

"E" - NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

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PO Box 970 Proctorville OH 45669

ASHLAND DISPUTES OVEC REPORT

In the wake of publicity from OVEC's report comparing the Catlettsburg refinery to other US refineries, Ashland Oil produced a report of their own to compare their air pollution emissions to those of other facilities. Not surprisingly, the Ashland report claims that their refinery is better than average, contrary to what was shown in the OVEC report. Also not surprisingly, the report is misleading in many ways.

The Ashland report includes some refineries smaller than the ones used in the OVEC report, but gives no explanation as to why some extra refineries were added or how they were selected. It seems what they did was to look though the smaller refineries not included in the OVEC report, pick out the dirtiest ones, and add them to the list in order to bring the average emissions up to their level. The other, cleaner refineries were conveniently omitted. In order to make themselves look better, Ashland had to compare themselves to the industry's heavier polluters.

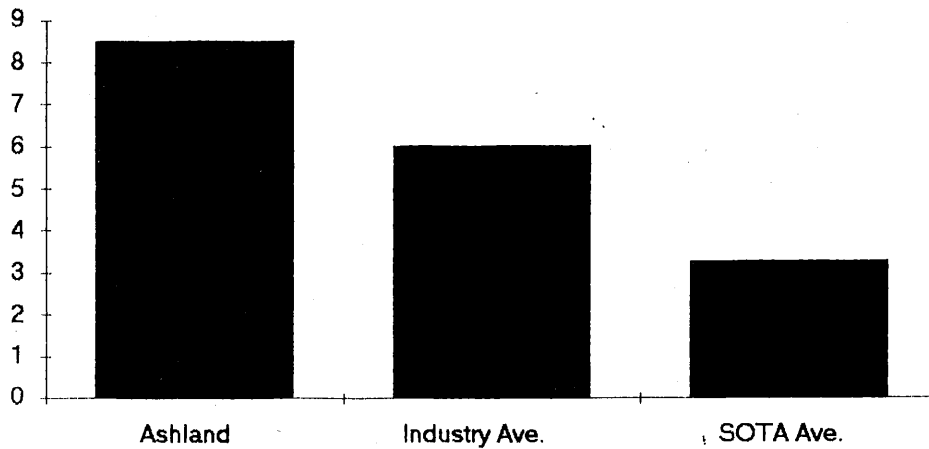
In addition to playing this and several other tricks with the numbers,

the Ashland report makes a number of false or simply misleading claims about the OVEC report. The company chose not to send their report to the media, but only to government officials. We can only assume that they want to avoid media scrutiny.

OVEC has produced a response to the Ashland report called "Refinery Comparison Update". In it, we shine light on the deceptions in the Ashland report, and use newer data (without convenient editing) to compare Ashland's emission rates to the industry as a whole and to "State-of-the-Art" refineries. The results show that Ashland's emission rates are well above the industry as a whole and dramatically above "State-of-the-Art" refineries. (See the chart on the next page) The question is: Does anybody care?

Copies of OVEC's Refinery Comparison Update are now available as is the original OVEC report. Write to the above address.

Overall Emissions Score



This graph, from the OVEC report "Refinery Comparison Update", shows a measure of the overall rate of emissions of major air pollutants from Ashland Oil's Catlettsburg Refinery as compared to the refining industry average and the average of the nation's ten best large refineries. (State-of-the-Art). For a complete explanation, see the report.

NOTABLE QUOTE:

"Why should we believe you? You don't have lots of money to donate to us!"
--A Ceredo-Kenova High School teacher (who doesn't live in Kenova)
explaining why she trusts Ashland Oil rather than OVEC.

**BRIAN NOW WITH OHIO
ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**

Brian Hagenbuch, who has been working as OVEC's project director, recently accepted a full time position with the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) in Columbus. The OEC is a network of over 100 groups statewide. We miss Brian's enthusiasm and dedication, but look forward to working with him and the OEC on Ohio River issues of mutual concern.

**OVEC FINANCIAL RECORDS
AVAILABLE**

OVEC treasurer Judy Whitley (who is also an auditor with the State of Ohio), has been working hard to keep OVEC's financial records in good shape. The records are available to members upon request.

