

# P2 QUARTERLY

The Newsletter of Lee  
County's Pollution  
Prevention Program

Winter 2002

## *Program Staff*

L.A.(Tony) Pellicer	DNRM Manager
Dale L. Nottingham	Program Manager
James Ward	ES II
Sara Leggett	ES II
Mary Goodell	Planning Tech II

## *Published By:*

Lee County  
P<sup>2</sup> Program  
P.O. Box 398  
Fort Myers, FL 33902  
Phone: 941/479-8126  
Fax: 941/479-8108

**Do you need a speaker for an upcoming event? Would you like a specialized presentation for your next trade association meeting? Give us a call and schedule a time for your next educational needs.**

**We would like to thank Dorothy Tremble for her kind words in regard to the P2 Quarterly! Lee County's P2 Program is a working partner for the business community.**

## LEE COUNTY FLEET RANKED SECOND IN THE NATION

Lee County Fleet Management has been recognized as the second most efficient fleet operation in the United States, according to a nationally recognized fleet analyst and an article he has written in the October issue of Automotive Fleet magazine.

Rounding out the top 10 fleets are: Everett, Washington (1); King County, Seattle, Washington (3); Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio (4); Chatham County, Savannah, Georgia (5); Montgomery County, Rockville, Maryland (6); City of Anaheim, California (7); City of Little Rock, Arkansas (8); Adams County, Colorado (9); and the District of Columbia (10).

Tom Johnson of CCG Systems put the ranking's list together. Johnson has analyzed more than 3,500 fleet departments, both public, and private in his 21 years as a fleet analyst and independent consultant. He currently is working on his second book, "The 100 Best Fleets in America."

Johnson rates fleets by seven common qualities: A High Trust Culture, High Technology, Acknowledgment of Accomplishments, Accountability, Collaboration, Creativity, and Celebration.

Lee County Government's Fleet Management Division maintains more than 1,200 vehicles that are used by the county's 25 departments and divisions each day in providing services to residents. The fleet includes everything from passenger cars, light duty trucks and commercial work vans, ambulances, graders, super-duty construction trucks, and equipment. The division employs 25 and has an annual operating budget of \$4.8 million. Among its accomplishments:

- It was the first fleet in Florida to completely eliminate hazardous waste from its operations by recycling, using environmentally safe materials, and modifying operational procedures.
- In 1998, Division Director Marilyn Rawlings was nominated by Automotive Fleet magazine as "Fleet Manager of the Year."
- In July of this year, 24 Fleet Management employees successfully completed an 11-week leadership-training course.
- The county maintains a state-of-the-art fleet management software system to track inventory, fuel, operations and maintenance.

## Fleet To Be Recognized In National Training Video

After numerous National recognition awards from various groups and governmental agencies, Lee County's Fleet Management will be featured in a training video being produced by CityTV, Channel 16, Santa Monica California located in Region 9 of the EPA. The video will be utilized to train local governments on the benefits of Environmental Preferable Purchasing (EPP). This term means knowing what product to buy that addresses a specific need with the least impact on the environment. EPP philosophy is also used to establish purchasing guidelines on products that have the least regulatory requirements for the handling of the waste streams they create. To know what comes through the "front door" helps to know "back door" disposal requirements and assist with cost control and budgeting. Another aspect, usually not high on the priority list, is employee safety concerns for the exposure from the utilized material. The cost savings by reducing toxic exposures to employees is reflected by less employee time off due to illness and/or onsite accidents from excessive exposure to toxic chemicals. One elusive factor in this scenario on calculating the savings; there is no solid figure on what a human life is worth. To us it is priceless!

