



[www.mcecc.org](http://www.mcecc.org)

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**Good Websites  
Good Information**

- EPA CARE Program [www.epa.gov/care](http://www.epa.gov/care)
- EPA Lead Safety [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)
- E-Waste Recycling [www.reconnectpartnership.com](http://www.reconnectpartnership.com)
- County-wide Health Concerns [www.muskegonhealth.net](http://www.muskegonhealth.net)

**Terminology**

(appearing in blue in the body text of newsletter)

- Phosphorus**—a non-metallic element of the nitrogen family
- E-waste**—electronic devices such as computers and radio equipment that are no longer usable
- Ecosystem**—the complex of a community of organisms and its environment functioning as an ecological unit

# Your Environment

A collaborative information resource for the Muskegon County Community

FALL/WINTER 2006-07

## Nominations Sought for Local Environmental Stewards

Amy Haack, WMSRDC

The Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council has annually recognized environmental excellence in Muskegon County since 1992. MCECC is currently accepting nominations for the 2006 Environmental Excellence Awards. The recognition may apply to an individual, group or business who has dedicated time and energy in an effort to improve the environment in Muskegon County.

### MUSKEGON AREA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their team effort in innovative treatment technologies at the former Ott Chemical Company Superfund Site. Individual recipients were Ken Brown, Alan Steinman, Arn Boezaart, Wes Lomax, Janessa Stroud, Rudy Bartels, and Barb Green. The lifetime achievement award was bestowed to Jim Austin.

The objective is not only to reward outstanding environmental projects, but to publicize these projects in hope that others will be inspired to take action and achieve the similar levels of excellence.

Environmental excellence awards are given in the following categories on a biennial basis: Organizations, Natural Resources, Government, Business & Industry, Agriculture, Education, Media, Lifetime Achievement and Individual Achievement.

2005 Award recipients include the Michigan Department of

Please make your deserving nominations now and plan to attend the awards ceremony, which is being held in conjunction with the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce Early Bird Breakfast on **March 30, 2007**. Nominations are due by **January 31, 2007**. Forms are available on the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council website at [www.mcecc.org](http://www.mcecc.org) under "Excellence Awards" or can be obtained by calling Amy Haack at (231) 722-7878 ext. 19 or emailing [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org).

## County-Wide Phosphorus Ban Ordinance Passed

The County of Muskegon recently passed a ban on the sale and use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus in Muskegon County effective January 1, 2007. From that day forward, it will be against the law to use fertilizer containing phosphorus and to sell or display lawn fertilizer within Muskegon County that contains phosphorus, unless it fits the parameters for exemption. Any person or business that violates these rules will be subject to a fine varying from \$25 to \$300 per incident.

Mona Lake Watershed. Though research studies show that Mona Lake and its tributaries are significantly affected by phosphorus fertilizer misuse in the County, it is a problem in all watersheds and has a large impact on the quality of all our lakes, rivers, and streams.



While the new ordinance will ban a prominent source of phosphorus that enters our lakes and streams, there are other significant sources, which are more difficult to eliminate or reduce

This ban was originally spearheaded by the Mona Lake Watershed Council which provides stewardship for the

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## “RECONNECT Michigan” Initiative Provides Residents with Computer Recycling Opportunities through Local Goodwill Retail Stores

Jill Montgomery, Muskegon County Health Dept

The **West Michigan Electronic Waste Recycling Coalition** (WMEWRC) is an initiative of the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum (WMSBF) and is comprised of local businesses, non-profits and governmental agencies from thirteen West MI Counties including Muskegon working together to address the growing problem of managing electronic waste (**e-waste**) in the region. The Grand Rapids Community Foundation has generously supported this initiative since 2003.

Current objectives are to 1) advocate for public policies and legislation addressing e-waste management arising from end-of-life computers and other electronics; and 2) promote public awareness of the need for safe and responsible recycling of e-waste. In addition, the Coalition has been advocating for initiatives and legislation that will 1) create a dedicated statewide or regional recycling infrastructure; and 2) place a ban on the disposal of e-waste in landfills and incinerators. Of particular emphasis is the need to strategically position West Michigan to benefit from the economic growth and job creation potential of an e-waste recycling infrastructure.