EPA EMPHASIZES DIOXIN'S DANGERS

Alabama River Pulp and Paper wants to build the largest pulp mill in North America in Apple Grove, WV, upstream of Huntington. Using the lure of economic development, the company has been trying to get WV to weaken dioxin standards. Dioxin, one of the most toxic chemicals known, is produced in the chlorine bleaching process, and would be discharged into the Ohio River. (OVEC has factsheets on this issue and also on timbering).

OVEC has worked with other WV groups to oppose the weak standard sought by Alabama Pulp. We've found that alternatives to chlorine bleaching, now in use in Europe, eliminate the creation of dioxin water discharges. We need that kind of technology here.

Citizen pressure has so far been effective. The WV legislature refused to adopt the weak standard, but the issue will certainly arise in the next legislative session.

The US EPA has recently reported findings of an exhaustive agency study of dioxin. The EPA found that very small exposures appear to cause human immune system damage and reproductive problems. Dioxin causes cancer as well.

Thousands of Tri-State people get their drinking water downstream of the proposed pulp mill. The EPA's findings are consistent with our strong conviction that the Apple Grove pulp mill must not be allowed to use outdated, dioxin producing technology.

The fact that the Ohio River is already too polluted is well known. A new book by Benjamin Goldman, entitled The Truth About Where You Live reports which counties in the country have the highest pollution emission rates. Mason county, proposed site of the new mill, is in the top 2% of US counties in amount of acutely hazardous chemicals released into surface water. Any new industries locating in Mason County should use the very best technology available to prevent the releases of toxics into the river.

FRED MILLAR VISITS TRI-STATE

Dr. Fred Millar of Friends of the Earth visited the Tri-State to meet with citizens and give some insights into issues here. The toxics director of this Washington DC based organization spoke of his concern over Ashland Oil's use of hydrogen fluoride (HF) in the refinery's alkylation process. HF poses the risk of a catastrophic accident, since a leak of the highly toxic substance would form a ground-hugging vapor cloud capable of causing severe injury or death downwind. Because of the extreme risk of this chemical, many US refineries use sulfuric acid instead of HF. Southern California refineries are required to phase out HF use by 1998 and strict interim safety guidelines are now enforced.

We've received a copy of these safety guidelines, and will work with interested citizens to see that the same standards are implemented at Ashland Oil.

TIME TO THINK ABOUT REORGANIZING

Like any other grassroots group, OVEC is nothing more than efforts of the people who are willing to devote some spare time to trying to make democracy work. It's time to think about OVEC's focus and organization.

Our strength has always been environmental advocacy, in other words, a small group of people (supported by a larger group) have researched issues and taken public stands to advocate for environmental improvements. But it's now obvious that OVEC needs to focus more on reaching out to environmentally aware people in order to listen to concerns and help stimulate more citizen involvement.

OVEC's successful advocacy work has put us in a good position to appeal to national foundations for funding to support an expanded organizing campaign. We have applied to several foundations and expect to hear if we will get grants by mid-July. A general membership meeting will be held in mid-July to get input, suggestions and help from all of you. We'll notify you of the time and place.

We hope to be in a position to hire an organizer at that time. Another goal will be to form committees to work on specific issues. Which issues will depend on members' interest, so start thinking about it.

CYANIDE DUMPING PROTESTED

In April, OVEC joined with the United Steelworkers national union, the USW Ravenswood local, the West Virginia Environmental Council, and several national groups in a news conference to call for an end to environmental violations at the Ravenswood (WV) Aluminum Company. Charges included illegal cyanide discharges into the Ohio River and the illegal spraying of hazardous wastes on a field adjacent to the river.

This high-tech news conference, held jointly in Charleston and Washington DC, stimulated immediate results. Senator Jay Rockefeller called for action and an unprecedented team of federal and state inspectors has since conducted a detailed investigation of the plant. Results of this inspection should be announced soon.

O.U. DISTRIBUTES ENVIRONMENTAL CURRICULUM

Ohio University in Ironton is distributing an Environmental Curriculum to sixteen Tri-State High Schools. This book, entitled Coexistence of Business and Society, contains a chapter written by OVEC's Dianne Bady. The chapter is called "Environmental Activism: Advocacy for the Earth". Let us know if you'd like to see a copy.

