

Meeting Minutes

Valley AIRNow Air Quality Outreach Program
Winchester-Frederick County
May 8, 2007
Northern Shenandoah Valley Air Quality Improvement Task Force

9:30 – 10: 30 AM
Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission
45 East Boscawen Street, Winchester VA 22601

Attendees

Moderator: Tiffany Tumer

Task Force Members: Patrick Barker, Gary Dove, Ken Jones, Bob Claytor

DEQ: Dan Salkovitz

VDOT: Laurie Henley

Meeting began at 9:32 am.

1. Past Events

- Clean Air Champions – James Wood High. Based on feedback from last month's meeting, Tiffany provided each member in attendance with a customized Valley AIRNow tire pressure gauge. These gauges were purchased as novelty items for the Clean Air Champion presentations to James Wood High Drivers Education students in February.
- JMU Earth Day event. Tiffany reported that James Wood High was unable to attend this event due to a transportation conflict. However, the teacher expressed interest in attending future educational events.
- Winchester Parks & Recreation Earth Day event. Tiffany reported that she was unable to staff a booth at this event, which was held on Saturday, April 18th.
- Ozone Season. This year's ozone season began on Tuesday, May 1st.
- Apple Blossom Festival races. The Apple Blossom Festival races were held on May 4th and 5th. Based on input from the April meeting, the informational bookmarks used last year were again inserted into the runner's packets.

2. Outreach Output

GENERAL

- Valley AIRCorps program: Recruitment for AIRCorps continues to be an ongoing process via the Chamber of Commerce recruitment fax. Although a handful of members have enrolled as a result of this fax, Tiffany suggested utilizing the personal contacts of those members present. She encouraged the Task Force to directly contact area business owners who they have close working relationships with. Each member agreed to distribute AIRCorps brochures to these contacts. Specifically, Bob Claytor agreed to submit information to the Access Independence Coalition.
- National Air Quality Awareness Week. Tiffany explained National Air Quality Awareness Week is an EPA sponsored program to raise awareness of air quality

issues during the first week in May (April 30 – May 5) as well as the rest of ozone season. Local and state air quality organizations are encouraged to submit information on air quality events for posting on the EPA website. Valley AIRNow submitted information on the JMU Earth Day event. The event description can be found at www.epa.gov/airnow/airaware/local.html. Tiffany stated that she would submit additional information on the idle reduction signage for posting on the website.

- Clean Air Champions website. DEQ and American Lung Association recently published the Clean Air Champions website, which can be found at www.virginiacleanairchampions.org. Tiffany navigated to the *Partners* webpage where Valley AIRNow was listed due to its role in the Clean Air Champions evaluation phase earlier this year.

Ozone Season 2007

- City/County AQAD memo. The AQAD memo is a memo endorsed by John Riley (Frederick County) and Ed Daley (City of Winchester) which outlines recommended actions for local government on Air Quality Action Days (i.e. reduction of engine idling, postponement of mowing, proper safety precautions). An updated version of this memo was sent again this year to Mr. Riley and Mr. Daley.

Frederick County distributed its memo on April 27th. However, Tiffany mentioned she was having a difficult time contacting Mr. Daley. Additionally, the designated Clean Air Coordinator, Dale Lehnig, was no longer employed with the City. Tiffany stated that a new City Clean Air Coordinator must be designated as soon as possible. Mr. Claytor stated that the City Engineer or a Transportation official would be the most applicable position for the new coordinator.

The Task Force stated that Mr. Daley was in the process of transitioning from the City Manager position and this may be the cause for his unavailability. Patrick Barker suggested phoning Mr. Daley.

- AQAD network check. Tiffany sent two mass emails in April regarding the upcoming ozone season. The first email was sent to the Valley AIRNow AQAD network to ensure all email addresses were current and to remind the members of the onset of ozone season.
- Valley AIRCorps materials availability. The second email was sent to the AIRCorps members to offer informational ozone resources for waiting rooms, break rooms, lobbies, etc. to the enrolled companies.
- Valley AIRNow hotline. The hotline was reactivated on April 30th. Ozone forecasts and messaging capabilities are currently available for the community.
- Valley AIRNow website. Tiffany recently updated the Valley AIRNow website in preparation for ozone season. She mentioned that the newest addition to the website was a daily ozone forecast console called Air Update, which she discovered was available for the Winchester area as a result of the National Air Quality Conference (February 2007). The console can currently be found on the Valley AIRNow homepage (www.valleyairnow.com). It displays the current forecast, as well as the following day's AQI forecast and credits VA DEQ with the source data.

