

Workgroup on Trash Burning
12-5-06

DNR Air Quality Bureau Offices – Urbandale, Iowa

Meeting Minutes

Welcome and Introductions: Jim McGraw

Information Sharing (“Situation”)

Handouts are available from the information presented and information will also be put on the web at www.iowacleanair.com.

Health Issues Update:

County Health Data (Andrea and Christine):

[See handout(s)]

- It is unclear if we can go to the detailed level of finding out if the cause of hospitalization is trash burning or not. CDC says there is a correlation between open burning and asthma attacks. Primary reasons listed would be asthma....however secondary reason(s) (such as open burning) may not be available.
- 12 Counties with high child hospitalization rates were looked at. Some of the criteria were for cities that allowed open air burning. The correlation is there, but causal effect is not very strong.

DNR spreadsheets with county and city data were sent to the IDPH epidemiologist to see what data she can come up with. We need to display the data as a weighted number. The higher population cities will obviously show up at the top because they have more people. Hopefully the “data person” will be able to do this.

Children and the Environment (Carole Lamphier, presented by Tony Daugherty)

[See handout]

- The study that was presented looked for correlations. The costs related to asthma as a direct result of environmental causes (not mold or other indoor reasons) were gathered. There is not a concrete correlation. Numbers were compared as a result of the 1970 Clean Air Act to see how/if the numbers dropped after it was enacted.
- 10%-35% of asthma cases are environmentally related. The environmentally attributable annual cost was judged to be 30% of the total. The link to this information is at: www.childenvironment.org/reports/environmental-paper.htm
- Carole also provided a list of resources/websites.
- There was also a survey of the counties: We heard from 10 of 99 counties, 9 counties don't have any trash burning regulations. Linn County does, it's enforced by the health department with violations.
- Tony: Actually Linn County has the same regulations as the DNR.
- Also, Polk County didn't respond, but we know they do have regulations.

Environmental Issues:

New PM Standard (Jim McGraw)

[See handout/presentation]

- There are federal standards designed to protect health (primary standards) and welfare (secondary standards).
- New standards were finalized based on the latest health research.
- With the new standards our state has very little excess to meet the standards. Some counties are higher than the standard.
- There is a timeline for meeting the standard. We still have to implement the 1997 form of the standard (it was delayed due to state lawsuits, etc.) and at the same time it's being superseded by the new standards. April of 2015 is the goal for attainment. There is a lot of work to put into developing an emissions control strategy.

Potential non-attainment issues:

- Must attain as expedited as possible
 - Adopt rules to implement control technologies and measures. (new open burning rules, smoke management plans, and/or programs to reduce emissions from woodstoves and fireplaces) That's how this focuses back to open burning.
 - New source review – must implement lowest achievable emission rate (LAER), and must offset emissions.
- There are a lot of EPA resources out there regarding this information.
 - Primary causes are from combustion sources.
 - What are the consequences? Costs of controls will depend on the control. LAER controls don't take into account the economics. If it's technologically feasible, you're expected to do it. It's very difficult to build a new source in a non-attainment area. Also there are transportation conformity issues. Highway projects have to be able to show they won't affect the non-attainment area from coming into compliance. Federal Highway money or state grant money could be withheld if states aren't working towards the goal, however this would be very extreme.

Comment: The cities themselves (not just industries) should be held accountable and required to take some actions to help meet the attainment level.

Dioxin Studies (Christine)

- EPA put out a 667 page report. They looked at dioxin emissions in the US. They concluded that there has been an overall reduction (from all sources). This is due to controls in the municipal waste combustors, etc. Open burning of household trash (burn barrels) is the largest contributor to dioxin in the US. The threshold for an acceptable amount has also been lowered. Most people get it from dairy consumption.
- Burn barrel study determined that dioxin emissions from burn barrels are significant.

- Because of the variability of burn barrels, it's hard to determine the emissions. Also they have to control for the barrel itself to make sure the burn barrel itself is not contributing to the emissions.
- Another interesting factor was that the recycler's dioxin emissions were considerably higher than the non-recyclers.