FACTSHEETS

To get of any of these factsheets, send a stamped, self addressed envelope along with your request to OVEC, PO Box 970, Proctorville OH 45669.

- #1 Air Pollution and Health in the Tri-State: The Mermin/Stanford Study
- #2 Air Pollution and Health in the Tri-State: The EPA Study
- #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

DONATIONS TO OVEC ARE BADLY NEEDED AND ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Greenpeace Uses Grassroots To Reach Time, Inc. Magazines

~~Executives at Time, Inc. were not~~ interested in meeting with executives from Greenpeace until they received more than 22,000 cards and letters urging them to "live up to the environmental responsibility of your leadership role in the publishing industry by demanding ecologically-safe, chlorine-free paper for your own publication."

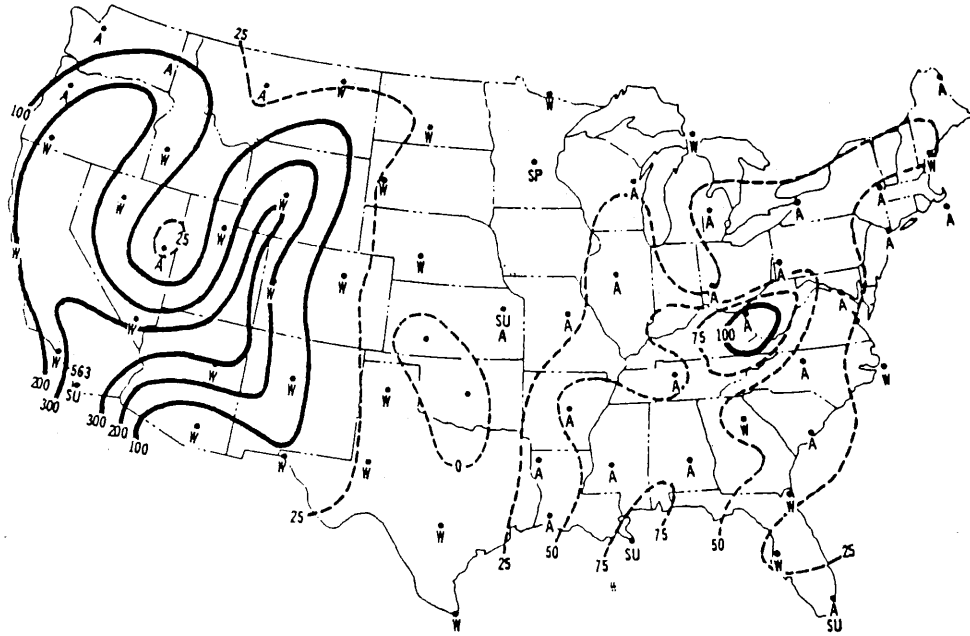
Mark Floegel, Greenpeace pulp and paper campaigner, wrote first to Greenpeace supporters telling them "you can make TIME sit up and listen." They did, sending off the cards and letters that brought about a meeting of Greenpeace and Time, Inc. officials.

The result of the meeting was this announcement, printed in the "Letters" column of the January 20, 1992, issue of TIME:

~~Over the past couple of months,~~ TIME's publishing company has received more than 22,000 cards and letters protesting the use of chlorine-bleached paper by Time, Inc. Magazines. This mail was part of a campaign launched by the environmental group Greenpeace urging magazine publishers to switch to paper bleached by other methods. Greenpeace believes chemical byproducts from chlorine bleaching are a major source of U. S. water pollution. We at Time take this problem seriously, but we are limited by the availability of paper produced without the use of dangerous pollutants. Most of our paper suppliers are far along with their plans to eliminate chlorine-bleached pulp. We will use this alternative paper as soon as it is practical to do so."

From Dioxin/organochlorine Center, Eugene, OR

AIR POLLUTION POTENTIAL



"Because of meteorological conditions, the potential for air pollution in the Ashland-Huntington-Ironton Tri-State area is greater than for any other urban area in the eastern United States." -- US EPA

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