Media

- Valley AIRNow press release. On May 1st, Valley AIRNow issued a press release to its media contacts entitled “Summer Ozone Season Begins May 1.” The press release served as a reminder of this year’s ozone season and outlined the activities community members can take to reduce individual emissions.
- Recent media coverage. As a result of the Valley AIRNow press release, Garren Shipley of the Northern Virginia Daily contacted Tiffany to obtain quotes for an article printed on May 1st entitled “American Lung Association Report Lauds Valley.” The article was in reference to the American Lung Association’s yearly “State of the Air” report, in which Winchester-Frederick County received a “B” rating for the first time.

A similar article was printed on May 2nd in The Winchester Star entitled “Data: Local Air Quality Sees an Improvement.” In addition, Dan Salkovitz (DEQ) was contacted by WINC-FM on May 2nd regarding this year’s ozone season.

- Media packet distribution. Tiffany created and distributed informational ozone media packets to the Valley AIRNow media contacts.

3. Task Force Input

- Task Force survey. Based on feedback from last month’s meeting regarding the most effective locations for idle reduction signage, Tiffany created an on-line survey that was distributed to the Task Force for input. Of the 23 members on the Task Force distribution list, 9 responded for a response rate of approximately 40%.

The four most effective locations for the idle reduction signage as determined by the survey, included:

- Schools
- Day care centers
- Virginia Inland Port
- Gas Stations, Convenience Stores

Mr. Claytor agreed to display several signs at H.N. Funkhouser stations. In addition, Mr. Claytor agreed to promote the signage at the next Petroleum Marketer’s meeting, which meets the first Tuesday of every month. Tiffany stated she would send the sign template and specifications to Bob in a follow-up email for review at this meeting.

Gary Dove agreed to contact the Virginia Inland Port regarding the installation of idle reduction signage. Again, Tiffany stated she would send the sign template and specifications in a follow-up email to Mr. Dove.

Other effective locations for the signage as voted on by the Task Force were:

- AIRCorps businesses
- Winchester Medical Center
- Park and Rides, Commuter lots
- Parks, Playgrounds, Other recreational areas

The least effective sign locations were determined to be:

- Athletic fields
- Shopping centers
- Retirement homes, Adult care centers

The second question on the Task Force survey questioned the value of previous and current Valley AIRNow outreach activities and programs. Tiffany mentioned that analyzing this data was more difficult as it seemed that the survey participants found most of the programs to be valuable in some way. However, the programs that stood out included:

- Idle reduction signage
- Clean Air Champions
- AQAD network
- Informational articles (i.e. newspaper articles, Chamber of Commerce newsletter articles, etc.)
- Media kits
- AIRCorps business outreach program
- Teacher training
- Presentations – civic groups

Tiffany mentioned she was a little surprised that the Task Force chose teacher training to be one of the most valuable outreach activities. After all, the GLOBE workshop held at JMU during the summer of 2006 was the only training opportunity that has been made available to area teachers to date.

- Plan for 2007 – 2008. Based on the Task Force survey discussed above, Tiffany stated that a plan needed to be developed for the 2007 – 2008 outreach year. Overall, the Task Force pointed out that Valley AIRNow was addressing all of the items that were determined to be of the most value—idle reduction signage, Clean Air Champions, AQAD network, AIRCorps program, etc. Mr. Claytor stated that incorporating idle reduction education into schools and day cares, in conjunction with the actual signage installation, would be a very beneficial outreach activity. Mr. Barker and the other Task Force members agreed.

Mr. Claytor also referred to his volunteerism with Access Independence, which had organized an art contest for kids with disabilities. The possibility of sponsoring an air quality art contest, as it relates to vehicle idling, was discussed. The submitted artwork could be displayed on the Valley AIRNow website. Tiffany agreed to explore this idea further for schools and day care centers.

Mr. Barker suggested continuing the Clean Air Champions program within the schools via classroom presentations.

Mr. Barker also posed the question to Mr. Salkovitz of, “did any of the survey things that popped up on the most valuable list kind of surprise you?” Mr. Salkovitz stated

that nothing really surprised him. When completing the survey, he mentioned that nothing really stood out as “least valuable.” All of the activities were valuable to some extent; however, some activities/programs had a little more weight than others.

- COC Business Agenda. Tiffany stated that in 2005, Valley AIRNow had reached an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce (COC) to print monthly informational articles in the Business Agenda. However, due to transitions in COC staff and lack of space, the Valley AIRNow articles were no longer guaranteed. Consequently, Tiffany was interested in how the Task Force felt about purchasing ad space. She then provided members with a COC ad price sheet.

Mr. Barker volunteered to speak with Charlie Weiss, the COC President, as the ad space was expensive and the Valley AIRNow articles don't occupy that much space.

- Idle Reduction Signage. Tiffany provided a quick update on the status of the idle reduction signage. To date, all posts and hardware had been received. The signs, however, had not yet been printed. The vendor had a large work backlog but anticipated the signs would be completed by the end of the week.

