

"E" - N O T E S

NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 4

NOVEMBER, 1991

CITIZEN EFFORTS BEAR FRUIT IN ASHLAND OIL ISSUES

For years, malfunctions and shut-downs at Ashland Oil's (AOI) Sulfur Recovery Unit (SRU) have sent sulfur dioxide (SO₂) levels soaring around the refinery and resulted in numerous health complaints.

Recently, AOI installed a back-up SRU, undoubtedly as a result of pressure put on state agencies by hundreds of citizens who telephoned or wrote letters demanding better pollution control at the refinery.

OVEC hopes this improvement will result in an eventual reduction of chronic SO₂ problems in the area but recognizes that much more needs to be done.

For example, the refinery still does not meet the minimum environmental standards required for operating permits in Kentucky. Instead, the refinery operates under agreed court orders and construction permits.

AOI'S OPEN HOUSE

Citizen efforts also made a real difference in halting some of AOI's outrageous public relations efforts. Some Wayne County school personnel were promoting Ashland Oil's recent "Good Neighbors" Open House.

At Ceredo-Kenova High School, the principal used the intercom to urge students to attend the AOI Open House. Several teachers offered extra credit to students who attended.

Remember, this is the same school system that refused to allow Marshall University's Medical School to study the lung functions of its students, claiming the school system should remain neutral on the AOI issue!

It appears that the phone calls made by angry Wayne County residents to school officials and news reporters have stopped this unethical effort to use public employees as public relations partners for a company which is being sued by 1700 of its neighbors for pollution damages.

MORAL OF THE STORY

There is a strong moral to both the Sulfur Recovery Unit and the public schools issues. Without the active work of numerous citizens, the schools could continue to promote AOI and the company could continue to lack the necessary sulfur control equipment to reduce SO₂ emissions.

The way to improve environmental quality is to join with other citizens who are working to require better pollution control and prevention. If you are willing to make a few phone calls, write letters, or contribute financially to our efforts, please write to OVEC or call Dianne Bady at (614) 886-5796. Your help is needed!

**MEANWHILE,
OTHER ASHLAND OIL ISSUES DRAG ON AND ON ...**

THE MALFUNCTIONS CONTINUE

Once again, AOI malfunctions have led to excessive releases of particulates, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide. On Nov. 6, the refinery reported upsets at their new SRU (see page one), RCC and FCC units. Refinery neighbors complained of problems such as nosebleeds and breathing difficulties.

In December, the U.S. EPA reported that industrial malfunctions are causing serious air quality problems in the Tri-State. AOI had the majority of malfunctions and the problems continue.

In April, the EPA charged AOI with 5 violations of the

federal Clean Air Act. Six months later, the EPA has yet to punish AOI for the violations. It's crucial that the EPA continue to hear from citizens on this matter.

PLEASE WRITE TO THE EPA!

Tell EPA AOI should be held fully accountable for their crimes against the environment and the people of the Tri-State and they should be required to correct ALL violations! Write to: Mr. Joe Kuntz, EPA-Region III, 841 Chestnut St. Philadelphia, PA 19107 and Mr. Winston Smith, EPA--Region IV, 345 Courtland St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30365.

AOI'S HAZARDOUS WASTE DUMP

Ashland Oil continues to dispose of hazardous materials in an unlined dump near the refinery. The dump does not even meet KY's standards for household garbage!

While the dump was used for years without a proper permit, it received a full operating permit in 1988, several months after arsenic levels 16 times higher than the allowable limit were detected in adjacent monitoring wells.

AOI claimed arsenic could not possibly be coming from the dump, even though the company was cited by KY for illegally dumping arsenic there.

In 1989, Don Harker, then Director of KY's Division of Waste Management (KY-DWM), decided Ashland's dump should be closed. Today, the dump remains open and Harker got fired for unexplained reasons.

Environmentalists are convinced that Harker's "crime" was that he had actually been trying to protect the state's environment.

Ashland Oil's current plan is to put a cap on the existing unlined dump and build another dump right on top of it! Although a U.S. EPA official spoke skeptically about the proposal, the state of KY has endorsed it.

In February 1991, the state held a public hearing to get comments on the "piggyback" plan. Except for Ashland Oil's high paid consultants, the testimony was unanimously opposed to this plan.

Mohammed Alauddin, a top official with the KY-DWM has said that the Division has, in principle, accepted Ashland's "piggyback" plan, but official approval is on hold while the Division's lawyers resolve a procedural problem regarding the proposal.

Meanwhile, three years after arsenic and 16 other toxic chemicals were found in the monitoring wells, Ashland Oil continues to dump hazardous wastes in the unlined dump! How convenient for the company!

HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT
IMPACT OF POLLUTION IN THE TRI-STATE

FEDERAL AIR STANDARDS DON'T PROTECT US

Here's an often repeated Tri-State scenario: citizens complain about health problems from air pollution, but industry and government respond by saying that pollution levels were within legal limits on that particular day, so people couldn't be getting sick. Who is right?

While many toxic chemicals dumped into the air and water are not regulated, scientific evidence is finding that industry neighbors can and do get sick from current legal levels of regulated air pollutants.

Science News (April 6, 1991) reported that a U.S. EPA epidemiologist determined about 60,000 people per year apparently die as a result of legal levels of particulates in the air. Especially hard hit are the elderly and breathing impaired.

Environmental Science and Technology (Vol 24, No 1, 1990) reported that "the onset of health problems occurs at far

lower carbon monoxide concentrations than currently mandated and enforced by EPA... a (CO) threshold below which there is no adverse health effect has not been found."

A University of Arizona researcher found that "ozone affects the lungs at lower levels than previously believed" and the federal ozone standard is unsafe (Herald-Dispatch, July 25, 1989).

Sulfur dioxide standards have come under attack from national environmental groups who cite similar evidence for SO₂.

Particulates, ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide have all generated significant citizen concern in the Tri-State. What can be done?

The KY-Division of Air Quality has been designated lead agency on Tri-State air issues. If you are bothered by bad air, call 1 (800) 866-0419 to register your complaint! This is an important first step to cleaning up the Tri-State!

STANDARDS DON'T
PROTECT CHILDREN

Here's another serious limitation of government pollution standards. Science (October, 1991) reported that regulatory agencies ignored a chemical's potential effects on human reproduction and early childhood development two-thirds of the time, in spite of the fact that fetuses and young children are much more sensitive to toxic chemical exposures than adults.

Did you know: One gallon of gas can contaminate 750,000 gallons of drinking water!

HOW THE TRI-STATE
RANKS IN THE U.S.

Did you know Boyd County, KY ranks #55 (top 2%) for industrial water discharges in the country? Or Cabell County, WV, ranks #34 (top 2%) in lung cancer mortality rates in the U.S?

This information was recently published in a landmark book called The Truth About Where You Live by Benjamin Goldman (Times Books, 1991).

Goldman's scientifically-based conclusions focused on workplace safety, mortality rates and other data obtained from the U.S. EPA and other federal agencies.

GARBAGE IN THE TRI-STATE
THE "LOAD-DOWN" ON SOLID WASTE

**CITY OF HUNTINGTON'S SOLID WASTE PLAN
HEARING SET FOR NOVEMBER 19**

How Huntington handles its solid waste will be determined at a public hearing on November 19, 7 pm at the Cabell County Courthouse. Mayor Nelson has a three step proposal--landfill, mixed waste processing facility and incineration!

OVEC would like to know what-ever happened to reduce, reuse and recycle? WV law establishes these three steps as the waste management hierarchy.

Help is needed to organize opposition to the Mayor's plans. OVEC member Alice Horn is leading the fight. Call Alice at 523-2898 for info.

THE LANDFILL

The City proposes to build a landfill adjacent to the current dump in East Huntington. Recent tests have found that 7 landfill neighbors have contaminated wells. These residents depend on groundwater as their only source of potable water.

Questions also arise as to whether the soil types present are suitable for building landfills, especially since the area is prone to landslides.

MIXED WASTE PROCESSING FACILITY

The City's Mixed Waste Processing Facility, sometimes called MRF's, would require several million dollars to build and operate. Garbage is dumped on a big floor and recyclables are separated by "garbage pickers".

Plans are to convert the non-recyclables to refuse-derived fuel (RDF) pellets to burn in the City's sludge incinerator. Curbside recycling is cheaper, easier and materials are much more marketable.

INCINERATION

OVEC opposes all forms of incineration. Burning garbage, even RDF, releases into the air toxic heavy metals such as cadmium, lead and mercury and chlorinated hydrocarbons such as PCB's, dioxins and furans.

Citizens live within hundreds of feet of the sludge incinerator in West Huntington. The threats to public health are far too great to burn any form of garbage, especially in a residential neighborhood.

Recyclable material will also be burned with the RDF.

**JANET BROWN
FEATURED IN "E"**

Janet Brown, Chairperson of Greenup Residents Opposed to Waste Landfill (GROWL) and an OVEC Board member, was featured in the July/August 1991 issue of E Magazine.

The "People" section profiled Janet's and GROWL's currently successful opposition to Addington Resources 937-acre landfill in Greenup County, KY.

OVEC congratulates Janet for the national recognition she deserves.

