

### Convention Center Receives ISO Certification



The Orange County Convention Center (OCCC), a participant in the [3<sup>rd</sup> EMS Initiative for Public Entities](#), recently became the first convention center in the U.S. to achieve third-party ISO 14001:2004. The registration was

conducted by NSF-ISR, Ltd, with the scope covering Building Services. The OCCC was supported in their implementation efforts through technical assistance provided by the University of Florida TREEO Center, a PEER Local Resource Center.

As a participant in the national EMS initiative (2003-2005), the OCCC was able to accomplish a number of achievements in the building services recycling program, including:

- Streamline communications concerning environmental practices
- Increase environmental awareness among employees
- \$77,500 in tipping fees saved due to recycling efforts, with another \$31,435 in recycling rebates
- 9,000 tons of material diverted for remanufacture
- 40% recovery of all waste in 2006 compared to less than 1% in 2003
- 871 tons of cardboard recycled
- 5.8 tons of office paper recycled in 2006

With the recent achievement of ISO 14001 registration, the OCCC has continued to position itself as an environmental leader. Hats off OCCC!

*This EMS News (March 2007) is the fourth in a series of newsletters supported through a cooperative agreement with the EPA Office of Wastewater Management that will be published quarterly by the PEER Center. The goal of each EMS Newsletter will be to keep readers informed of current developments, events and articles on environmental management systems (EMS) in the public sector.*

### NEW RESOURCES

#### Toolkit for Wastewater Utilities Environmental Management Systems



This toolkit provides a collection of innovative tools designed specifically to assist wastewater utilities from making the initial business case decision for EMS implementation to step-by-step EMS implementation and

best practices guidance. The Toolkit was developed in partnership with U.S. EPA's Office of Wastewater Management as well as wastewater managers and practitioners with experience in EMS implementation at their facilities. To enter the Toolkit, [click here!](#)

#### Coming Soon!

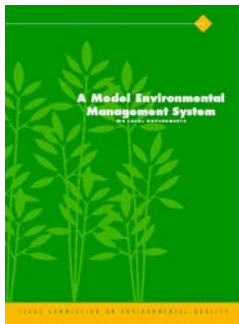
The Global Environment & Technology Foundation ([www.getf.org](http://www.getf.org)) is working in partnership with the U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management and a group of wastewater practitioners on an EMS and Asset Management Pamphlet. The document will highlight logical connection points between the two tools and their use in the wastewater sector.

## LRC CORNER

The eleven PEER Local Resource Centers (LRCs), located around the country, promote EMS competence and encourage government-to-government sharing and mentoring between public sector organizations. Each Center supplies communities with technical expertise, field-tested tools, and support for EMS implementation. For more information, visit:

[www.peercenter.net/whocanhelp/lrc.cfm](http://www.peercenter.net/whocanhelp/lrc.cfm)

### Texas Commission on Environmental Quality



The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) recently published an EMS guidance manual entitled, "A Model Environmental Management System". This manual serves as a guide for local governments considering the development of an EMS and is presented as actual working papers from a hypothetical city: Green City, Texas. To download a copy, [click here!](#)

### University of Florida - Center for Training, Research, and Education for Environmental Occupations (TREEO Center)

The TREEO Center, in conjunction with the National Biosolids Partnership (NBP), conducted a two-day EMS workshop, January 23-24, 2007 in Seattle, Washington, with a primary focus on conducting an Internal EMS Audit. In addition, time was spent on the Status Review process and the Verification Audit.

In addition, JEA, an electric, water, and wastewater utility in Jacksonville, Florida, contracted with the TREEO Center to assist in preparation and implementation of an EMS for the Ridenour Water Treatment Plant. The plant recently became the first water facility to receive ISO 14001 certification in Florida. Congratulations JEA and TREEO!

### Sustainable Earth Initiative

In March 2007, the Green California Summit and Exposition will be held in Sacramento California, touted as "a groundbreaking conference dedicated to state and local government efforts to green the Golden State. Susan Sakaki of Sustainable Earth Initiative will be one of the instructors in a two day workshop called "Green Mandates," providing an overview of EMS implementation in the public sector. For more information, please visit: [www.green-technology.org/gcsummit](http://www.green-technology.org/gcsummit)

### Kansas State University - Pollution Prevention Institute



The LRC family is proud to welcome a new member. Barb Johnson is leading the LRC activities for the Kansas State University Pollution Prevention Institute (PPI). Barb has been with Kansas State PPI for six years and serves as secretary for the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable (NPPR) Board and board liaison for the NPPR Local Government networking group. A natural fit!



