



Meeting Minutes

Valley AIRNow Air Quality Outreach Program
Winchester-Frederick County
September 5, 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: Tom Ballou (DEQ), Patrick Barker, Ken Jones, Bob Claytor, Gary Dove, Jim Giraytys, Jeff Rezin

Meeting began at 9:33 am.

Tiffany Tumer announced that several Task Force members who regularly join meetings via phone will no longer be participating due to new job positions—Terry Hargrove of the American Lung Association of Virginia and Laurie Henley of Virginia Department of Transportation. Jim Ponticello has agreed to represent VDOT until a new replacement is found.

1. News & Past Events

- Idle reduction sign recruitment. Ms. Tumer reported that she has continued recruiting new partners for the idle reduction sign initiative. See *Outreach Output* for more details.
- Winchester Star article. *The Winchester Star* printed an article entitled “Summer’s sweltering wrath: Ozone levels are climbing” in its August 8th, 2007 edition. Dan Salkovitz (DEQ) was interviewed and quoted in the article. This article was successful in drawing attention to air quality in the Winchester-Frederick County area.
- Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine. Ms. Tumer reported that she was contacted by an editor from the *Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine* regarding its monthly survey question for readers. The upcoming survey question was on how often the readers check the air quality forecasts before going outside to “play” (e.g. bike, hike, kayak, etc.).
- Meeting with Girl Scouts of Shawnee Council. Last meeting, the Task Force suggested contacting local Boy and Girl Scout troops regarding a partnership with their environmental merit badge program. Ms. Tumer announced that earlier that morning she met with Sue Jarvis, a representative of the Girl Scouts of Shawnee Council. At the meeting, many partnership opportunities were addressed in addition

to the environmental badge program, including: enrollment in the AIRCorps program, Valley AIRNow educational presentations, Clean Air Champions program, clean air art contest, idle reduction initiative, and the installation of a GLOBE surface ozone monitoring station. Mrs. Jarvis promised to relay the information to the other council members to determine where their interests lie.

Mr. Barker inquired about the local Boy Scouts organization. Ms. Tumer responded that she had contacted several members but with no response. Mr. Barker agreed to provide additional contact information within the Boy Scouts.

- Virginia Ambient Air Monitoring 2006 Data Report. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality recently posted its 2006 ambient air monitoring report at www.deq.virginia.gov/airmon/publications.html. Ms. Tumer passed out an abbreviated copy of the report containing only the chapter on ozone.

2. Outreach Output

- Valley AIRCorps program. Recruitment for AIRCorps continues to be an ongoing process via the Chamber of Commerce recruitment fax. Ms. Tumer announced that SCS Engineers, an environmental consulting and contracting firm in Winchester, recently joined the AIRCorps program.
- Idle Reduction PR Campaign. Several materials were developed for the idle reduction PR campaign—a press release, a fact sheet containing facts on vehicle idling, and a webpage devoted to the initiative. Ms. Tumer asked those members present to review the draft webpage, located at www.valleyairnow.com/idlereduction.htm, over the next week and provide her with any feedback for webpage improvement. Ms. Tumer also reported that upon request she provided several daycare centers with additional information on the signage for parents who have expressed interest. The Director of Heritage Clubhouse in Berryville printed out this information and distributed it to parents in August.
- Chamber of Commerce Business Agenda. Ms. Tumer submitted a short informational paragraph highlighting the idle reduction initiative to the Chamber of Commerce Business Agenda's *Partner Update* section. This article was published in the September edition.
- Idle Reduction Signs. Ms. Tumer next shared photographs of several of the idle reduction signs that had recently been installed by Valley AIRNow's campaign partners. See accompanying PowerPoint presentation for photographs taken at the following sign locations: Abundant Life Preschool and Daycare, James Wood Middle School, James Wood High School, Shenandoah Child Care Center, Rt. 11 Handy Mart location, and National Avenue Handy Mart location.

New partners to the idle reduction initiative include Apple Valley Montessori School, Fremont Street Nursery, Winchester Day Nursery, Little ME Daycare, and Apple Tree Club House. Ms. Tumer announced that this now brings the total number of signs in the area to 84. She also stated that upon contacting Flying J's Winchester location, it was discovered that approval was required from the corporate office to display any type of signage. Mr. Barker agreed to help find an appropriate contact within the Flying J corporate office.