Fire safety and insurance cost (Jim Kenkel and Ross Loder):

[See handout(s)]

- The insurance rating schedule looks at things like the strength of the fire department and water supply, but it does not account for the adoption of a burn ban.
- In discussions with some insurance industry contacts, no one said there was a direct check-off with whether or not a burn ban was in place.
- Only about 49% of fire departments report the data, so that's a major limitation to this data.
- We have knowledge of single fires as a result of trash fires that resulted in \$5 million in damage, this was not reported. Therefore we can't make assumptions with the numbers, and it's not as easy as doubling the amounts.
- Last spring we had a trash-burning fire that burned many acres in several counties.
- Unfortunately a lot of these departments don't report the fires.
- Fatalities normally occur with older and younger people. We had 2 elderly people that died in fires last year. We see 2-3 trash burning fatalities each year.
- In some cases the elderly get worked up because the fire is out of control, and end up having a heart attack.
- We're getting reports from the larger departments, but not the smaller ones.

Question: Wouldn't the smaller communities that don't fill out the survey potentially have slower response time? Therefore their rates may actually be higher than the bigger areas?

Answer: Cost to the public is a hard cost to quantify. In rural areas, there is a direct cost for paying the volunteer fighters for time on a call. These numbers can grow very quickly.

Comments: This data is important in an educational campaign. The people that died were elderly, this can help target the audience. Public safety brings a bigger perspective than the "tree huggers" sometimes do.

Ross: Department of Public Safety issues are being presented to the governor's transitional staff, along with other potential items. Would it be acceptable to present this information as a potential item that may occur?

Response: It might be good to discuss with Sharon or Diane Ford-Shivers for their input. The legislature knows about the trash burn workgroup (they're on the email list). It's ok to mention it, but we're in the discussion stage.

Nuisance Issue:

This is one that is hard to get information on. A community in Linn County was having nuisance complaints so they implemented a burn ban.

Comments:

- We have a neighbor that burns his construction waste in burn barrels when the wind blows away from his residence (towards mine) is when he burns. It is a nuisance. There is anecdotal data.
- Other states mention dealing with nuisance issues and use it as public education.
- For nuisance issues, sometimes people don't know who to call. Related to this is that sometimes departments get called about a fire (if they see smoke) and they go out on a call. Even if it's a controlled fire, this still takes resources to get the department to go out.
- Appanoose County has less than 10 complaints a year, and they're all in the city.
- Rural residents may not call because they don't know who to call, or they don't think anything will be done.

Education and Awareness: (Susan)

See handout, samples of "clearing the Air", there are also a lot of websites listed as resources for education.

Case studies and examples of curriculum:

- One county paid for half of an officer's salary to deal with burning issues. The officer had an incentive to go out and seek out burning problems. They made a lot more arrests and findings and a lot of other illegal activities were identified. This made the sheriff feel that they should fund the position because it was so successful.
- Another idea was to have a program for trading in burn barrels for 6 months of reduced garbage fees. WM companies will make money in the long run.
- There is a broad basis of programs to use as a foundation to educate local officials, law enforcement, the community, etc. There are also lots of examples of public education campaigns for reducing backyard burning. MN has a campaign and they do have a strategy, so it's a nice model to use. (Clarification is that MN does not have a ban on open burning, there are loopholes to get around it. It's the public education that they count on. Regulations get shot down when brought up.)
- Wisconsin sent some power point examples that they have for different age groups. Information is presented in an understandable manner that's easy to digest.
- Minnesota also has educational materials. They received funding from the legislation to do educational materials.
- There are DVD's, CD's, and videos available too.

Trash burning in other states (Christine)

[See handout(s)]

- There is a lot of good information and education from other states.

- The eastern states seems to have more regulations for banning burning (enforcement is unclear).
- California didn't ban burning until 2004. They have some of the same exceptions that we've been hearing about (based upon trash pickup availability).
- The Midwest is similar to Iowa.

Minnesota is interesting right now.

- They gathered a lot of information on rural burning in the state based on a survey they did. It's not necessarily the farmers doing the burning, it's businesses, vacationers, other rural residents, etc.
- They have a lot of the same health information that we've presented and they focus on dioxins. Minnesota focuses on the dioxin impacts in agricultural and rural areas.
- They're talking to communities about infrastructure options, and ways to inform the residents of the options.
- There are lots of educational campaigns (Bernie the Burn Barrel).
- Their goal is to reduce emissions by 50% by 2008 and eliminate burn barrels by 2010.
- They're starting with regional and county presentations. "What will it take to get your residents to change their behavior?", then a statewide media campaign, and also a grant program. They were able to do this by getting money from the legislation to do the grant program (\$150,000). They have an individual working on assisting local state governments. They also got money from a couple of other sources that they could use for the educational campaign. The money wasn't specifically dedicated for burn barrels, but that's what they've decided to focus on.