## **DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR MERCURY DEVICES ARE?**

Mercury containing devices in our solid waste stream have risen sharply over the past ten years; they have doubled in the past 5 years to more than half of the total mercury in our waste stream. The percentage will continue to rise until mercury is **recycled** instead of thrown away. This is a problem that affects everyone because mercury contaminates the air you breathe, the water you drink and the food you eat. Two-thirds of the mercury released into the environment comes from older Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facilities that incinerate the mercury containing devices placed in the regular solid waste stream ([www.epa.gov/grtlakes/p2/merpam.html](http://www.epa.gov/grtlakes/p2/merpam.html)). The mercury is circulated by air currents and falls to the ground in rainwater. The mercury is deposited into wetlands, lakes, and streams. Bacteria present in bodies of water convert part of the mercury into methylmercury, which is toxic and builds up in the tissues of animals that eat the bacteria. The full cycle begins by humans not properly disposing of mercury containing devices and ends with humans breathing or eating the mercury tainted air or food.

Mercury containing lamps, which include fluorescent lights, high intensity discharge (HID), metal halide, mercury vapor, high-pressure sodium, and neon lights all contain mercury and need to be recycled. There are also a number of devices that need to be recycled. They include thermometers, thermostats, electric switches, light switches, displacement relays, boat bilge pump switches, barometers, gauges, blood pressure manometers, and the ampoules from these devices that contain mercury.

Mercury thermometers are used by doctors to measure fever temperatures and by homeowners, businesses, and institutions to measure water and air temperatures. Alternatives to this type of thermometer are alcohol filled or digital thermometers.

Mercury containing thermostats and thermostat probes can be found in many gas-fired appliances, such as ranges, ovens, clothes dryers, water heaters, furnaces and space heaters. Alternatives to mercury thermostats are electric thermostats.

Mercury containing tilt switches can be found under the lids of washing machines and chest type freezers. Motion sensitive and position sensitive switches can be found in irons and space heaters. Float switches are used in sump pumps and bilge pumps. Light switches, which contain mercury, can be found under the hood in automobiles and trucks.

Displacement relays that contain mercury switches can be found in some automobiles to control airbags, anti-lock brakes, seat belt systems, and automatically adjusting suspension systems.

Most barometers, manometers and vacuum gauges contain mercury. These are gauges used to calibrate or measure certain parameters. Mercury-free liquid can be used in place of mercury in many of the gauges.

If you use any of these devices at work, the proper way to dispose of them is to **recycle**. (US EPA's Universal Waste Rule 40 CFR 273.13 or 273.33) The P2 Program has produced a guide sheet that will assist in the proper handling of this waste stream. For a copy contact our office at (941) 479-8126.

## **THE PROBLEM**

One of the largest environmental challenges facing Lee County residents is the insurgence of mercury into our environment through improper disposal of mercury containing devices and lamps, also known as potential hazardous waste. One would think that there are sufficient laws to prevent the degradation of our drinking water and wildlife by mercury intrusion. However, the unfortunate truth is that hazardous wastes from construction demolition are making their way into our environment, our wildlife, and ultimately our bodies. Construction and demolition debris is the largest contributing source of mercury in our environment (with the exception of coal burning power plants). Thankfully the Florida Power and Light (FP&L) facility in East Lee County has switched their fuel to natural gas.

Construction and demolition debris containing mercury devices/lamps, lead paint, PCB containing ballasts, and other hazardous wastes are disposed of at construction landfills, and Waste to Energy (WTE) facilities. These wastes are not knowingly accepted at construction and demolition landfills or WTE. However, these receiving facilities are not part of the transporting portion of the operation and do not have the manpower to properly screen all the loads delivered to them. Thus landfills and WTE's are receiving unknown quantities of hazardous and toxic wastes into their systems. (continued next page)

The following excerpt is from a report published by The Environmental Protection Agency's Region 4 office ([www.epa.gov/region04/sesd/sflea/sfleair.html](http://www.epa.gov/region04/sesd/sflea/sfleair.html)) "The highest mercury concentrations in algae, fish, and great egrets have been found to occur in Water Conservation Area 3 between Alligator Alley and Tamiami Trail. No single point source has been identified that contributes directly to these high mercury levels. Atmospheric mercury loading from precipitation is between 35 to 70 times greater in the publicly owned Everglades than mercury loading in canal water coming from the Everglades Agricultural Area. Some experts believe disposal and/or incineration of improperly screened solid waste loads in urban areas is likely the primary source of atmospheric mercury.