MORE ON GROWL

GROWL has filed suit against the KY Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet, charging the agency showed political favoritism to the proposed 937-acre Green Valley Landfill.

GROWL cited improper private meetings between the landfill's owner and Governor Wilkinson, who received over \$200,000 from people associated with Green Valley. Last summer, the Cabinet exempted only Green Valley from tough landfill standards. Keep up the good work, GROWL!!

THE DIOXIN DEBATE
PULP MILL AND CITIZENS BOTH SCORE VICTORIES

**WATER RESOURCES
BOARD OKAYS WEAK
DIOXIN STANDARD**

In late August, the West Virginia Water Resources Board (WRB) okayed a dioxin discharge standard that is almost 90-times weaker than U.S. EPA's recommended standard.

In public hearings earlier in the summer, OVEC, along with environmentalists and labor leaders, presented evidence that the dioxin standard should be strengthened with a goal of zero discharge.

Substantial scientific and medical evidence indicates that dioxins are the most potent chemical ever developed. Dioxin can cause cancer, birth defects reproductive and immune system disorders, chloracne and other diseases. Often, a 20 year latency period can occur between exposure and cancer symptoms.

The WRB also adopted weakened criteria for measuring how much toxic chemicals can be discharged into rivers such as the Ohio. According to a study by the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council, "mean harmonic flow" may allow industries to discharge as much as 8 times more cancer-causing chemicals into West Virginia waterways than is currently allowed.

OVEC blasted the WRB after their decisions.

**CITIZENS SCORE
DIOXIN VICTORY!!**

After the WRB decision, Alabama River Pulp and Paper asked Governor Caperton to put the dioxin standard on the agenda for the recent special session of the legislature.

By doing so, the company and politicians were attempting to subvert the entire democratic process in West Virginia for one purpose: Okay the mill's permits as fast as possible, before citizens can organize opposition!

The plan backfired. On Sunday, September 22, the Tri-State Building and Trades Council placed full page ads in 18 different newspapers in West Virginia urging citizens to call or write their legislators to oppose the "Cancer Creek Bill."

The ad, plus an avalanche of letters from citizens opposing the proposed dioxin standard, resulted in Caperton keeping dioxin off the agenda.

The water quality standards will go before the Legislative Rule-Making Review committee, then the full legislature during the regular session before being enacted. EPA must also approve the standards.

Citizens efforts will be needed to prevent the Ohio River from becoming "Cancer Creek".

OVEC AT CITIZENS' CONFERENCE ON DIOXIN

In late September, OVEC Project Director Brian Hagenbuch, Board member Missy Woolverton, OVEC member Bill Beard and other WV environmentalists attended the First International Citizens' Conference on Dioxin in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The Conference was attended by university and government dioxin scientists, doctors, organized labor, attorneys, citizens affected by dioxin, activists and others from 36 states and eight countries. The bottom line was simple:

ZERO DISCHARGE!!

OVEC TIDBITS
ENVIRO-NEWS IN THE TRI-STATE

OCAW 4-620 COMMENDS OVEC

OVEC formed in 1988 to fight a proposed BASF toxic waste incinerator that would have burned chemical wastes shipped into the Tri-State from all across the United States.

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) Local 4-620 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was at that time embroiled in a bitter lock-out at BASF's Geismer plant.

OVEC received much help from OCAW 4-620 in our successful fight to keep the Tri-State from becoming a national toxic waste disposal center.

In a recent newsletter, OCAW 4-620 described OVEC's "excellent work" on BASF issues and noted OVEC's \$25,000 grant from the W. Alton Jones Foundation. OVEC also worked on BASF-Huntington's toxic waste dumps along the Guyandotte River.

OCAW 4-620 successfully waged a long and inspiring battle against BASF-Geismer's unjust treatment of their workers and the environment. The union won their lock-out battle and continues their close association with state and national environmental groups.

If you'd like to see an excellent videotape about OCAW's labor-environmental struggle, please contact Dianne Bady (614-886-5796) who has copies.

OVEC RECEIVES LEADERSHIP GRANT

OVEC recently received a \$400 grant from the Appalachian Community Fund for group leadership development.

Funds were used to send OVEC members Dianne Bady, Brian Hagbuch, Lewis Baker and Alice Horn to the annual meeting of Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (KFTC).

CITY OF ASHLAND PLANS TO ISSUE \$20 MILLION IN BONDS FOR AOI

A \$20 million bond issuance by the City of Ashland is being planned to provide financial assistance to Ashland Oil for solid waste management. According to the proposed ordinance, "the Project will benefit the people of the Issuer by abating and controlling atmospheric, solid waste and water pollution in the state and by aiding in the retention of existing industry through the control of pollution."

Residents with questions or concerns should talk to their Commissioners or call the City Manager's office at 372-2002.