Cost/Convenience of Options (Cindy)

[See handout(s)]

- There are a lot of variables that are different across the state, county, cities. The best summary is that there are options available. Range is anywhere from \$5 to \$30.
- UBP (Unit based pricing) has been incorporated by a lot of cities as a mechanism for encouraging waste reduction. You pay for what you throw away. The rate is based on the amount that you dispose of.
- Rural hauler prices range based upon haulers and resident location.
- Clarification; Cindy's chart is primarily for cities that have a contract in place. There are some that residents arrange for. There are some that are in a more rural area and their prices increase.
- Cindy: Actually rural collection costs vary across the board, but it is available or it could be available at a reasonable price.
- Other factors are distance to disposal, or if they have to go through a transfer station. These things may cause the price to go up.
- However if we make it a wider base where more people will utilize the services, it will be more feasible for haulers to pick up. If there's just one person out in the country wanting pick up, it will be higher priced or they won't do it due to the inconvenience, however if there are several out along the route doing it, it's more cost-effective to do it.

- It's available, but expensive the farther out you get.
- Cities could extend their contracts, but their contract cost will go up.
- Zoning could help with the costs.
- And again, if more people are using the service it becomes more feasible.

Elderly/low income consideration: Are there special services for these people? Some did have special arrangements. Reduced rates could apply.

Citizen Convenience Centers:

[See photos]

- One of the ways that rural county service is provided is to provide drop off facilities for solid waste. The county pays for it. It's a reduced cost for rural residents to bring in their garbage. There is staffed. Residents can just come and drop off. When it is full, it goes to the landfill.
- Other CCC's also use an open top box that could be tarped and hauled to the landfill (rather than compacted). This would be an even lower cost option. You could probably get a facility set up for \$40,000 to \$50,000. It's also good to have recycling available at the location as an option too. Having it staffed is important. Some counties have a private hauler that rotates where the "drop-off" is located at. There is a schedule that they use to spend time at different locations.

There are several options that can be explored as options available.

Elderly/disability Costs (Nikki)

[See hand-out]

- After discussion/research I found that for the most part, older adults and persons with disabilities are able to manage costs and physical limitations.
- The handout has a list of the examples of the variety of options available. There's a wide range of programs. They may be more likely to just place recyclables in the trash because it's more difficult to get recyclables to the correct destination. Some people use neighbors as a resource fairly well. Sometimes there are people that hold onto it until it becomes a health issue, but not very often.
- There are still some barriers with cost with a burn ban, where it hasn't been a cost available before.

A lot of the elderly population are still burning, so there's an educational component that's needed. Some of the elderly don't want to burn, but it's the issue of having a feasible alternative.

ISU extension and 4-H groups and other civic organizations could be used as resources for assistance.

Enforcement

[See hand-out on Polk County]

- It's about \$100 an hour for Polk County to do enforcement. It's hard to split out trade waste vs. residential, however 95% of complaints are for open burning. The percentage of those caught that are fined is fairly low.

- About \$12,000 was spent in a year for open burning enforcement. This is mostly reactive.

- In the entire states in 2005, of 525 solid waste related complaints, 95% of those were related to open burning and/or open dumping (this is per DNR Field Office data). This was about \$300,000 in staff salary. It resulted in \$80,000 of fines issue.

- Linn County has burn permits that cost \$5 for 30 days or \$15 for 60 days. They average about 4,000 permits a year. A portion goes to the fire department.

- It sounds like it's difficult to do enforcement. Also it's difficult to distinguish between trade waste and municipal waste.

- We have a smaller community with a burn ban that has a contract with a hauler. If the hauler sees someone that hasn't set out garbage for a while, then they can report them to the city. But we don't know from there how it's dealt with.

- There are a lot of variables. It's hard to determine who is directly responsible.

- With any ban you have to have an enforcement program. This way you have a clear process for where to go.

- Incentives work better than punishment? You need both. You need to start with the options, then once it's banned you don't have as much to enforce.