Have an EMS Case Study to share?

Please submit case studies to [jduteau@getf.org](mailto:jduteau@getf.org) for posting on the National PEER Center website.



## V-REMS PARTNERSHIP

The V-REMS Partnership is proud to announce the release of a website, located at [www.vrems.org](http://www.vrems.org)!

The website:

- highlights the many benefits of the partnership;
- provides an overview of the V-REMS workgroups and invites participation;
- welcomes interested parties to learn more about and join V-REMS;
- shares V-REMS related accomplishments and publicly available documents such as the V-REMS annual report; and,
- contains a calendar of events pertinent to this regional partnership.



### About V-REMS...

The Virginia Regional Environmental Management System (V-REMS) is a partnership of over 50 federal, state, and local public and private organizations that collaborate to address regional community and environmental issues.

The innovative partnership strengthens community relationships and promotes environmental sustainability by reducing air emissions, improving water quality, and minimizing waste in the areas where its partners operate. For more information on the partnership, contact Amy Alton at [amy.alton@getf.org](mailto:amy.alton@getf.org).

## EMS SECTOR CORNER



The Port of Houston Authority (PHA) was recently recognized by the U.S. EPA for renewing its commitment to implement environmentally beneficial

practices that go beyond state and federal regulatory requirements. PHA is the first and only port in the nation to achieve recognition in EPA's Performance Track program.

As part of the program, the port has committed to reduce total water use by 5%, non-hazardous waste by 15%, emissions of volatile organic compounds by 15% and energy use by 10%. The port will also construct about 70 acres of valuable wetlands from recycled construction material.

## EMS LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

### Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)/Clean Texas Program

The following is based on phone interviews with representatives of TCEQ/Clean Texas Program.

1. *Texas has been one of the most active states with promoting EMS. What is TCEQ's general viewpoint on the use of EMSs?*

The TCEQ began promoting and educating Texans on the advantages of undertaking an environmental management system (EMS) on the heels of a state mandate that resulted from the Texas state legislature in 2001. For the TCEQ, this mandate was critical in giving the authority and setting the direction to actively support specific approaches and tools known by the agency to be effective, such as an EMS. Establishing the agency's objective, this mandate directed the TCEQ to form a program that integrates branches of the agency, such as permitting, compliance assistance, and enforcement, to expediently offer regulatory benefits to industry and businesses that take a leadership role in protecting Texas' environment. The program also encourages EMS implementation by regulated entities, public and private organizations, state agencies, and local governments. The TCEQ began placing significant focus on developing models and guidance materials specific to local governments and small businesses, since these audiences lacked available resources and case studies.

2. *TCEQ developed the Clean Texas Program, tell me a little about this?*

The Clean Texas Program ([www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org)) is a voluntary environmental leadership program to protect air, water, and land resources in Texas. The program:

- Recognizes organizations for creative approaches in resolving environmental challenges and setting goals that go beyond or outside regulatory requirements
- Supports regional partnerships and networking to achieve local goals
- Promotes public awareness and participation in activities that protect air, water, or land resources
- Encourages organizations to implement sustainable practices
- Reports measurable environmental results

The Clean Texas Program is open to all types of organizations, including local governments. There are four levels of membership (Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum), with the top-three levels requiring implementation of an EMS. The top tier mirrors that of the EPA Performance Track Program ([www.epa.gov/performance-track](http://www.epa.gov/performance-track)), offering the opportunity for reciprocal benefits to participating organizations. Similar to other state recognition programs, the TCEQ views the Bronze level as an on-ramp or entry level to the program. Bronze-level participants show commitment to environmental improvements, but lack the tools and support needed to jumpstart their EMS program. Our team aims to bridge this need.

Participants in the program are recognized each May during the Environmental Trade Fair and Conference in Austin, Texas, as well as through the Clean Texas web site, case studies, performance reports, press releases, on-site recognition events, and customized outreach materials for Gold and Platinum members.

