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OPEN CHANNEL NEWS ISSUE 1 APEIL 1999 NIROP FRIDLEY MN  
4/1/1999  
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## Open Channel News

is published by  
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Pollution Prevention Section  
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## Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

Mears Park Centre  
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## Waste Discharge Rules Revisions

Industrial Users are again reminded that the Waste Discharge Rules (WDR) were revised in December 1998. The revised WDR include changes to the MCES Local Pretreatment Standards (see the table below). Printed versions of the WDR will be mailed to all Permittees this spring. A copy of the revised WDR can be accessed via the Internet at the following address:

[www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialDischarges/rules.htm](http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialDischarges/rules.htm)

If you have questions on this topic, please contact Leo Hermes at 651-602-4701 for assistance.

Parameter	Previous Local Pretreatment Standard [mg/L]	Current Local Pretreatment Standard [mg/L]
Cadmium	2.0	1.0
Chromium	8.0	6.0
Copper	6.0	4.0
Cyanide	4.0	4.0
Lead	1.0	1.0
Nickel	6.0	6.0
Mercury	0.1	0.002
Zinc	8.0	6.0

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Issue #1 / April 1999

## Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) is one of four divisions of the Metropolitan Council, a regional public agency working for the seven-county metropolitan area.

MCES is responsible for

(1) coordinated water resources, sewer service network and capital investment planning to preserve regional water quality and water supply;

(2) water resources management providing an optimal mix of point and non-point source solutions; and

(3) cost and quality competitive wastewater collection and treatment for 104 communities and 839 industrial clients.

## What's Inside?

- Changes at MCES p2
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- Rules Revisions p4

To find out more information about MCES and our Y2K contingency plan, call Leo Hermes at 651-602-4701 or look on our web site for the latest information, [www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialDischarges](http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialDischarges).

## Welcome to Open Channel News

Welcome to the first edition of Open Channel News. Open Channel News is a news bulletin focused on providing useful information to the Industrial Users of the Metropolitan Disposal System. Topics covered by Open Channel News will be focused on pretreatment program issues, as well as issues related to Pollution Prevention.

Open Channel News was created in response to a customer survey that indicated Industrial Users want more information and assistance regarding pollution prevention, regulatory requirements, and wastewater disposal cost reduction. Open Channel News will be published by the Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention (IWPP) Section periodically throughout the year. Please let us know if there is a particular topic that you would like covered in upcoming issues.

## Y2K & Wastewater Treatment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has notified agencies such as MCES of its expectations regarding Year 2000 (Y2K) readiness and ongoing discharge compliance requirements as the various Y2K-related dates pass. MCES is utilizing an EPA-recommended approach for contingency planning. Part of that planning is to notify industrial users of MCES expectations.

MCES fully expects that permittees will conduct Y2K evaluations for all systems and equipment that may affect wastewater discharge compliance. Further, since the Y2K computer problem is well known and the opportunity exists now to take corrective measures, MCES requires that wastewater discharges remain in compliance with all applicable standards and requirements as the Y2K dates pass. In an event that a spill or bypass does occur, permittees are required to notify MCES, using established procedures. One source of assistance for Y2K readiness is the EPA web site at [www.epa.gov/year2000](http://www.epa.gov/year2000).

**YEAR 2000 READINESS DISCLOSURE.** The above Year 2000 information about the Metropolitan Council and its Environmental Services Division is designated a Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure pursuant to the Year 2000 Information and Readiness Disclosure Act, Public Law No. 105-271. Refer to the Metropolitan Council's website ([www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org)) for additional information about the Year 2000 readiness of the Metropolitan Council.

## [www.metrocouncil.org/environment](http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment)

MCES staff recently updated the MCES Internet site. Information such as: general permit conditions, an on-line version of the Waste Discharge Rules, strength charge rates, permit fees, how to report a spill and other useful information can be found at the Internet site. IWPP staff are responsible for maintaining the "Industrial Dischargers" and the "Pollution Prevention" area. Contact Mike Pliml at 651-602-4702 with comments and/or suggestions.

## Important Dates:

- April 30, 1999 - All Regular & Special Discharge quarterly reports are due at MCES offices.
- July 15, 1999 - All Liquid Waste Hauler reports are due at MCES offices.
- July 30, 1999 - All Regular & Special Discharge semi-annual & quarterly reports due at MCES offices.

## MCES Organization Changes

### MCES Business Plan to Improve Competitiveness

Current forces in the environmental protection industry are bringing about big changes in the way that MCES manages its regional business of wastewater treatment and coordination of water resources planning. To keep a "public utility" public, MCES is responding energetically with a business plan - first defined several years ago - which is now being deployed at an accelerated rate. Three forces bringing about the change are:

- Aggressive challenges from the private sector to operate public utilities.
- Rising customer expectations of higher value at lower costs.
- The growing importance of watershed issues that require a comprehensive and integrated watershed management approach.

Some aspects of the business plan include:

- Finding the right balance of pollution reductions through wastewater treatment plants and from non-point sources (runoff), to maximize environmental benefits.
- Leveraging resources through partnerships with other public, private and non-profit entities.
- More effective management of capital projects and debt restructuring to save interest costs.

