



www.mcecc.org

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**Good Websites
Good Information**

EPA CARE Program
www.epa.gov/care

EPA Lead Safety
www.epa.gov/lead

E-Waste Recycling
www.reconnectpartnership.com

County-wide Health Concerns
www.muskegonhealth.net

Link from National Wildlife
Federation

GARDENER'S GUIDE TO
GLOBAL WARMING

Challenges and Solutions:
www.nwf.org/gardenersguide/
Gardeners_Guide.pdf

Your Environment

A collaborative information resource for the Muskegon County Community

WINTER 2007-2008

New Tools Make Understanding Air Quality Easier Than Ever

(Washington, D.C. □ November 19, The AQI is EPA's color-coded tool to 2007) Ever used your computer to "fly" inform the public about daily air pollution through the mountains, or zoom in on a levels in their communities. EPA, in satellite picture of your house? Now you can use the same technology to learn more about emissions and air quality across the country and where you live.

EPA has developed two tools that let computer users "see" air quality information on a virtual globe. Both tools are available to the public starting today.

"Google has changed the way people use the Internet. By combining their innovative mapping tools with our air data, EPA and Google are changing the way people use the Internet to protect their health," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson.

The first tool is part of the new "Air Emission Sources" Web site, which is designed to make emissions data for six common pollutants easy to find and understand. Based on the latest National Emissions Inventory, the site uses charts and Google Earth files to answer a user's questions. Users can look at overall emissions, emissions by type of industry, or emissions by largest polluter.

Want to know what industry emits the most sulfur dioxide in your state? Select your state from a map, pick a pollutant, and the site creates a chart showing you emissions by industry. Want to "see" which refineries in your state emit the most sulfur dioxide? Use the "tilt" feature in Google Earth to quickly find the largest emitter. Then click on the balloon to get more details about emissions from that facility.

EPA also is providing Air Quality Index (AQI) information in the Google Earth format. Use the AQI tool to quickly see air quality across the country, then click on a specific location to see that city's AQI forecast and current levels of ozone or particle pollution.

On the web:

Go to the Air Emissions Sources Web site: www.epa.gov/air/emissions

View information in Google Earth format about which facilities emit any of six common pollutants: <http://www.epa.gov/air/emissions/where.htm>

See AQI forecasts and current conditions: www.airnow.gov

View air quality information in Google Earth format: http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=google_earth.main

EPA is also using the Google Earth platform to display Acid Rain Program data: <http://epa.gov/airmarkets/progress/interactivemapping.html>



LEAD GRANT NOW

In September the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the allocation of 143 million in grant funding to assist a total of 60 communities throughout the country. The focus on the funding is to protect children from the dangers of lead in older housing.

Two communities in Michigan were awarded funding, Wayne County and the City of Muskegon which will receive \$2,079,492. According to the City of Muskegon Community and Neighborhood Services, Director Wil Griffin, the funding will be used to abate a total of 204 housing units in a three-year period

The program started in November. Anyone with questions about the Muskegon Lead Program should contact the CNS office at 724-6717.

EPA CARE GRANT UPDATE

Submitted by
Coleen Boyer, Project Coordinator of
MCECC EPA CARE Grant
MSU Extension Educator, Muskegon County



MCECC applied for and received an EPA CARE (**C**ommunity **A**wareness for a **R**enewed **E**nvironment) grant in 2005. Since obtaining the grant, many efforts have transpired to bring about an increased awareness for our environment and the simple things we can do everyday to help keep our environment a safe and healthy one.



Locally identified issues for the EPA CARE included:

- Lead Awareness
- Cleaning and preparing locally caught fish for healthier and safer consumption.
- Air Quality Awareness
- Water Quality Awareness

Efforts to educate and change lives need to bring about positive impacts in peoples' lives. Many activities and educational programs have taken place to educate and bring a heightened awareness of these identified issues. Sustainability of these efforts is crucial to the future of our environmental quality and the quality and health of life for ourselves and that of future generations.



LEAD AWARENESS

Through the EPA CARE grant, it was originally proposed to give a 50 % abatement to qualifying area residents for the purpose of helping to fund lead risk assessments in their home, whether they owned the home or rented. After offering this incentive, it was found to be ineffective. Area residents qualifying to have a lead risk assessment preformed most often did not have the disposable income available to meet the remaining cost of the assessment. The subsidized cost of the assessment was not enough for residents to take advantage of the service. Permission from EPA Region 5 to fully assist residents in paying for risk assessments vs only subsidizing partial cost has dramatically pushed the numbers of assessments up. Since February of 2007 we have been able to complete 20 risk assessments in the urban areas of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights alone. There are currently an additional 20 houses waiting for inspection by a certified risk assessor. These additional inspections should be completed over the summer.

While current lead testing numbers are above project projections, the State of Michigan is not assisting with funding in WIC through the County Health Department. This has caused a temporary drop in the lead testing in WIC. Other avenues are being explored to resolve the issue. The health department is attempting to leverage funding from local foundations to cover the cost of testing and supplies.

The Muskegon County Health Department is partnering with Berrien County (through an EPA grant) to develop a guidebook on ordinance development for local governments. The creation of this document will assist all local governments in developing a variety of different ordinances, with special focus on environmental health issues such as lead.



HAVE YOU NOTICED?

Lead awareness billboards have been posted in 3, high risk neighborhoods in the City of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. You'll see these billboards along Laketon Ave., Summit Ave., and the area of Shoreline and Western.