We are approaching a point whereby a critical mass of organizations have worked through the EMS process as part of the Clean Texas Program, allowing us the opportunity to gauge performance and the extent of positive

environmental impact for the state of Texas. To facilitate this, we included questions regarding past performance with environmental improvements as a key benchmark during initial applications. As sites work through the program, they are required to submit annual progress reports, which we can compare with initial baselines.

3. *What are the benefits to joining the Clean Texas Program and how many current members are public entities?*

The benefits of participation are wide-ranging across four central categories: Recognition, Networking, Technical and Program Assistance, and Regulatory Benefits. The benefits are captured in more detail on our web site at [www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org).



The development of a benefits program is always difficult due to the range of organizations and sectors a program must respond to. The one revelation we have discovered is that the development of benefits has been a tremendous way to educate our own agency on the usefulness of an EMS and promote cross-functional discussions on formalizing regulatory benefits (i.e., as an agency, what are we comfortable offering? What can be realistically implemented and managed?). The last thing we want, or any other state recognition program for that matter, is for one arm to promote a program and another to not recognize it on the ground. Therefore, we have developed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the division running the Clean Texas Program and the regulatory/enforcement branches. This dialogue and agreement has greatly promoted relationships between our divisions, and also between regulatory offices and companies.

Additionally, one component of our program, which is somewhat different than other states, is that we allow regulated sites to request benefits on a case-by-case basis, as long as they do not increase pollution or decrease public participation. We felt this was critical as Texas

is a relatively large and diverse state, and we understand that "blanket benefits" have limitations.

*4. What EMS support services does TCEQ offer to public entities?*

The most significant service offering, specific to public entities, is the facilitation of EMS General and Implementation training workshops through an EPA grant. Most of the sessions take place in large metro areas, most notably Dallas-Ft. Worth and Houston. In addition, we also offer EMS assistance through our headquarters and regional (16 total) offices.

In terms of the Clean Texas Program, we have created an innovative method for independently assessing an EMS for public entity participants. Finding that many public entities either don't have the resources or the driver to conduct third-party evaluations of their EMS, the program now allows for local governments and quasi-governmental sites to use an internal auditor with the proper credentials to perform the assessment as long as the auditor doesn't directly report to the on-site manager. Many public entities have found that it is less expensive and complicated to obtain training for a staff member to earn the proper credentials than hire a third-party, with the added benefit of then having a qualified EMS auditor on staff. To further support this, the TCEQ offers courses and opportunities for hands-on training during assessment visits, encourages continuing education training, and fosters the possibility of cross-auditing as more and more local governments implement an EMS.

*What if a public entity approaches TCEQ and is committed and ready to go with EMS implementation, but needs guidance?*

Our office meets with the public entity representatives to gauge the general state and readiness of the organization to implement an EMS. From this conversation and assessment, we are better able to direct the organization to specific universities and assistance centers

(Manufacturing Extension Programs). We also encourage interested parties to use tools developed by the TCEQ (i.e., Model EMS for Local Governments) and to visit the PEER Center web site for additional resources at <[www.peercenter.net](http://www.peercenter.net)>.

*5. What action by TCEQ has been most successful with promoting EMSs within the public sector? What has been the greatest barrier to overcome?*

The Clean Texas program promotes the advantages of an EMS to targeted organizations as a key tool for achieving environmental performance.

We have also conducted direct recruitment drives through letter-writing, contacting trade associations, and through direct presentations; however, the one approach that continues to be most successful is working with existing contacts. In addition, as an outgrowth of early EMS-training sessions, we started a "reunion" program, where we invite participating organizations to share experiences, plans, and encourage one another along the EMS-implementation journey.

We are finding that public entities face challenges in allocating funding resources for EMS development with their competing priorities. There are numerous organizations that could still positively improve their environmental performance while also improving their operation's bottom line. Our goal remains constant—to assist the public entities interested in launching their own EMS program.

*This [PEER Center EMS](#) Newsletter will be developed quarterly under a Cooperative Agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the [Global Environment & Technology Foundation](#)*

*To submit an idea to EMS News, or to join the list serve to receive a quarterly copy, please contact Jeff DuTeau at 703-379-2713 or [jduteau@getf.org](mailto:jduteau@getf.org).*