The centerpiece of the plan is to cut \$20 million from the annual MCES budget by 2001. This will include both labor and non-labor reductions. Payroll costs are currently being reduced through a voluntary separation program, with the ultimate goal being staff reductions of more than 200 positions in MCES. Non-labor costs will be reduced through improved purchasing practices, optimizing the use of contractors and consultants, and by lowering chemical and utility use. Sewer Service Charges (the rate MCES charges communities) were reduced by 6.9% for 1999, with further reductions planned for the next two years.

### Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention Section Impacts

The staff of the Industrial Waste & Pollution Prevention section endorse the components of the MCES Business Plan. We have worked in the past to improve the efficiency and value of the functions we conduct and the services we provide. The use of new technology in both monitoring functions and data management, as well as improved scheduling and work practices, has allowed us to operate with fewer resources. Our existing goals of insuring compliance with requirements while providing good customer service continue, even though about 20% of our staff positions are currently vacant. The section has also started a "Reengineering Study" to define our future structure and practices, so that future staffing needs and other resources can be accurately determined. Our future goals, within the context of the MCES Business Plan, include expanded customer service and better customer communication. We welcome the opportunity to provide better service at a lower cost to customers, as we continue to work with you to maintain the high environmental quality of the region.

**OPEN CHANNEL NEWS is on the Internet.**  
Go to  
[www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialDischarges](http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/IndustrialDischarges)  
and look under News & Information.



The diagram features a central blue box with the text "Industrial Discharge" in red. Below it, a definition states: "Industrial Discharge is any solid, liquid or gaseous substance disposed of in a public sewer in the metropolitan area resulting from a business activity." Two white pipes branch out from the box, each ending in a green nozzle. The left pipe is labeled "Who are we?" and "News & Information". The right pipe is labeled "Rules & Regulations" and "Permits". Both pipes lead to a circular base with the text "REPORT A SPILL".

## Pollution Prevention Pays in Many Ways at the Pillsbury Corporation

The Pillsbury Corporation has incorporated a program for protecting the environment that has saved it hundreds of thousands of dollars in waste management costs and ensured the company's continued stature of leadership and product quality in the marketplace.

The Pillsbury program for protecting the environment was adopted in 1990 and is led by the Environmental Affairs Department, based in Minneapolis, and a team of Environmental Coordinators -- one from each of their facilities. This team is responsible for making sure Pillsbury follows not only the letter, but also the spirit of environmental requirements. To do this they established goals that met three criteria:

1. Reduce health and injury risk for Pillsbury employees;
2. Meet government and company environmental objectives;
3. Make company more efficient by reducing costly wastes.

The plan was adopted in 1990 and by 1994 the company managed to:

- Eliminate all gaseous chlorine from water treatment;
- Eliminate all polychlorinated biphenyl's (PCB's) from electrical equipment;
- Eliminate all process chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's);
- Reduce solid wastes by 15%;
- Reduce landfilled wastes by 50%;
- Eliminate 12 million pounds of packaging waste by reducing or changing product packages;
- Reduce total toxic chemical releases such as ammonia, chlorine, phosphoric acid, solvents and CFC's by 90%;and
- Reduce wastewater strength charges at two facilities by 81% each, saving over \$410,000.

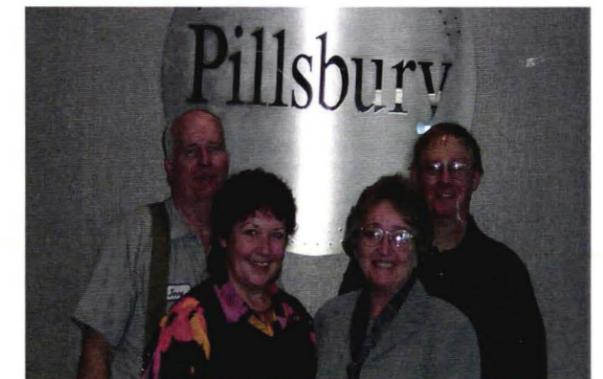
The key to the success of the program is that Pillsbury depends on employee initiatives and ideas at all levels. For example, Pillsbury Eden Prairie and Chanhassen set up tools to accomplish their goals

that involve every area of operations. They establish a zero tolerance for spills and implemented standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all wastes. These procedures include suggestions obtained from employees working with the chemicals and wastes. Annual review of the SOPs is provided. Employees are educated in new policies and pollution prevention through training sessions, communication boards and notices. An approval process or waste stream analysis is required for all chemicals prior to entering the plant. Waste is handled at the highest level of hierarchy. Employees also work with purchasing to look for opportunities to reduce waste.

The Pillsbury Company continues to strive for environmental excellence by setting new goals for the year 2000, continuing to eliminate waste to increase profit, and always trying to reduce by 10%.

The Pillsbury Company has won several environmental awards. The company's Eden Prairie facility won the 1998 Environmental Quality Award sponsored by the Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce. The award recognizes city businesses that have environmental practices exceeding minimum regulatory compliance, and have indicated a long-term commitment to the environment through their practices.

If you have any questions on the pollution prevention efforts Pillsbury has made you can contact Dotti Shay at the Chanhassen office at 612-474-7444 or e-mail her at [dshay@pillsbury.com](mailto:dshay@pillsbury.com).



Pictured from the left: Jerry Carson, Cher Atkinson, Dotti Shay, Jerry Tillman