IT'S JUST ANOTHER FISH STORY.....

Muskegon is richly blessed with water ways, rivers, streams and lakes. Many residents freely enjoy the sport of fishing with the abundant areas available to us. Catching and eating locally caught fish can be a way for many families to help stretch the food dollar while supplying a high source of protein. While fish is a healthy food source in the diet, there are also some things to be aware of, especially when eating fish caught in local waters.

Know a bit of history of the area from where the fish are harvested. Did industry once use the area for disposal of its wastes? Do rivers or streams flow in, bringing possible wastes from up-stream? Are there possible contaminants settled along the bottom of these waters?

Larger, older fish tend to have higher concentrates of contaminants in their bodies. Contaminates build up in the fatty tissue of the fish. As the fish ages, the contaminants continue to accumulate. Some larger fish eat smaller fish, ingesting the contaminants from the smaller fish, adding to the concentration of contaminants within its body.

What kind of fish is it? Is it a bottom feeder? Does it eat other fish? Some species of fish have a higher fat content than other species. The fatty tissues are a holding tank, so-to-speak, for higher levels of contaminants. Bottom feeders may consume contaminants that have settled to the bottom of the lake or water way.

Prepare your fish to minimize the amount of contaminants ingested. Properly filleting fish removes the fatty tissues, reducing the contaminant levels, leaving the healthy, meaty tissue.

For more tips on how you can enjoy eating healthy after a day of fishing, go to www.michigan.gov/mdch. On the left side links, click on Published Reports and Surveys. Scroll down, looking in the center column and click on MICHIGAN FISH ADVISORY. Click on this link to find the 2007 Michigan Family Fish consumption Guide, Fish Consumption Brochures, DNR Fishing Information and the DEQ Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program.

MUSKEGON COUNTY GOLF COURSE RECEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL LOAN

Muskegon County Golf Course Receives Environmental Loan

Contact: Robert McCann (517) 241-7397

Agency: Environmental Quality

November 29, 2007

Department of Environmental Quality Director Steven E. Chester announced today that a pollution prevention project proposed by Southland Development of Muskegon County has received a \$170,000 low interest loan through the DEQ's Small Business Pollution Prevention Loan Program. Southland Development will use the funds to complete a pollution prevention project at Bent Pine Golf Club in Whitehall and enable them to replace the existing irrigation system for the golf course with a more efficient computer controlled system, as well as add controls to the current pumping subsystem. "Small businesses in Michigan are working hard to find ways to reduce their overall environmental impact," said Director Chester. "The DEQ will continue to be a partner in these efforts that benefit Michigan's environment, as well as our economy." Southland Development estimates that the new efficient irrigation system will reduce water consumption by 10,235,490 gallons per year and provide for annual energy savings of 21 percent (20,064 kWh). The DEQ and the company's local lending institution, Community Shores Bank, each contributed half of the loan proceeds. "The low interest, P2 Loan Program made it possible for us to make a major capital improvement in our golf course and stay within our annual operating budget," said Scot Southland, member of Southland Development. "Because of the new irrigation system our customers will be playing golf on higher quality, more consistent turf throughout the entire golfing season. Completing this project is clearly better for the environment, our customers, and our bottom line." Businesses with fewer than 500 employees can apply for loans of up to \$400,000 with a guaranteed interest rate of not more than 5 percent. The short application helps businesses describe how their projects will eliminate or reduce waste through source reduction, environmentally sound reuse, and/or recycling; including water and energy conservation projects. Loans are available to all private business sectors including farming, manufacturing, retail, and service. For more information, contact the DEQ's Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278, or by e-mail at deq-ead-env-assist@michigan.gov.

Editor's note: DEQ news releases are available on the department's Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

"Protecting Michigan's Environment, Ensuring Michigan's Future"
Revised November 29, 2007 by Pat Watson

AND THE STORY CONTINUES.....



In early summer, youth participating in the Orchard View Community Ed Summer Programs were given a lesson on how to properly clean fish for safer consumption. A total of 43 boys and girls, ages 6 through 14, were each given a preserved, 12 inch perch for the purpose of learning to fillet. Many started out with

reservations and maybe even a bit squeamish, but soon over came those perceptions as they tackled the job. Proper cutting methods were shown. If they succeeded in cutting the fish correctly, they didn't have to see the guts of the fish. Of course for some, especially the boys, that was all part of the fun. After the fillet was cut, the kids learned how to skin the fillet, peeling off with it the fatty tissues that harbor under the skin. The kids enjoyed themselves, had fun with the project and learned some valuable lessons.



The following day, the same kids were given the opportunity to draw a picture of what they had learned. Again, the kids had fun while reinforcing the lessons they had learned about cleaning fish.

Their artwork was gathered for the purpose of designing signs to be distributed throughout Muskegon County. Through their drawings, the importance of properly cleaning fish could be conveyed to others.



Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council

P.O. Box 389
Muskegon, Michigan 49443

Signs distributed to Muskegon County Parks Department are now posted at Blue Lake County Park, Meinert County Park, Moore County Park, Pioneer County Park and Twin Lake County Park.

Three signs were distributed and mounted in the City of Whitehall at Mill Pond Peninsula, Goodrich Park and Covell Park. Leisure Services in the City of Muskegon will be posting signs in Spring '08. More signs are available if you have a favorite fishing spot you would like to see one posted. Call Coleen Boyer at (231) 724-4737 and let her know.



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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