

SPECIAL ISSUE

MSD and JRC mark new beginning

An agreement between MSD and the Justice Resource Center will end eight months of daily protests at the Morris Forman Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility.

It also marks the beginning of a new relationship between MSD and the community surrounding and served by the Morris Forman Facility. "We don't



Installed in 1994, bioroughing towers pretreat high-strength wastewater at the Morris Forman facility by using bacteria to break down solids. To reduce the potential for odors, aluminum dome covers were added to the towers in 1999.

view the agreement as an endpoint," said Executive Director Gordon Garner. "We view it as the beginning of an opportunity to rebuild the trust with our neighbors."

The agreement resulted from mediation sessions held under the direction of retired Judge Benjamin Shobe. The disagreement between MSD and the Justice Resource Center had already been argued in the courtroom. Justice Resource Center protesters refused to comply with a temporary restraining order, prohibiting them from blocking truck traffic at the Morris Forman facility on Algonquin Parkway.

MSD sought the mediation for the same reasons it sought the restraining order—to continue its operations and ensure safety of workers, contractors and the protesters. Judge Shobe moderated two meetings between the parties. "The result is more than an agreement we can live with," said Garner. "It's an agreement we can get behind."

Under the agreement, approved by MSD's Board on July 24, the Justice Resource Center no longer interferes with truck traffic at the Morris Forman facility. Signs posted near the entrance have been removed.

The agreement calls for MSD to undertake studies to determine traffic flow in the Morris Forman neighborhood, conduct groundwater testing at a closed septage receiving facility, post fish-consumption advisories, and conduct air monitoring tests. Garner said MSD's mediation team developed the agreement terms based on the CERES Principles and the Principles for

(continued on back)

Principles guide MSD in agreement terms

While negotiating a legal agreement with a citizen-based group may be new to MSD, deciding what compromises MSD could make was relatively simple.

"We looked to our two guiding documents—the CERES (Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies) Principles and the Principles for Results-Based Management," said Executive Director Gordon Garner.

More than a decade ago, MSD's Board adopted the two sets of principles to help the agency become a better neighbor and environmental steward. Since, they have provided direction to MSD staff and Board in all aspects of the company's operations and management.

The principles provide guidelines for environmental, safety, internal and external communications, workforce, financial matters, and other issues. "Certainly, if these principles apply to our day-to-day business and operations, it makes sense to use them as a guide in reaching an agreement with the Justice Resource Center," Garner said.

Here's how the terms of the Agreement match up with the CERES Principles and the Principles for Results-Based Management:

- Write to everyone who transports materials to the Morris Forman facility, requiring that their vehicles meet all contract requirements as well as environmental and transport regulations.
CERES Principle: MSD will safeguard all habitats affected by our operations.
- Accelerate conversion of the diesel fleet to meet pending 2007 EPA emissions standards.
CERES Principle: MSD will conserve nonrenewable resources.

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MSD

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MSD and JRC

(continued from front)

Results-Based Management. (See related story, *Principles guide MSD in agreement terms*)

Garner said many of the agreement terms are practices already in place at MSD. Air monitoring, for example, is already performed in the area through the West County Community Task Force, in which MSD actively participates. Extensive groundwater monitoring data from the Morris Forman facility already is available. "Part of our challenge is making voluminous technical data understandable and available to those who want to learn more," he said.

In addition to providing information to the Justice Resource Center, MSD plans to share results of its traffic studies, groundwater and air monitoring and other new information with other industries neighboring the Morris Forman facility. "All of us need to be looking beyond permit compliance at issues that matter most to neighborhoods," Garner said. "We hope sharing this information will help."

Garner said one of MSD's chief concerns remains odor. "Odor is an air-quality issue for us. It relates to the comfort and quality of life of our facility's neighbors," he said. While the Morris Forman facility isn't the only odor-producer in the area, Garner said MSD's facility is at the center of neighborhood odor issues.



A two-stage chemical scrubber system reduces odor migrating from the Morris Forman facility by removing hydrogen sulfide odor. Combined with the covers on the bioroughing towers, these odor control features cost \$3.3 million.

A new solids handling process is being built at the Morris Forman facility (see related story, *New solids process to reduce odor*) and MSD hopes it helps improve conditions for facility neighbors.

"Although odor is not

toxic or hazardous to anyone's health, it is annoying and we're committed to making it better," Garner said.

Garner noted that mediation such as this one is not common practice for municipal utilities. "These issues can drag on and create ill-feelings," he said. "Our breakthrough was having a mediator that is known in the community, aware of the issues and acceptable to both sides. My only regret is that we didn't think of it sooner."

Participating with Garner in the mediation for MSD were: Legal Counsel Carolyn Shain; Director of Research/Productivity Assessment Mike Sweeney; John Dwyer with law firm Pedley, Zielke, Gordinier & Pence; and Gary Swanson with CH2M Hill, the engineering firm that works with the Morris Forman Area Team.

Representing the Justice Resource Center were Rev. Louis Coleman, Herman Dozier, Rev. Charles Kirby, Mattie Jones, Marvina Marshall and attorney Samara Swanston. Four observers from the Jefferson County of Education also were present.

Principles guide

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- Explore alternative truck routes to and from the Morris Forman facility.
Results-Based Management Principle: MSD, as a public employer, will be socially responsible and supportive of community planning, neighborhood involvement, and economic development.
- Participate in a study of heavy truck traffic on Algonquin Parkway and in the immediate vicinity.
CERES Principle: MSD will minimize environmental, health and safety risks to our employees and customers.
- Mount security cameras at the facility's main gate to the plant to view trucks entering and leaving.
Results-Based Management Principle: MSD will encourage open and effective communication among its employees and customers about its business and evolving strategy for the future.
- Present a proposal for ground water testing at the Bells Lane Receiving Facility.
CERES Principles: MSD will correct damages caused to the environment from past operations and projects. MSD will conduct environmental audits.
- Post the State Department of Fish & Wildlife warning -regarding Ohio River fish consumption at MSD facilities along the river.
CERES Principle: MSD will maintain an open communications network with customers and employees regarding environmental issues. MSD will minimize environmental, health and safety risks to our employees and customers.

New solids process to reduce odor at Morris Forman facility

A new way to handle solid by-products of the wastewater treatment process at MSD's Morris Forman Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility will eliminate a major odor source.

The new process will replace the plant's low-pressure oxidation or Zimpro system, a main source of odors. Although MSD has invested more than \$7 million in odor control measures at the Morris Forman facility since 1995, odor from the facility continue to concern area residents.

To replace the Zimpro system, MSD chose a process that initially treats solids by anaerobic digestion, then blending them with secondary solids before they are dewatered and dried.

MSD is exploring uses for the dried solids that will result from the new process. For more than 60 years, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District has marketed its dried biosolids under the brand name Milorganite. Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Parks Department purchases dried biosolids from Milwaukee for use in the Metro Parks' 12,000-plus acres of property.

The new process will be enclosed and use multiple odor controls, nearly eliminating solids handling odor from the facility. Existing buildings at Morris Forman will house dryers and other process components.

The new process also will reduce the volume of solid waste and save on landfill disposal charges. Methane

gas produced in the process will fuel dryers, reducing energy costs.

Black & Veatch/J.S. Alberici Joint Venture of Louisville will design and build the new solids handling process at the Morris Forman facility. Minority-owned businesses will perform roughly 20 percent of the work and woman-owned companies will perform about eight percent. Construction is to be completed in 2002.

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