## **THE SOLUTION**

What is needed is a pro active local regulatory agency empowered to ensure any process that generates regulated waste is properly managed through scientifically proven methods. Legislators create regulations with no funding or visible means of manpower to ensure compliance is achieved. Until this gap is lessened, situations will turn into problems that become harder and more expensive to correct.

Regulations just for the sake of appearing to accomplish campaign promises are not the answer. Compliance through proven technology works and ensures that the environment, communities, and the people who live in them are protected and secure!

## **ASSISTANCE ITEMS AVAILABLE**

As an education and assistance program, we provide a variety of pamphlets, brochures, and reference lists. These are designed to help businesses properly manage and understand their hazardous waste regulatory requirements. Some of the items available are:

### **BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP's):**

- Auto Body Repair
- Golf Course Maintenance
- Marine Repair
- Photographic Processing
- Small Mechanical Repair Facilities

### **PAMPHLETS/BROCHURES:**

- Pocket Guide to MSDS's & Labels Your Keys to Chemical Safety
- Hazardous Waste Regulations and You
- Florida's Handbook For Small Quantity Generators of Hazardous Waste

### **SINGLE SHEET INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

- Occupational Licenses and Contacts
- Hauler's List for Lee County, Florida (Revised 11-28-01)
- Management of Spent Mercury-Containing Lamps and Devices

All of the above listed items are available at no charge. If you're interested in receiving any of these, please call Mary O'Toole Goodell at (941) 479-8519, or stop in at the Hazardous Waste/Utilities/Wells counter in the Public Works Building 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Permitting/Zoning, 1500 Monroe ST, FT Myers, FL 33901.

## **ONSITE ASSISTANCE**

Do concerns about regulatory compliance at your facility keep you up at night? Ever wanted to ask a government inspector to assess your facility? On the logical scale, do these two questions seem to be about as far apart as they can be? Well, they could be depending on the governmental agency that you call. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the federal body of government that regulates hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA). The EPA has increased their criminal investigation team 17% this past year, and just got approval to add an additional 30 environmental investigators. If you thought the EPA was going soft under the Bush administration, think again!

The State of Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is authorized by State Statute to enforce EPA's RCRA regulation. DEP is the EPA for RCRA in the State of Florida. Lee County's Pollution Prevention Program is not! Need a facility assessment? Need a review of your safety plan for OSHA requirements? Just want some questions answered without raising red flags? Pollution prevention is like regulatory intervention before the situation becomes a serious problem. For a better night's sleep, give us a call to schedule an onsite assessment!

## Hazardous Waste Collection Days For Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators

April 25, 2002

July 25, 2002

October 24, 2002

The times for the CESQG collection days are from 8:00am- 3:00pm. The location for the CESQG collection day is on North Airport Road at Page Field. The scheduled collection days and times are subject to change and/or canceled, depending on inclement weather.

**There is a fee involved for disposal depending on the type of waste and quantity.** If you have any questions regarding the associated fees for your disposal, please contact US Liquids of Florida at 1-800-624-5302

These collection days are designed to offer disposal alternatives for the business community's CESQG's. The contractor will provide receipts documenting proper disposal, at the collection days. If your facility is classified as a Small Quantity Generator, you cannot transport your waste. You will need to have a transporter pick up your waste from your facility.

### Other Upcoming Events

Here are some locations that you can meet your Pollution Prevention team members. At these events you can pick up various types of information to help you comply with your regulatory requirements. The informational handouts are free and you can schedule a time for a facility assessment.

Southwest Florida Fair – February 22 through March 3

Evangelical Christian School Business Fair – March 9

Presort Standard U.S. Postage PAID Ft. Myers, FL Permit No. 756
---

*P<sup>2</sup> Program*  
 1500 Monroe Street  
 P.O. Box 398  
 Ft. Myers, FL 33902