OVEC JOINS WV RIVERS COALITION WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM

OVEC has joined a large coalition of groups working to gain national protection of 12 river segments within WV's Monongahela National Forest. The goal is to gain national Wild and Scenic River status for these rivers. Wild and Scenic designation would protect them from pollution and other negative human impacts.

WV's high mountain headwaters eventually drain into the Ohio River and flow past the Tri-State. We are not immune from the effects of sedimentation, acid mine drainage or other pollution which impacts these rivers.

OVEC NEEDS YOU!

To build a better Tri-State environment, OVEC needs your support, memberships are \$5/single, \$10/family, \$25/contributing. Donations are tax-deductible and needed!

BUSH ALTERS WETLANDS

In the last newsletter, OVEC supported President Bush's No Net Loss of wetlands policy. About the time we went to press, Bush changed the definition of wetlands. So, OVEC changed its mind on supporting Bush's "No Net Loss" policy!

With the change, West Virginia will lose 20-50% of its currently classified wetlands. The policy change also means significant portions of the Everglades, coastal marshes and other areas will no longer be protected from development.

OVEC cannot support such wanton destruction of a valuable natural resource just for the sake of pro-development interests.

OVEC SERIES OF TRI-STATE ENVIRONMENTAL FACT SHEETS ARE AVAILABLE

OVEC has compiled a series of 12 Fact Sheets dealing with specific Tri-State issues such as air quality, health, Ashland Oil, the pulp mill and more. New members can receive a copy of the set with paid membership. Current or renewing members or other interested people can receive single copies or a set with a small tax-deductible donation. Send to OVEC, P.O. Box 970, Proctorville, OH 45669.

OVEC FACT SHEETS

- #1. Air Pollution and Health: The Mermin/Stanford Study
- #2. Air Pollution and Health: The EPA Study
- #3. Tri-State Environmental Health Quality (in preparation)
- #4. Pollution: Who's In Charge?
- #5. Air Pollution in the Tri-State: What Are We Breathing?
- #6. Sulfur dioxide and Carbon Monoxide: What You Can't See Can Hurt You
- #7. Particulates and Fallout: The Visible Pollution
- #8. The New Pollution: Hazardous Air Pollutants
- #9. Ozone in the Tri-State
- #10. Ashland Oil: Why the Focus?
- #11. Apple Grove Pulp and Paper: Timber in West Virginia
- #12. Apple Grove Pulp and Paper: Dioxin

"Release of Hazardous Air Pollutants in the Tri-State" (\$3)

"WE ARE NOT FOR SALE"

FIGHT POLLUTION WHILE YOU CHRISTMAS SHOP!

Some of West Virginia's finest musicians have written and recorded a dynamic album of environmental songs to raise money for the West Virginia Environmental Council (WVEC) and OVEC. "We Are Not For Sale" features West Virginia artists such as:

Stewed Mulligan...David Morris...Larry Groce (host of Mountain Stage)...Kate Long...Ron Sowell (formerly with Stark Raven)...Mike Morningstar...Steve Himes...Mountain Thyme...and others!

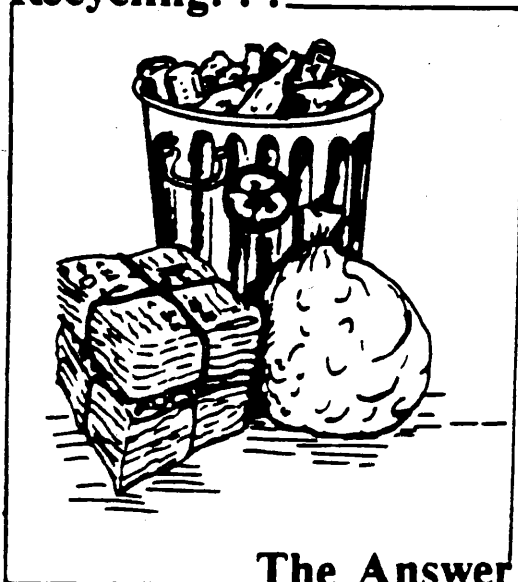
Now you can help protect the environment by buying a great tape. Buy one for each of your friends and family! The WVEC hopes to sell 2,000 tapes by Christmas to help fund the 1992 environmental legislative campaign. OVEC has a number of tapes for sale. A portion of the money will go to OVEC!

\$10.00 per tape plus \$1.25 postage/handling

Send check or money order to OVEC, P.O. Box 970, Proctorville, OH 45669. For more details, call (304) 525-4803.

Ohio Valley
Environmental Coalition
Box 970
Proctorville, OH 45669

Recycling. . .



**The Answer
to Our Garbage Problems**