3. Task Force Input

- Clean Air Art Contest. The following details regarding the proposed art contest were discussed:
 - *Contest name*. Mr. Ballou offered to approach the VDEQ outreach division for contest name ideas.
 - *Contest theme*. Ms. Tumer stated that other organizations promoting similar contests utilized very broad themes. For example, “things my family and I can do to help keep the air clean” and “come go with me”, which emphasized using alternative modes of transportation. Mr. Claytor suggested “air quality: past, present, and future,” “air quality: we are the future” or “how we can make a difference in air quality.” Ms. Tumer next stated that she would create a flyer with the contest name, theme, and contest specifications for distribution to schools and participating idle reduction daycare centers. Mr. Barker suggested approaching Lord Fairfax Community College and Apple Blossom Mall regarding the idle signage and displaying the art contest flyer.
 - *Eligible age range*. Ms. Tumer suggested opening the contest to all students in grades K – 12. The Task Force concurred.
 - *Age groups*. Mr. Barker further broke the eligible age range down to elementary, middle, and high school students. Ms. Tumer then suggested choosing only one winner from each of these age groups, rather than awarding a gold, silver, and bronze winner from each of the three groups. This suggestion was based upon a conversation with Lynn Radocha of JMU who had promoted a similar contest with the university’s biodiesel program, which in its first year did not have enough entries to warrant the award of three winners from each age group. However, Ms. Tumer did state that she was expecting a large number of entries simply based upon previous conversations with the Directors of the participating idle reduction daycares.
 - *Promotion of contest*. Ms. Tumer asked the body if it would be worthwhile to purchase ad space in *The Winchester Star* and *Northern Virginia Daily* announcing and promoting the contest. Mr. Barker stated that it would be best to approach schools and daycares one-on-one, particularly those that are currently displaying the Valley AIRNow *Healthy Air Zone* signs. Mr. Claytor also suggested submitting a press release to the local media outlets to spread the word. Following the contest, Mr. Claytor suggested submitting an article to the local media announcing the contest winners and the daycare with the most entries. Ms. Tumer next asked the body if it would be beneficial to post contest flyers in public locations, such as the Apple Blossom Mall or Winchester Medical Center. Mr. Barker stated that banks (e.g. Bank of Clarke County) sometimes post flyers on their drive-thru windows or allow space in their buildings to post community events.
 - *Contest start date and submission deadline*. Ms. Tumer stated that a timeline was needed to establish when Valley AIRNow would begin publicizing the contest, when artwork could be submitted, and when submissions would no longer be accepted. Although October was suggested by the body as a start date, Ms. Tumer stated that more time would be needed to develop flyers and obtain prizes. The month of November was then suggested. To play off of the month and the Thanksgiving holiday, Mr. Claytor commented that a potential

theme or title for the contest could be “Thankful for Clean Air.” The Task Force unanimously approved this slogan.

- *Prizes.* Mr. Claytor initiated discussion of prizes by asking if Valley AIRNow could award a prize to the daycare center that went the extra distance and submitted the most artwork. Mr. Barker stated that it could be more of a challenge contest for the daycares—which daycare can provide the most entries, for example. As an award to the winning daycare, Mr. Claytor suggested printing posters of the idle reduction sign design and writing “First Place Winner of Valley AIRNow Art Contest” somewhere on the poster. Mr. Barker then suggested using some type of gold sticker (e.g. “First Place,” “Second Place,” etc) that could be adhered directly onto the daycare’s idle reduction sign that they are displaying outside. That way, as people are driving around the community and viewing the signs they are noticing differences between the signs at each business which may stir up conversation on what the different stickers mean. Another idea posed by Mr. Barker was a certificate with a nice frame that could be hung on the wall.

Next, Ms. Tumer initiated discussion of potential prizes for the student winners. She stated that in the past, JMU had worked with the Harrisonburg Wal-Mart Community Involvement Specialist to obtain a donation for the university’s Earth Week outreach events. She suggested that perhaps Valley AIRNow could approach the Winchester-area Wal-Mart for a donation or in-kind contribution. For example, perhaps a bicycle could be donated for the three grand prize winners or art supplies could be donated to create goody bags for all contest participants. Mr. Barker suggested contacting Wes Williams at Valley Health regarding sponsorship of the art contest.

Ms. Tumer also suggested using a small amount of Valley AIRNow funds to purchase Valley AIRNow t-shirts or Auntie Litter “Life is a Breath of Fresh Air” t-shirts. The Task Force expressed their like of the Auntie Litter air slogan and the idea of t-shirts as prizes. In other clean air art contests, Ms. Tumer stated that goody bags were provided to each contest participant. If possible, she would like to do something similar—perhaps a young artists’ gift bag containing art materials and supplies. If this is not feasible due to lack of funding, Mr. Claytor suggested providing these gift bags to the first 25 entries.