Some of the key activities of the Coalition in the last year include:

- Educational effort resulting in the creation of a DVD “*Electronic Waste: the Search for a Solution*” with over 50 copies being distributed to public policy makers in West MI.
- Informational meetings and communications with policymakers, including Michigan County Commission Chairs, Senators and Representatives from the thirteen counties.
- Participation in drafting recommendations for a MI Electronic Waste Recycling Infrastructure to help establish a statewide approach to the issue.
- Publication of a monthly electronic news brief “WEEE Bytes!”. To date nine issues have been distributed by email to more than 1000 recipients.

The Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council (MCECC) and Goodwill Industries of West MI are Coalition members and have been actively involved in e-waste issues this year.

- MCECC organized the second ever e-waste collection event to be held in Muskegon County held in conjunction with Muskegon Community College’s May Fest event in 2005.
- Dell, Inc. and the Goodwill Association of MI have partnered to launch “RECONNECT Michigan” – a statewide pilot program for residential computer recovery, reuse and recycling whereby MI consumers can drop-off computers at no charge. The program will provide funding for job creation programs at Goodwill facilities, including those in West MI.

For more information on the West MI Electronic Waste Recycling Coalition, please call 616-301-1059 or email [cboyd@sustainableresearchgroup.com](mailto:cboyd@sustainableresearchgroup.com). If you would like to receive the monthly “WEEE Bytes!” issues by email, or have news worthy material pertaining to e-waste that you would like to submit for inclusion, please use the contact details above.



## Wondering Where and What To Recycle?



### E-Waste Collection Site Locations:

- 2818 Henry St, Muskegon, MI
- 271 E Apple Ave, Muskegon, MI
- 1974 E Sherman Blvd, Muskegon, MI
- 1484 Ellis Rd, Muskegon, MI
- 529 Whitehall Rd, North Muskegon, MI
- 3353 Underwood Dr, Whitehall, MI

### FREE PUBLICATION!

### Recycle Muskegon!

### A Guide to Recycling and Pollution Prevention in Muskegon County

Access publication on-line at:

Goodwill Association of Michigan [www.reconnectpartnership.com](http://www.reconnectpartnership.com)

[http://www.mcecc.org/documents/recycle\\_muskegon\\_guide.pdf](http://www.mcecc.org/documents/recycle_muskegon_guide.pdf)

## Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council and Partners Continue Shoreline Habitat Improvements

The Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council was established in 1992 and meets monthly to coordinate projects that improve the Muskegon Lake Watershed in Muskegon County. The council's web site is [www.muskegonlake.org](http://www.muskegonlake.org)

The Muskegon Lake PAC operates through partnerships with community organizations and state and federal agencies. Many organizations, such as the Muskegon County Health Department, Muskegon Conservation District and the City of Muskegon are active with projects that are improving the lake's **ecosystem** and its sub-watersheds such as Ruddiman, Ryerson and Bear Creeks.

Currently, Timberland Area Council is managing an EPA grant that will establish targets and improve fish and wildlife habitats around the lake. Project partners include the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, GVSU-AWRI and Muskegon Community College. This partnership project will create a student monitoring program, involve land owners to restore two shoreline areas with native plantings and perform the scientific research necessary to set measurable targets for the health of fish, wildlife and related aquatic habitat.

For more information or if you are

a shoreline land owner that would like to participate, please call Kathy Evans, Timberland Area Council/ Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council at (231) 903-7442 or (616) 942-4111 Ext. 156.

