten "elements" of Iowa's Solid Waste EMS. The training is done through a variety of methods, including on-site visits, webinars and conference calls and face-to-face meetings. A consultant, Gresham, Smith and Partners, works with DNR to help deliver this training. Each Tier 1 has been matched with a Tier 2 "mentor" to help guide them through the ups and downs of implementing this type of system at a solid waste facility. The anticipated training completion date is late spring 2013.

All EMS program participants must submit an Annual Report to the EMS Council every September 1. Reports contain information about EMS frameworks, processes and most importantly accomplishments towards environmental goals. EMS participants are eligible for a number of benefits including special grant funds, group projects and a variance from most comprehensive planning update requirements. Present participants agree that the benefits go beyond those stated. They see an increase in environmental performance, more satisfied employees, and better training records, to name a few.

Applications for the next round of Tier 1 participants are due **February 15**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about EMS and Comprehensive Planning, go to www.iowadnr.gov/FABA

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Above: This photo of Metro Waste Authority's Observation Platform at the Metro Park East Landfill captures three of the six EMS "component" areas - **Water Quality Improvement** (the constructed wetland is in the distance), **Environmental Education** takes place at this site, and the **Recycling of materials** helped build the outdoor learning facility. The other three EMS components can't be seen in this photo — there is a methane stack nearby, part of the facility's extensive **Greenhouse Gas Reduction** program. At Metro Park East **Yard Waste** is collected, and those with **Household Hazardous Waste** are referred to the nearby facility in Bondurant.

SIX TIER 2 PARTICIPANTS: (completed training in 2010)

- Cass County Environmental Control Agency
- Cedar Rapids Linn-County Solid Waste Agency (Landfill Service Area)
- Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency
- Metro Waste Authority (Landfill Service Area)
- Rathbun Area Solid Waste Management Commission
- Waste Commission of Scott County (Landfill Service Area)

THREE TIER 1 PARTICIPANTS: (currently undergoing training)

- Iowa City Landfill and Recycling Center (Landfill Service Area)
- Northern Plains Regional Planning Area
- South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency

2012 EMS SUCCESS

A SAMPLING OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM THE SIX EMS COMPONENT AREAS

- **Green House Gas Reduction** - Cass County Environmental Control Agency Goal: Establish a Program to help residents reduce energy use by December 2012. Cass purchased 25 energy-use measurement tools for libraries for free checkout by residents. Cass is marketing this program across the county for more usage.
- **Yard Waste** - Cedar Rapids-Linn County Solid Waste Agency Goal: To increase biomass waste wood recovery by 1,000 more tons than in 2011. Scale attendants have helped train landfill customers to separate all types of wood from other types of landfill bound waste. Biomass already topped 1,300 tons by September 2012.
- **Recycling** - Rathbun Area Solid Waste Management Commission Goal: Increase recycling collection from commercial, industrial and administrative offices. Rathbun purchased more recycling containers to place at businesses and multi-family housing units in area communities for collection of mixed paper. Tons collected are being tracked to determine if Rathbun is seeing an increase in recycling.
- **Water Quality** - Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency Goal: Improve surface water quality at the landfill, testing to begin in 2013. Dubuque ordered water testing equipment and will partner with the University of Dubuque to test water quality at Catfish Creek, where it enters and leaves the landfill. Testing will be done in April and October, and test results will be used to determine other actions necessary.
- **Environmental Education** - Metro Waste Authority (MWA) Goal: Develop 12 "how to" videos to post on their website by December 31, 2013. Video topics will be MWA's key programs. The first video "How to dry latex paint," is under development now. Other topics are ready for scripting and filming.
- **Household Hazardous Materials** - Waste Commission of Scott County Goal: Implement collection sites at local businesses for five household hazardous materials (Compact Fluorescent Tubes, mercury thermostats, and business sharps) by December 31. Through letters and phone calls, Scott County solicited businesses to host collection sites for the 5 household hazardous materials. Through October they already had four additional sites with several other potential sites identified.



Above: Metro Waste Authority is currently developing How-To videos as part of their EMS Environmental Education component.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Round Seven of Iowa's Comprehensive Planning Update cycle has begun. Five of Iowa's 44 Solid Waste Planning Areas are scheduled to complete Plan Updates in 2013 with the rest to follow through March 2016. The updates contain important information about what cities and counties are doing to help residents and businesses deal with waste. Those with updates due soon should already be taking steps to conduct public meetings to receive input from citizens and businesses. (Refer to IAC 567, Chapter 101.)

To see the Round 7 schedule or to find out more about Plan Updates, go to: www.iowadnr.gov/faba and click on the Comprehensive Planning link.

The Financial and Business Assistance Section can assist with questions about Comprehensive Planning and provide outreach to stakeholders on all topics solid waste related - from waste diversion rates, to rural recycling, organics and more. Staff members are available to meet with local government officials to help provide information needed to make informed decisions.

For example, Iowa's 2011 Waste Characterization Study identified cardboard as one material communities may struggle to pull from the waste stream. FABA staff can help identify potential resources to assist with solutions to better manage cardboard.