- *Sponsorship.* Mr. Barker suggested contacting health-oriented businesses for potential sponsorship of the contest. For example, Valley Health or some of the larger medical firms in the area. In return, these businesses will receive good publicity and low-cost advertising. It was also suggested that the Valley AIRNow AIRCorps members were contacted for contributions (e.g. \$10, \$20, \$50, whatever could be spared would significantly help!).
- *Judging criteria and method.* Ms. Tumer suggested a community judging event in which submissions would be displayed at a public location (e.g. Apple Blossom Mall, Valley AIRNow website) and the community would vote for their favorite piece of artwork. Instead, Mr. Barker suggested leaving the judging to various media outlets (e.g. Winchester Star, Northern Virginia Daily, TV-3) to get them involved. Another idea posed by Mr. Claytor was to

- have Lord Fairfax or Shenandoah University art classes or clubs judge the artwork. This would hopefully eliminate judging based on popularity or how many times a friend or family member votes. Consequently, the Task Force unanimously agreed that an art class at one of the local colleges would be best.
- *Other comments.* Mr. Claytor suggested sending information regarding the art contest to the Shenandoah Valley Runner's Association (i.e. include article in upcoming newsletter, send flyer), Winchester Green Circle, or Winchester Wheelmen (Mike Perry, contact).
 - Shenandoah Valley Natural Systems Symposium. This science symposium is scheduled to be held on October 15th and 16th at Shenandoah University. The theme is "taking care of the water, plus air and land relationships" with the objective to build a science plan that will inform Valley policy makers. A poster session is being held on the 15th and Ms. Tumer stated that she would be presenting a SHENAIR overview poster highlighting both research and outreach that included a section on the Valley AIRNow idle reduction campaign.

4. Upcoming Events

- Next Task Force meeting: November 7, 2007
- Oldies 95.3 radio interview: September 12
- Healthy Air Zone signage PR campaign: Friday, September 14th
- Shenandoah Valley Natural Systems Symposium: October 15 – 16
- Clean air art contest: November 2007

5. General Comments/Input

Mr. Claytor stated that he would like to see Valley AIRNow develop a post-ozone season article or document that highlights the number of green, yellow, and orange days in 2007, how the season went overall, the highest hourly/8-hour threshold value, etc. Given that 2007 was the last year of the EAC, Mr. Barker suggested holding some kind of informational or celebratory event, perhaps in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Barker inquired into the timeline of the federal ozone standard revision. Mr. Ballou responded that they are anticipating EPA to release the revision sometime in the spring of 2008. Mr. Giraytys furthered the discussion by stating that, based on his calculations Winchester would still meet the standard even if it was lowered to between 70 – 75 ppb. Mr. Ballou responded that this was not necessarily the case—that it would depend on where EPA set the new standard. He stated that EPA originally proposed a strengthening of the ozone standard that was between 70 and 75 parts per billion (ppb). According to Mr. Ballou, the Winchester area would not be in attainment if a 70 ppb standard was adopted. Off the top of his head, Mr. Ballou believed the current Winchester-Frederick design value was 72 ppb. If the standard was indeed lowered to 70 ppb, a majority of the ozone monitors in Virginia would be in violation—not just Winchester. Even if Winchester did not meet the new standard, Mr. Barker stated that the process for formally designating an area as nonattainment would be lengthy. Mr. Ballou responded that in summary, everything is speculation at this time and that the Task Force could discuss this in more detail at the November meeting.

Mr. Claytor inquired into the status of an updated 8-hour ozone exceedance bar chart for Winchester-Frederick County. Mr. Ballou sent the chart following the meeting and copies were distributed to each Task Force participant (see Attachment A). Mr. Ballou also stated that DEQ would attend November's meeting to present an overview of where Winchester stands with ozone, the current ozone standard and the EAC, and the development of a potential new ozone standard.

Mr. Giryatys next asked Mr. Ballou what the status of the fine particulate matter standard was. Mr. Ballou responded that there are two standards in regards to fine PM—1) a 24-hour standard, and 2) an annual standard. EPA just revised the 24-hour standard from 65 micrograms/cubic meter to 35 micrograms/m³. This 24-hour standard is official and the state will now have to begin talking about designating areas in non-compliance. He stated that at the moment, Winchester does not have a fine PM monitor. However, it will be receiving one soon. The question is when Winchester will receive the monitor and how that fits in to the grand scheme of things. Although it is expected to be installed sometime next month according to Mr. Giryatys, Mr. Ballou stated that three years worth of data is required before talks could begin on the status of attainment for fine particulate matter. In other words, there would be some lag time before an official status of the area could be made in terms of PM.

Mr. Ballou also noted that there is currently ongoing litigation between several states (including Maryland and D.C.) and the federal government, stating that the lowering of the 24-hour and annual standard should not have occurred at the same time. Again, this is something that will not be resolved any time soon.

Mr. Giryatys next noted that over the past year, the National Weather Service (NWS) has been putting out specialized air quality products for the Valley. These products include an entire spectrum of pollutants and JMU has chosen to study ozone and PM 2.5, specifically. As part of a senior thesis, a JMU undergraduate student in collaboration with SHENAIR and a JMU professor, all of the PM 2.5 monitors along the I-81 corridor are being examined to determine the accuracy of the NWS products and the ground-truth. In other words, is the NWS putting out products that are valuable? To date, all of the NWS datasets have been obtained and results are expected to be in during the spring of 2008.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.