Kathy Evans  
Timberland RC&D Area Council



### Lead-Safe Door-to-Door Campaign Reaches over

Tressa Duncan  
Lead-Safe NOW! Muskegon

**Lead-Safe Kids** is a door-to-door campaign to raise awareness around childhood lead poisoning prevention methods. The effort reached over 400 families in the cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. "I am so excited about what we accomplished," said Tressa Duncan, Coordinator for Lead-Safe NOW! Muskegon Coalition. "One of the Coalition's goals is to make homes lead-safe for children and this campaign has allowed us to take that crucial first step, which is putting information right into the hands of parents and grandparents."

On Saturday September 16<sup>th</sup> and again on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> Coalition volunteers knocked on doors, distributed information and answered questions. Volunteers covered a total of 32 blocks in the City of Muskegon, Nelson Neighborhood and City of Muskegon Heights-Neighborhood East.

Special thanks to volunteers from the following area agencies: Muskegon County Health Dept., healthCARE, Muskegon Family Care, Revival Miracle Temple, MCHP, City of Muskegon Heights, parents and community members James Duncan III, Kari Tyler, Lloyd Bridges, and Princess.



Lead poisoning can cause brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities and a multitude of other health risks yet it is 100% preventable. You can help protect area children by volunteering to assist Lead-Safe NOW! in our educational outreach efforts. Contact Tressa Duncan at 231/728-3201 or via email at [duncant@mchp.com](mailto:duncant@mchp.com) for further information.

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such as discharges from sewage treatment plants. Treatment plants process wastewater that contains industrial products, toothpaste, detergents, pharmaceuticals, and food-treating compounds; and often it is impossible to completely remove all of the phosphorus without additional treatment.

Even though phosphorus is an essential nutrient for both plants and animals, in excess the mineral will cause extensive growth of aquatic plants and algal blooms, which depletes the oxygen in the water, causing serious harm or even death for aquatic animals.

The Muskegon County Health Department Environmental Health Program has been charged with enforcement of the new ordinance. If you have questions about the ban, exemptions to the ban or enforcement, you can visit the Health Department website at [www.muskegonhealth.net](http://www.muskegonhealth.net) or call 231-724-6208 for information.



Muskegon County's efforts in creating a healthy community through local partnership development and environmental education and awareness are underway. Coleen Boyer has been brought on board as the CARE Program Director to oversee and guide implementation of the objectives identified through an environmental assessment facilitated by the Muskegon County Health Department in 2003.

Partnership development is underway to help promote local awareness and education around environmental concerns including: 1. Lead contamination; 2. Condition of the region's drinking water; 3. Contamination of fish caught in local lakes and Lake Michigan; and 3. Air quality concerns. Through CARE, we are working to provide a community-driven educational outreach initiative in each of the four areas of concern.

In fact, CARE is committed to working with Lead Safe Now! Muskegon, a local non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of lead contamination hazards within the home. We will help to promote identification of lead hazards, child testing for contamination and promotion of safe abatement processes. In addition, work is being done with the Muskegon County Health Department's Lead Hazard Remediation program to assist property owners and landlords with understanding the hazards of lead contamination and the potential assistance available to complete the abatement process.

The CARE Program Director and local partners are available to provide informational community presentations customized to suit your environmental interest on any of the above identified environmental concerns. Please contact Coleen at (231) 724-4737 or [boyerc@mcecc.org](mailto:boyerc@mcecc.org) to arrange a time that suits your group's meeting schedule and environmental learning objectives.



## Lead Risk Awareness

- Lead exposure can be dangerous, especially to children ages 6 and younger
- Lead does not break down over time
- Exposure to lead-contaminated dust, not lead-based paint, is the most common way to get lead poisoning
- Lead from pipes can contaminate water – amount of lead is much greater when water is hot or warm
- Boiling water does not get rid of lead



## Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council

*The purpose of the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council ("MCECC") shall be to advance the environmental well being of the Muskegon region by providing opportunities for collaboration, education and stewardship.*

If you would like to submit information on an issue or your organization in this newsletter, please contact:

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MCECC CARE Program Director  
(231) 724-4737  
[boyerc@mcecc.org](mailto:boyerc@mcecc.org)  
[www.mcecc.org](http://www.mcecc.org)

## Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council

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