Once completed, Tiffany stated she would distribute the materials to Larry Rickard, Facilities Management Coordinator for Frederick County Public Schools. Together, they would create a timeline for sign installation.

Mr. Barker inquired about the participation of Winchester City Public Schools. Tiffany responded that she had not yet made contact with Mr. Kellison, the school Superintendent. Mr. Barker suggested emailing Mr. Kellison later that day and volunteered to follow-up with him during a work function the following day.

Tiffany also stated that she would approach private schools as well regarding the signage. Mr. Claytor volunteered to contact Winchester Academy.

Mr. Barker inquired about the number of day cares which have agreed to install the signs. Tiffany responded that she has only approached half of the centers in the area. She wanted to secure funding before approaching additional businesses. She stated that to date, 75 of the 100 signs purchased are already committed to schools, day cares, and gas stations.

Before installing more signs, Mr. Barker suggested observing how the community reacts as a result of the upcoming public relations campaign. Mr. Claytor also suggested promoting the sign availability as part of the PR campaign. For example, include a sentence in newspaper coverage like, “if you are interested in displaying one or more signs at your business location, contact Valley AIRNow at”

- Potential Events. Tiffany reviewed potential upcoming events in the area and introduced several ideas for new events.

- *Business Showcase 2007.* This year's Business Showcase is scheduled for June 5th at Sportsplex. Tiffany mentioned that Valley AIRNow staffed a booth in 2005. The 2007 fee for non-profit, Chamber of Commerce members is \$150. She asked for the Task Force's input on the cost-effectiveness of purchasing a booth for this year's Showcase. Mr. Barker noted that the event was primarily a venue for area businesses to sell their products. He suggested attending the event and using it as a networking opportunity versus staffing a booth. Mr. Barker and Ken Jones volunteered to attend the event with Tiffany if so desired.
- *Clean Air Champions Training Workshop.* Tiffany noted that "teacher training" was determined to be one of the most valuable Valley AIRNow activities by the Task Force survey. Consequently, she pitched the idea of hosting a Clean Air Champions (CAC) training workshop for Drivers Education teachers, as well as other teachers who may be interested (e.g. environmental science and ecology teachers).

This idea arose as a result of Valley AIRNow's involvement in the DEQ/ALA evaluation phase of the CAC program. Tiffany stated that the Drivers Education teachers lacked background knowledge of air quality (science content, current issues, relationship between air quality and proper car maintenance for example). Unfortunately, as the curriculum currently exists, there is no lesson plan to accompany the PowerPoint presentation the teachers will be supplied with in the fall. As a result, Tiffany mentioned that she was concerned teachers would not effectively convey the information to the students. A training workshop could be one way to address this problem. By offering continuing education credits, which all teachers are required to pursue, participation rates should increase.

Mr. Barker suggested that Tiffany pen a brief synopsis of how the workshop might be run. Several recent conversations with a family member who teaches high school science revealed that most teachers' schedules are packed with other classes and workshops during the summer. He suggested that an option to a one-day training event might be a one-hour training where lunch is provided to the teachers in attendance.

- *Air Check Virginia.* Tiffany suggested the Air Check Virginia station at the JMU Earth Day event as a possible future event for the Winchester-Frederick County area. JMU and Valley AIRNow partnered with DEQ to staff this station at Earth Day where it was very popular with the students and general community. Tiffany explained that remote sensing equipment was set-up to allow vehicles to drive through a flagged area and an emissions rating of "good", "fair", or "poor" was displayed on a sign at the end. Other tests that DEQ made available at the event were a two-speed idle test and a gas cap test that determined whether the gas cap seal was sufficient to prevent gasoline from evaporating into the air from the vehicles tank.

Mr. Salkovitz stated that several cities have used the remote sensing equipment to aggressively pursue the “old-smoker” vehicles. Although there aren’t too many of these smokers on the road anymore, the ones that are being driven are very dirty and emit significant amounts of pollution in comparison to today’s newer, cleaner vehicles.

Mr. Barker suggested exploring this idea next year during the week of Apple Blossom Festival. Several other upcoming events in 2007 were discussed (e.g. hot rod event, Hot Air Balloon Festival) but simply weren’t of the Bloom’s magnitude.

Another issue that Tiffany mentioned would need to be addressed is the availability of ESP—the contractors of the remote sensing equipment. Advance notice would be required due to their large work load. Mr. Dove inquired into the cost of this event. Tiffany stated that although DEQ was able to obtain ESP’s services free of charge, they may charge a fee for attending a Valley AIRNow event. Mr. Barker suggested contacting ESP to find out if, and how much they might charge.

4. Upcoming Events

- Next Task Force meeting: June 6th at the Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission.
- Idle Reduction Sign Installation: To be determined.
- Business Showcase 2007: June 5.
- EAC Progress Report: due June 30.

5. General Comments/Input

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 am.