- A lot of it is education. We have to tell people what trash burning is doing. We also need some alternatives for the town and along with providing alternatives to educate them of the options. With education we can get the mindset established first.

- Would there be any way to get corporate support? The other states don't have it. There are grants available. One is from USDA for a rural solid waste grant. I think if we define what we want to do there are monies out there.

- Solid waste alternatives program money could potentially be earmarked for helping establish some of the initial costs.

Where do we start?

- Education is key. Also this is a big issue for farmers so we may want to stay with residential as a starting place.

- Also we need to be careful that we don't shift it from open burning to open dumping, neither of which are acceptable. Also, the agricultural exemptions need to be considered too.

- I think we have some subgroups that could work on some things, education committee, legislation committee, and transition. Also legislative funding initiatives would be good to look at. We need a transition/options group to look at options.

- Consensus of the group is that we don't think we can get legislation through. However with the new legislature we need to keep it as an option.

- We need to start with some education and milestones and keep the legislature in the loop. With milestones we have direction and goals to move towards.
- Another suggestion is for the legislature to have a study/report that summarizes what our group has discussed and come up with. This is also to show them our future direction for where we want to move towards. This way they're aware of the issue and they know who to talk if they have questions.
- We could also have a legislative strategy sub-committee.
- We don't want a sub-committee to come up with information and then have it go backwards like the first couple of meeting.

Where do we go from here?

- Put information on the website. Start getting the information out that is already available to the public, including the legislators. Put them on notice that we're going to do something.
 - Isn't there potential that with our group's work and the information we've presented will be picked up by a legislator? Why not pick the easier fruit and get to the more difficult issues as we move along.
- Target urban communities for trash burn bans (population of 500 and greater??)
- Identify legislators to take this on. (Lobbyists?)
 - Asthma
 - Fire fatalities
- Go to general assembly leadership (Gronstal, Bolkom?)
- Grassroots legislators, too
- Need governor's buy-in too.
- Capitalize on what's being done. Find cities already doing this.
- Presentations/committees for ISAC and League of Cities to educate them and put them on board. DNR has had a staff person attending these meetings in the past. Maybe needs to be reiterated.
- Develop materials to support the ban. Sample ordinances and basic educational items to give to cities as assistance to help promote burn bans.
- Support statement from the group lending more credibility to what the group has done.
- Public health and welfare needs to be promoted.
- Target rural and urban in a different way.
- Start with education whether or not legislation gets passed, we need to have education in place even if we get legislation.
 - Grassroots education (county fairs)
- Develop a consistent packet from the workgroup.
- Concrete idea of education and the costs for it.
- Education to the cities and the counties. Legislators will say they can already do this on their own if they want.

At a minimum what do we want to push forward?

- Ban trash burning, but, representatives need back-up materials to convince constituents.
- Proper waste disposal. Piggyback with illegal dumping campaign as a comprehensive package.
- Tire fund/program as a funding mechanism?
- Signed statement and binder/packet supporting a trash burn ban.
 - Broader than just rural.
 - Generic letter about health impacts, and simple statements. Also you need to have different documents you can put in your packet. The inserts can all have them same look, but you can put your packet together as you see fit.
 - The generic letter can say trash burning is bad for Iowa. Then adding to that we can give options and alternatives to the burn barrel.
- What is the strategy? (focus on big picture)
 - End the burning of trash
 - Proper waste disposal
- Homework: positive statement for “End Trash Burning”
 - Sub-group: Educational - Use the MN and Wisconsin documents as frameworks. But find out their process and strategy for getting to that point.
 - We all have different ideas of how far we want to go. If we have the educational components there, then individuals can decide how far they want to go with the components.
 - Sub-group: Political - Working with/on the legislators. (briefing documents, building report)
 - Sub-group: Financing and education
- We need to develop education; how far and where we go from there may be different for each constituent.
- What do you want out of it? Put the tools together and using the tools you can decide what things you want to pull out of it.

Group members need to consider how far they want to go. DNR can't do it on their own. You need to consider how/if this group can help you and how far you want to go with it. Some think that the DNR needs to take more ownership. There's more the DNR could do.

We need to answer the questions and get back to Christine to get us where we need to be for the next time. Let Christine know if you are interested in working on one of these sub-committees.